THE ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT AND THE COURT OF ROME

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Chapter 1

Church and State essentially distinct

The Church and the State are essentially distinct. They both receive their task from God, but that task is different in each. The task of the church is to lead men to God; the task of the state is to secure the earthly development of a people in conformity with its peculiar character. There are certain bounds, traced by the particular spirit of each nation within which the state should confine itself; while the church, whose limits are coextensive with the human race, has a universal character, which raises it above all national differences. These two distinctive features should be maintained. A state which aims at universality loses itself; a church whose mind and aim are sectarian falls away. Nevertheless, the church and the state, the two poles of social life, while they are in many respects opposed to one another, are far from excluding each other absolutely. The church

has need of that justice, order, and liberty, which the state is bound to maintain; but the state has especial need of the church. If Jesus can do without kings to establish his kingdom, kings cannot do without Jesus, if they would have their kingdoms prosper. Justice, which is the fundamental principle of the state, is continually fettered in its progress by the internal power of sin; and as force can do nothing against this power, the state requires the gospel in order to overcome it. That country will always be the most prosperous where the church is the most evangelical. These two communities having thus need one of the other, we must be prepared, whenever a great religious manifestation takes place in the world, to witness the appearance on the scene not only of the little ones, but of the great ones also, of the state. We must not then be surprised to meet with Henry VIII, but let us endeavor to appreciate accurately the part he played.

If the Reformation, particularly in England, happened necessarily to be mixed up with the state, with the world even, it originated neither in the

state nor in the world. There was much worldliness in the age of Henry VIII, passions, violence, festivities, a trial, a divorce; and some historians call that the history of the Reformation in England. We shall not pass by in silence these manifestations of the worldly life; opposed as they are to the Christian life, they are in history, and it is not our business to tear them out. But most assuredly they are not the Reformation. From a very different quarter proceeded the divine light which then rose upon the human race.

To say that Henry VIII was the reformer of his people is to betray our ignorance of history. The kingly power in England by turns opposed and favored the reform in the church; but it opposed before it favored, and much more than it favored. This great transformation was begun and extended by its own strength, by the Spirit from on high.

When the church has lost the life that is peculiar to it, it must again put itself in communication with its creative principle, that is, with the word of God. Just as the buckets of a

wheel employed in irrigating the meadows have no sooner discharged their reviving waters, than they dip again into the stream to be re-filled, so every generation, void of the Spirit of Christ, must return to the divine source to be again filled up. The primitive words which created the church have been preserved for us in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles; and the humble reading of these divine writings will create in every age the communion of saints. God was the father of the Reformation, not Henry VIII. The visible world which then glittered with such brightness; those princes and sports, those noblemen, and trials and laws, far from effecting a reform, were calculated to stifle it. But the light and the warmth came from heaven, and the new creation was completed.

In the reign of Henry VIII a great number of citizens, priests, and noblemen possessed that degree of cultivation which favors the action of the holy books. It was sufficient for this divine seed to be scattered on the well-prepared soil for the work of germination to be accomplished.

A time not less important also was approaching — that in which the action of the popedom was to come to an end. The hour had not yet struck. God was first creating within by his word a spiritual church, before he broke without by his dispensations the bonds which had so long fastened England to the power of Rome. It was his good pleasure first to give truth and life, and then liberty. It has been said that if the pope had consented to a reform of abuses and doctrines, on condition of his keeping his position, the religious revolution would not have been satisfied at that price, and that after demanding reform, the next demand would have been for liberty. The only reproach that can be made to this assertion is, that it is superabundantly true. Liberty was an integral part of the Reformation, and one of the changes imperatively required was to withdraw religious authority from the pope, and restore it to the word of God. In the sixteenth century there was a great outpouring of the Christian life in France, Italy, and Spain; it is attested by martyrs without number, and history shows that to transform these three great nations, all that the gospel wanted was liberty. “If we had

set to work two months later," said a grand inquisitor of Spain who had dyed himself in the blood of the saints, "it would have been too late: Spain would have been lost to the Roman church." We may therefore believe that if Italy, France, and Spain had had some generous king to check the myrmidons of the pope, those three countries, carried along by the renovating power of the gospel, would have entered upon an era of liberty and faith.

The struggles of England with the popedom began shortly after the dissemination of the English New Testament by Tyndale. The epoch at which we are arrived accordingly brings in one view before our eyes both the Testament of Jesus Christ and the court of Rome. We can thus study the men (the reformers and the Romanists) and the works they produce, and arrive at a just valuation of the two great principles which dispute the possession of authority in the church.

It was about the close of the year 1525; the English New Testament was crossing the sea; five

pious Hanseatic merchants had taken charge of the books. Captivated by the Holy Scriptures they had taken them on board their ships, hidden them among their merchandise; and then made sail from Antwerp for London.

Thus those precious pages were approaching England, which were to become its light and the source of its greatness. The merchants, whose zeal unhappily cost them dear, were not without alarm. Had not Cochlaeus caused orders to be sent to every port to prevent the entrance of the precious cargo they were bringing to England? They arrived and cast anchor; they lowered the boat to reach the shore; what were they likely to meet there? Tonstall's agents, no doubt, and Wolsey's, and Henry's, ready to take away their New Testaments! They landed and soon again returned to the ship; boats passed to and fro, and the vessel was unloaded. No enemy appeared; and no one seemed to imagine that these ships contained so great a treasure.

Just at the time this invaluable cargo was

ascending the river, an invisible hand had dispersed the preventive guard. Tonstall, bishop of London, had been sent to Spain; Wolsey was occupied in political combinations with Scotland, France, and the Empire; Henry VIII, driven from his capital by an unhealthy winter, was passing the Christmas holidays at Eltham; and even the courts of justice, alarmed by an extraordinary mortality, had suspended their sittings. God if we may so speak, had sent his angel to remove the guards.

Seeing nothing that could stop them, the five merchants, whose establishment was at the Steelyard in Thames Street, hastened to conceal their precious charge in their warehouses. But who will receive them? Who will undertake to distribute these Holy Scriptures in London, Oxford, Cambridge, and all England? It is a little matter that they have crossed the sea. The principal instrument God was about to use for their dissemination was an humble servant of Christ.

In Honey Lane, a narrow thoroughfare adjoining Cheap-side, stood the old church of All

Hallows, of which Robert Forman was rector. His curate was a plain man, of lively imagination, delicate conscience, and timid disposition, but rendered bold by his faith, to which he was to become a martyr. Thomas Garret, for that was his name, having believed in the gospel, earnestly called his hearers to repentance; he urged upon them that works, however good they might be in appearance, were by no means capable of justifying the sinner, and that faith alone could save him. He maintained that every man had the right to preach the word of God; and called those bishops pharisees who persecuted Christian men.

Garret's discourses, at once so quickening and so gentle, attracted great crowds; and to many of his hearers, the street in which he preached was rightly named Honey Lane, for there they found the honey out of the rock.

But Garret was about to commit a fault still more heinous in the eyes of the priests than preaching faith. The Hanse merchants were seeking some sure place where they might store up the New

Testaments and other books sent from Germany; the curate offered his house, stealthily transported the holy deposit thither, hid them in the most secret corners, and kept a faithful watch over this sacred library. He did not confine himself to this. Night and day he studied the holy books, he held gospel meetings, read the word and explained its doctrines to the citizens of London. At last, not satisfied with being at once student, librarian, and preacher, he became a trader, and sold the New Testament to laymen, and even to priests and monks, so that the Holy Scriptures were dispersed over the whole realm. This humble and timid priest was then performing alone the biblical work of England.

And thus the word of God, presented by Erasmus to the learned in 1517, was given to the people by Tyndale in 1526. In the parsonages and in the convent cells, but particularly in shops and cottages, a crowd of persons were studying the New Testament. The clearness of the Holy Scriptures struck each reader. None of the systematic or aphoristic forms of the school were to be found there: it was the language of human life

which they discovered in those divine writings: here a conversation, there a discourse; here a narrative, and there a comparison; here a command, and there an argument; here a parable and there a prayer. It was not all doctrine or all history; but these two elements mingled together made an admirable whole. Above all, the life of our Savior, so divine and so human, had an inexpressible charm which captivated the simple. One work of Jesus Christ explained another, and the great facts of the redemption, birth, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, followed and completed each other. The authority of Christ's teaching, so strongly contrasting with the doubts of the schools, increased the clearness of his discourses to his readers; for the more certain a truth is, the more distinctly it strikes the mind. Academical explanations were not necessary to those noblemen, farmers, and citizens. It is to me, for me, and of me that this book speaks, said each one. It is I whom all these promises and teachings concern. This fall and this restoration.....they are mine. That old death and this new life.....I have passed

through them. That flesh and that spirit.....I know them. This law and this grace, this faith, these works, this slavery, this glory, this Christ and this Belial.....all are familiar to me.

It is my own history that I find in this book. Thus by the aid of the Holy Ghost each one had in his own experience a key to the mysteries of the Bible. To understand certain authors and certain philosophers, the intellectual life of the reader must be in harmony with theirs; so must there be an intimate affinity with the holy books to penetrate their mysteries.

“The man that has not the Spirit of God,” said a reformer, “does not understand one jot or tittle of the Scripture.” Now that this condition was fulfilled, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Such at that period were the hermeneutics of England. Tyndale had set the example himself by explaining many of the words which might stop the reader. “The New Testament!” we may suppose

some farmer saying, as he took up the book; “what Testament is that?” — “Christ,” replied Tyndale in his prologue, “commanded his disciples before his death to publish over all the world his last will, which is to give all his goods unto all that repent and believe. He bequeaths them his righteousness to blot out their sins — his salvation to overcome their condemnation; and this is why that document is called the Testament of Jesus Christ.” “The law and the gospel,” said a citizen of London, in his shop; “what is that?” “They are two keys,” answered Tyndale. “The law is the key which shuts up all men under condemnation, and the gospel is the key which opens the door and lets them out.

Or, if you like it, they are two salves. The law, sharp and biting, driveth out the disease and killeth it; while the gospel, soothing and soft, softens the wound and brings life.” Every one understood and read, or rather devoured the inspired pages; and the hearts of the elect (to use Tyndale’s words), warmed by the love of Jesus Christ, began to melt like wax. This transformation was observed to take place even in the most catholic families. Roper,

More’s son-in-law, having read the New Testament, received the truth. “I have no more need,” said he, “of auricular confession, of vigils, or of the invocation of saints. The ears of God are always open to hear us. Faith alone is necessary to salvation. I believe.....and I am saved.....Nothing can deprive me of God’s favor.” The amiable and zealous young man desired to do more. “Father,” said he one day to Sir Thomas, “procure for me from the king, who is very fond of you, a license to preach. God hath sent me to instruct the world.” More was uneasy. Must this new doctrine, which he detests, spread even to his children? He exerted all his authority to destroy the work begun in Roper’s heart. “What,” said he with a smile, “is it not sufficient that we that are your friends should know that you are a fool, but you would proclaim your folly to the world? Hold your tongue: I will debate with you no longer.” The young man’s imagination was struck, but his heart had not been changed. The discussions having ceased, the father’s authority being restored, Roper became less fervent in his faith, and gradually he returned to popery, of which he was afterwards a zealous

champion.

The humble curate of All Hallows having sold the New Testament to persons living in London and its neighborhood, and to many pious men who would carry it to the farthest parts of England, formed the resolution to introduce it into the University of Oxford, that citadel of traditional catholicism. It was there he had studied, and he felt towards that school the affection which a son bears to his mother: he set out with his books.

Terror occasionally seized him, for he knew that the word of God had many deadly enemies at Oxford; but his inexhaustible zeal overcame his timidity. In concert with Dalaber, he stealthily offered the mysterious book for sale; many students bought it, and Garret carefully entered their names in his register. This was in January 1526; an incident disturbed this Christian activity.

One morning when Edmund Moddis, one of Henry’s valets-de-chambre, was in attendance on his master, the prince, who was much attached to

him, spoke to him of the new books come from beyond the sea. “If your grace,” said Moddis, “would promise to pardon me and certain individuals, I would present you a wonderful book which is dedicated to your majesty.” — “Who is the author?” — “A lawyer of Gray’s Inn named Simon Fish, at present on the continent.” — “What is he doing there?” — “About three years ago, Mr Row, a fellow-student of Gray’s Inn, composed for a private theater a drama against my lord the cardinal.” The king smiled; when his minister was attacked, his own yoke seemed lighter.

“As no one was willing to represent the character employed to give the cardinal his lesson,” continued the valet, “Master Fish boldly accepted it.

The piece produced a great effect; and my lord being informed of this impertinence, sent the police one night to arrest Fish. The latter managed to escape, crossed the sea, joined one Tyndale, the author of some of the books so much talked of; and, carried away by his friend’s example, he

composed the book of which I was speaking to your grace.” — “What’s the name of it?” — “The Supplication of the Beggars.” — “Where did you see it?” — “At two of your tradespeople’s, George Elyot and George Robinson; if your grace desires it, they shall bring it you.” The king appointed the day and the hour.

The book was written for the king, and everybody read it but the king himself. At the appointed day, Moddis appeared with Elyot and Robinson, who were not entirely without fear, as they might be accused of proselytism even in the royal palace. The king received them in his private apartments. “What do you want?” he said to them. “Sir,” replied one of the merchants, “we are come about an extraordinary book that is addressed to you.” — “Can one of you read it to me?” — “Yes, if it so please your grace,” replied Elyot. “You may repeat the contents from memory,” rejoined the king.....”but, no, read it all; that will be better. I am ready.” Elyot began, “THE SUPPLICATION OF THE BEGGARS.” “To the king our sovereign lord, — “Most lamentably complaineth of their woeful

misery, unto your highness, your poor daily bedesmen, the wretched hideous monsters, on whom scarcely, for horror, any eye dare look; the foul unhappy sort of lepers and other sore people, needy, impotent, blind, lame, and sick, that live only by alms; how that their number is daily sore increased, that all the alms of all the well-disposed people of this your realm are not half enough to sustain them, but that for very constraint they die for hunger.

"And this most pestilent mischief is come upon your said poor bedesmen, by the reason that there hath, in the time of your noble predecessors, craftily crept into this your realm, another sort, not of impotent, but of strong, puissant, and counterfeit, holy and idle beggars and vagabonds, who by all the craft and wiliness of Satan are now increased not only into a great number, but also into a kingdom." Henry was very attentive. Elyot continued: "These are not the shepherds, but the ravenous wolves going in shepherds' clothing, devouring the flock: bishops, abbots, priors, deacons, archdeacons, suffragans, priests, monks,

canons, friars, pardoners, and sumners.....The goodliest lordships, manors, lands, and territories are theirs. Besides this, they have the tenth part of all the corn, meadow, pasture, grass, wood, colts, calves, lambs, pigs, geese, and chickens. Over and besides, the tenth part of every servant's wages, the tenth part of wool, milk, honey, wax, cheese, and butter. The poor wives must be accountable to them for every tenth egg, or else she getteth not her rights [i.e. absolution] at Easter.....Finally, what get they in a year? Summa totalis: L430,333, 6s. 8d. sterling, whereof not four hundred years past they had not a penny.....

"What subjects shall be able to help their prince, that be after this fashion yearly polled? What good Christian people can be able to succor us poor lepers, blind, sore, and lame, that be thus yearly oppressed?.....The ancient Romans had never been able to have put all the whole world under their obeisance, if they had had at home such an idle sort of cormorants." No subject could have been found more likely to captivate the king's attention. "And what doth all this greedy sort of

sturdy idle holy thieves with their yearly exactions that they take of the people? Truly nothing, but translate all rule, power, lordship, authority, obedience, and dignity from your grace unto them. Nothing, but that all your subjects should fall into disobedience and rebellion.....Priests and doves make foul houses; and if you will ruin a state, set up in it the pope with his monks and clergy.....Send these sturdy loobies abroad in the world to take them wives of their own, and to get their living with their labor in the sweat of their faces.....Then shall your commons increase in riches; then shall matrimony be much better kept; then shall not your sword, power, crown, dignity, and obedience of your people be translated from you." When Elyot had finished reading, the king was silent, sunk in thought. The true cause of the ruin of the state had been laid before him; but Henry's mind was not ripe for these important truths. At last he said, with an uneasy manner: "If a man who desires to pull down an old wall, begins at the bottom, I fear the upper part may chance to fall on his head." Thus then, in the king's eyes, Fish by attacking the priests was disturbing the

foundations of religion and society. After this royal verdict, Henry rose, took the book, locked it up in his desk, and forbade the two merchants to reveal to any one the fact of their having read it to him.

Shortly after the king had received this copy, on Wednesday the 2nd of February, the feast of Candlemas, a number of persons, including the king himself, were to take part in the procession, bearing wax tapers in their hands. During the night this famous invective was scattered about all the streets through which the procession had to pass. The cardinal ordered the pamphlet to be seized, and immediately waited upon the king. The latter put his hand under his robe, and with a smile took out the so much dreaded work, and then, as if satisfied with this proof of independence, he gave it up to the cardinal.

While Wolsey replied to Fish by confiscation, Sir Thomas More with greater liberality, desiring that press should reply to press, published The Supplications of the Souls in Purgatory. “Suppress,” said they, “the pious stipends paid to

the monks, and then Luther's gospel will come in, Tyndale's Testament will be read, heresy will preach, fasts will be neglected, the saints will be blasphemed, God will be offended, virtue will be mocked of, vice will run riot, and England will be peopled with beggars and thieves." The Souls in Purgatory then call the author of the Beggars' Supplication "a goose, an ass, a mad dog." Thus did superstition degrade More's noble genius. Notwithstanding the abuse of the souls in purgatory, the New Testament was daily read more and more in England.

Chapter 2

The two Authorities

Wolsey did not stop with Fish's book. It was not that "miserable pamphlet" only that it was necessary to hunt down; the New Testament in English had entered the kingdom by surprise; there was the danger. The gospellers, who presumed to emancipate man from the priests, and put him in absolute dependence on God, did precisely the reverse of what Rome demands. The cardinal hastened to assemble the bishops, and these (particularly Warham and Tonstall, who had long enjoyed the jests launched against superstition) took the matter seriously when they were shown that the New Testament was circulating throughout England. These priests believed with Wolsey, that the authority of the pope and of the clergy was a dogma to which all others were subordinate. They saw in the reform an uprising of the human mind, a desire of thinking for themselves, of judging freely the doctrines and institutions, which the nations had hitherto received humbly from the hands of the

priests. The new doctors justified their attempt at enfranchisement by substituting a new authority for the old. It was the New Testament that compromised the absolute power of Rome. It must be seized and destroyed, said the bishops.

London, Oxford, and above all Cambridge, those three haunts of heresy, must be carefully searched. Definitive orders were issued on Saturday, 3rd February 1526, and the work began immediately.

The first visit of the inquisitors was to Honey Lane, to the house of the curate of All Hallows. They did not find Garret; they sought after him at Monmouth's, and throughout the city, but he could not be met with. "He is gone to Oxford to sell his detestable wares," the inquisitors were informed, and they set off after him immediately, determined to burn the evangelist and his books; "so burning hot," says an historian, "was the charity of these holy fathers." On Tuesday, the 6th of February, Garret was quietly selling his books at Oxford, and carefully noting down his sales in his register,

when two of his friends ran to him exclaiming, “Fly! or else you will be taken before the cardinal, and thence.....to the Tower.” The poor curate was greatly agitated. “From whom did you learn that?” — “From Master Cole, the clerk of the assembly, who is deep in the cardinal’s favor.” Garret, who saw at once that the affair was serious, hastened to Anthony Dalaber, who held the stock of the Holy Scriptures at Oxford; others followed him; the news had spread rapidly, and those who had bought the book were seized with alarm, for they knew by the history of the Lollards what the Romish clergy could do. They took counsel together. The brethren, “for so did we not only call one another, but were in deed one to another,” says Dalaber, decided that Garret should change his name; that Dalaber should give him a letter for his brother, the rector of Stalbridge, in Dorsetshire, who was in want of a curate; and that, once in this parish, he should seek the first opportunity of crossing the sea. The rector was in truth a “mad papist” (it is Dalaber’s expression), but that did not alter their resolution.

They knew of no other resource. Anthony wrote to him hurriedly; and, on the morning of the 7th of February, Garret left Oxford without being observed.

Having provided for Garret's safety, Dalaber next thought of his own. He carefully concealed in a secret recess of his chamber, at St. Alban's Hall, Tyndale's Testament, and the works of Luther, Oecolampadius, and others, on the word of God. Then, disgusted with the scholastic sophisms which he heard in that college, he took with him the New Testament and the Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, by Lambert of Avignon, the second edition of which had just been published at Strasburg, and went to Gloucester college, where he intended to study the civil law, not caring to have anything more to do with the church.

During this time, poor Garret was making his way into Dorsetshire. His conscience could not bear the idea of being, although for a short time only, the curate of a bigoted priest, — of concealing his faith, his desires, and even his name.

He felt more wretched, although at liberty, than he could have been in Wolsey’s prisons. It is better, he said within himself, to confess Christ before the judgmentseat, than to seem to approve of the superstitious practices I detest. He went forward a little, then stopped — and then resumed his course. There was a fierce struggle between his fears and his conscience. At length, after a day and a half spent in doubt, his conscience prevailed; unable to endure any longer the anguish that he felt, he retraced his steps, returned to Oxford, which he entered on Friday evening, and lay down calmly in his bed. It was barely past midnight when Wolsey’s agents, who had received information of his return, arrived, and dragged him from his bed, and delivered him up to Dr. Cottisford, the commissary of the university. The latter locked him up in one of his rooms, while London and Higdon, dean of Frideswide, “two arch papists” (as the chronicler terms them), announced this important capture to the cardinal. They thought popery was saved, because a poor curate had been taken.

Dalaber, engaged in preparing his new room at

Gloucester college, had not perceived all this commotion. On Saturday, at noon, having finished his arrangements, he double-locked his door, and began to read the Gospel according to St. Luke. All of a sudden he hears a knock. Dalaber made no reply; it is no doubt the commissary's officers. A louder knock was given; but he still remained silent. Immediately after, there was a third knock, as if the door would be beaten in. "Perhaps somebody wants me," thought Dalaber. He laid his book aside, opened the door, and to his great surprise saw Garret, who, with alarm in every feature, exclaimed, "I am a lost man!

They have caught me!" Dalaber, who thought his friend was with his brother at Stalbridge, could not conceal his astonishment, and at the same time he cast an uneasy glance on a stranger who accompanied Garret. He was one of the college servants who had led the fugitive curate to Dalaber's new room. As soon as this man had gone away, Garret told Anthony everything: "Observing that Dr. Cottisford and his household had gone to prayers, I put back the bolt of the lock with my

finger.....and here I am.”.....”Alas! Master Garret,” replied Dalaber, the imprudence you committed in speaking to me before that young man has ruined us both!” At these words, Garret, who had resumed his fear of the priests, now that his conscience was satisfied, exclaimed with a voice interrupted by sighs and tears: “For mercy’s sake, help me! Save me!” Without waiting for an answer, he threw off his frock and hood, begged Anthony to give him a sleeved coat, and thus disguised, he said: “I will escape into Wales, and from there, if possible, to Germany and Luther.” Garret checked himself; there was something to be done before he left. The two friends fell on their knees and prayed together; they called upon God to lead his servant to a secure retreat. That done, they embraced each other, their faces bathed with tears, and unable to utter a word. Silent on the threshold of his door, Dalaber followed both with eyes and ears his friend’s retreating footsteps. Having heard him reach the bottom of the stairs, he returned to his room, locked the door, took out his New Testament, and placing it before him, read on his knees the tenth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, breathing

many a heavy sigh:.....Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake.....but fear them not; the very hairs of your head are all numbered. This reading having revived his courage, Anthony, still on his knees, prayed fervently for the fugitive and for all his brethren: “O God, by thy Holy Spirit endue with heavenly strength this tender and new-born little flock in Oxford. Christ’s heavy cross is about to be laid on the weak shoulders of thy poor sheep.

Grant that they may bear it with godly patience and unflinching zeal!” Rising from his knees, Dalaber put away his book, folded up Garret’s hood and frock, placed them among this own clothes, locked his roomdoor, and proceeded to the Cardinal’s College, (now Christ Church,) to tell Clark and the other brethren what had happened. They were in chapel: the evening service had begun; the dean and canons, in full costume, were chanting in the choir. Dalaber stopped at the door listening to the majestic sounds of the organ at which Taverner presided, and to the harmonious strains of the choristers. They were singing the

Magnificat: My soul doth magnify the Lord.....He hath holpen his servant Israel. It seemed to Dalaber that they were singing Garret's deliverance. But his voice could not join in their song of praise. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "all my singing and music is turned into sighing and musing." As he listened, leaning against the entrance into the choir, Dr. Cottisford, the university commissary, arrived with hasty step, "bareheaded, and as pale as ashes." He passed Anthony without noticing him, and going straight to the dean appeared to announce some important and unpleasant news. "I know well the cause of his sorrow," thought Dalaber as he watched every gesture. The commissary had scarcely finished his report when the dean arose, and both left the choir with undisguised confusion.

They had only reached the middle of the ante-chapel when Dr. London ran in, puffing and chafing and stamping, "like a hungry and greedy lion seeking his prey." All three stopped, questioned each other, and deplored their misfortune. Their rapid and eager movements indicated the liveliest emotion: London above all

could not restrain himself. He attacked the commissary, and blamed him for his negligence, so that at last Cottisford burst into tears. “Deeds, not tears,” said the fanatical London; and forthwith they despatched officers and spies along every road.

Anthony having left the chapel hurried to Clark’s to tell him of the escape of his friend. “We are walking in the midst of wolves and tigers,” replied Clark; “prepare for persecution. Prudentia serpentina et simplicitas columbina (the wisdom of serpents and the harmlessness of doves) must be our motto. O God, give us the courage these evil times require.” All in the little flock were delighted at Garret’s deliverance. Sumner and Betts, who had come in, ran off to tell it to the other brethren in the college, and Dalaber hastened to Corpus Christi. All these pious young men felt themselves to be soldiers in the same army, travelers in the same company, brothers in the same family. Fraternal love nowhere shone so brightly in the days of the Reformation as among the Christians of Great Britain. This is a feature worthy of notice.

Fitzjames, Udal, and Diet were met together in the rooms of the latter, at Corpus Christi College, when Dalaber arrived. They ate their frugal meal, with downcast eyes and broken voices, conversing of Oxford, of England, and of the perils hanging over them. Then rising from table they fell on their knees, called upon God for aid, and separated, Fitzjames taking Dalaber with him to St. Alban's Hall. They were afraid that the servant of Gloucester College had betrayed him.

The disciples of the gospel at Oxford passed the night in great anxiety.

Garret's flight, the rage of the priests, the dangers of the rising church, the roaring of a storm that filled the air and re-echoed through the long cloisters — all impressed them with terror. On Sunday, the 11th of February, Dalaber, who was stirring at five in the morning, set out for his room in Gloucester College. Finding the gates shut, he walked up and down beneath the walls in the mud, for it had rained all night. As he paced to and fro

along the solitary street in the obscure dawn, a thousand thoughts alarmed his mind. It was known, he said to himself, that he had taken part in Garret's flight; he would be arrested, and his friend's escape would be revenged on him. He was weighed down by sorrow and alarm; he sighed heavily; he imagined he saw Wolsey's commissioners demanding the names of his accomplices, and pretending to draw up a proscription list at his dictation; he recollected that on more than one occasion cruel priests had extorted from the Lollards the names of the brethren, and terrified at the possibility of such a crime, he exclaimed; "O God, I swear to thee that I will accuse no man,.....I will tell nothing but what is perfectly well known." At last, after an hour of anguish, he was able to enter the college. He hastened in, but when he tried to open his door, he found that the lock had been picked. The door gave way to a strong push, and what a sight met his eyes! his bedstead overturned, the blankets scattered on the floor, his clothes all confusion in his wardrobe, his study broken into and left open.

He doubted not that Garret’s dress had betrayed him; and he was gazing at this sad spectacle in alarm, when a monk who occupied the adjoining rooms came and told him what had taken place: “The commissary and two proctors, armed with swords and bills, broke open your door in the middle of the night. They pierced your bed-straw through and through to make sure Garret was not hidden there; they carefully searched every nook and corner, but were not able to discover any traces of the fugitive.” At these words Dalaber breathed again.....but the monk had not ended. “I have orders,” he added, “to send you to the prior.” Anthony Dunstan, the prior, was a fanatical and avaricious monk; and the confusion into which this message threw Dalaber was so great, that he went just as he was, all bespattered with mud, to the rooms of his superior.

The prior, who was standing with his face towards the door, looked at Dalaber from head to foot as he came in. “Where did you pass the night?” he asked. “At St. Alban’s Hall with Fitzjames.” The prior with a gesture of incredulity

continued: “Was not Master Garret with you yesterday?” — “Yes.” — “Where is he now?” — “I do not know.” During this examination, the prior had remarked a large double gilt silver ring on Anthony’s finger, with the initials A.D. “Show me that,” said the prior. Dalaber gave him the ring, and the prior believing it to be of solid gold, put it on his own finger, adding with a cunning leer: “This ring is mine: it bears my name. A is for Anthony, and D for Dunstan.” — “Would to God,” thought Dalaber, “that I were as well delivered from his company, as I am sure of being delivered of my ring.” At this moment the chief beadle, with two or three of the commissary’s men, entered and conducted Dalaber to the chapel of Lincoln College, where three ill-omened figures were standing beside the altar: they were Cottisford, London, and Higdon. “Where is Garret?” asked London; and pointing to his disordered dress, he continued: “Your shoes and garments covered with mud prove that you have been out all night with him. If you do not say where you have taken him, you will be sent to the Tower.” — “Yes,” added Higdon, “to Little-ease [one of the most horrible

dungeons in the prison], and you will be put to the torture, do you hear?" Then the three doctors spent two hours attempting to shake the young man by flattering promises and frightful threats; but all was useless. The commissary then gave a sign, the officers stepped forward, and the judges ascended a narrow staircase leading to a large room situated above the commissary's chamber. Here Dalaber was deprived of his purse and girdle, and his legs were placed in the stocks, so that his feet were almost as high as his head. When that was done, the three doctors devoutly went to mass.

Poor Anthony, left alone in this frightful position, recollected the warning Clark had given him two years before. He groaned heavily and cried to God: "O Father! that my suffering may be for thy glory, and for the consolation of my brethren! Happen what may, I will never accuse one of them." After this noble protest, Anthony felt an increase of peace in his heart; but a new sorrow was reserved for him.

Garret, who had directed his course westwards,

with the intention of going to Wales, had been caught at Hinksey, a short distance from Oxford. He was brought back, and thrown into the dungeon in which Dalaber had been placed after the torture. Their gloomy presentiments were to be more than fulfilled.

In fact Wolsey was deeply irritated at seeing the college [Christ Church], which he had intended should be “the most glorious in the world,” made the haunt of heresy, and the young men, whom he had so carefully chosen, become distributors of the New Testament. By favoring literature, he had had in view the triumph of the clergy, and literature had on the contrary served to the triumph of the gospel. He issued his orders without delay, and the university was filled with terror. John Clark, John Fryth, Henry Sumner, William Betts, Richard Tavener, Richard Cox, Michael Drumm, Godfrey Harman, Thomas Lawney, Radley, and others besides of Cardinal’s College; Udal, Diet, and others of Corpus Christi; Eden and several of his friends of Magdalene; Goodman, William Bayley, Robert Ferrar, John Salisbury of Gloucester,

Barnard, and St. Mary's Colleges; were seized and thrown into prison. Wolsey had promised them glory; he gave them a dungeon, hoping in this manner to save the power of the priests, and to repress that awakening of truth and liberty which was spreading from the continent to England.

Under Cardinal's College there was a deep cellar sunk in the earth, in which the butler kept his salt fish. Into this hole these young men, the choice of England, were thrust. The dampness of this cave, the corrupted air they breathed, the horrible smell given out by the fish, seriously affected the prisoners, already weakened by study. Their hearts were bursting with groans, their faith was shaken, and the most mournful scenes followed each other in this foul dungeon. The wretched captives gazed on one another, wept, and prayed. This trial was destined to be a salutary one to them: "Alas!" said Fryth on a subsequent occasion, "I see that besides the word of God, there is indeed a second purgatory.....but it is not that invented by Rome; it is the cross of tribulation to which God has nailed us." At last the prisoners were taken out one by one

and brought before their judges; two only were released. The first was Betts, afterwards chaplain to Anne Boleyn: they had not been able to find any prohibited books in his room, and he pleaded his cause with great talent. The other was Taverner; he had hidden Clark's books under his school-room floor, where they had been discovered; but his love for the arts saved him: "Pshaw! he is only a musician," said the cardinal.

All the rest were condemned. A great fire was kindled at the top of the market-place; a long procession was marshalled, and these unfortunate men were led out, each bearing a fagot. When they came near the fire, they were compelled to throw into it the heretical books that had been found in their rooms, after which they were taken back to their noisome prison.

There seemed to be a barbarous pleasure in treating these young and generous men so vilely. In other countries also, Rome was preparing to stifle in the flames the noblest geniuses of France, Spain, and Italy. Such was the reception letters and the

gospel met with from popery in the sixteenth century.

Every plant of God’s must be beaten by the wind, even at the risk of its being uprooted; if it receives only the gentle rays of the sun, there is reason to fear that it will dry up and wither before it produces fruit. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.

There was to arise one day a real church in England, for the persecution had begun.

We have to contemplate still further trials.

Chapter 3

Persecution at Cambridge

Cambridge, which had produced Latimer, Bilney, Stafford, and Barnes, had at first appeared to occupy the front rank in the English reformation.

Oxford by receiving the crown of persecution seemed now to have outstripped the sister university. And yet Cambridge was to have its share of suffering. The investigation had begun at Oxford on Monday the 5th of February, and on the very same day two of Wolsey's creatures, Dr.

Capon, one of his chaplains, and Gibson, a sergeant-at-arms, notorious for his arrogance, left London for Cambridge. Submission, was the password of popery. "Yes, submission," was responded from every part of Christendom by men of sincere piety and profound understanding; "submission to the legitimate authority against which Roman-catholicism has rebelled." According to their views the traditionalism and pelagianism of the Romish

church had set up the supremacy of fallen reason in opposition to the divine supremacy of the word and of grace. The external and apparent sacrifice of self which Roman-catholicism imposes, — obedience to a confessor or to the pope, arbitrary penance, ascetic practices, and celibacy, — only served to create, and so to strengthen and perpetuate, a delusion as to the egotistic preservation of a sinful personality. When the Reformation proclaimed liberty, so far as regarded ordinances of human invention, it was with the view of bringing man's heart and life into subjection to their real Sovereign. The reign of God was commencing; that of the priests must needs come to an end. No man can serve two masters. Such were the important truths which gradually dawned upon the world, and which it became necessary to extinguish without delay.

On the day after their arrival in Cambridge, on Tuesday the 6th of February, Capon and Gibson went to the convocation house, where several of the doctors were talking together. Their appearance caused some anxiety among the spectators, who

looked upon the strangers with distrust. On a sudden Gibson moved forward, put his hand on Barnes, and arrested him in the presence of his friends. The latter were frightened, and this was what the sergeant wanted. “What!” said they, “the prior of the Augustines, the restorer of letters in Cambridge, arrested by a sergeant!” This was not all. Wolsey’s agents were to seize the books come from Germany, and their owners; Bilney, Latimer, Stafford, Arthur, and their friends, were all to be imprisoned, for they possessed the New Testament. Thirty members of the university were pointed out as suspected; and some miserable wretches, who had been bribed by the inquisitors, offered to show the place in every room where the prohibited books were hidden. But while the necessary preparations were making for this search, Bilney, Latimer, and their colleagues being warned in time, got the books removed; they were taken away not only by the doors but by the windows, even by the roofs, and anxious inquiry was made for sure places in which they could be concealed.

This work was hardly ended, when the vice-

chancellor of the university, the sergeant-at-arms, Wolsey's chaplain, the proctors, and the informers began their rounds. They opened the first room, entered, searched, and found nothing. They passed on to the second, there was nothing. The sergeant was astonished, and grew angry. On reaching the third room, he ran directly to the place that had been pointed out, — still there was nothing. The same thing occurred everywhere; never was inquisitor more mortified. He dared not lay hands on the persons of the evangelical doctors; his orders bore that he was to seize the books and their owners.

But as no books were found, there could be no prisoners. Luckily there was one man (the prior of the Augustines) against whom there were particular charges. The sergeant promised to compensate himself at Barnes expense for his useless labors.

The next day Gibson and Capon set out for London with Barnes. During this mournful journey the prior, in great agitation, at one time determined to brave all England, and at another trembled like a

leaf. At last their journey was ended; the chaplain left his prisoner at Parnell’s house, close by the stocks. Three students (Coverdale, Goodwin, and Field) had followed their master to cheer him with their tender affection.

On Thursday (8th February) the sergeant conducted Barnes to the cardinal’s palace at Westminster; the wretched prior, whose enthusiasm had given way to dejection, waited all day before he could be admitted.

What a day! Will no one come to his assistance? Doctor Gardiner, Wolsey’s secretary, and Fox, his steward, both old friends of Barnes, passed through the gallery in the evening, and went up to the prisoner, who begged them to procure him an audience with the cardinal. When night had come, these officers introduced the prior into the room where their master was sitting, and Barnes, as was customary, fell on his knees before him. “Is this the Doctor Barnes who is accused of heresy?” asked Wolsey, in a haughty tone, of Fox and Gardiner. They replied in the affirmative.

The cardinal then turning to Barnes, who was still kneeling, said to him ironically, and not without reason: “What, master doctor, had you not sufficient scope in the Scriptures to teach the people; but my golden shoes, my poleaxes, my pillars, my golden cushions, my crosses, did so sore offend you, that you must make us a laughing-stock, ridiculum caput, amongst the people? We were jollily that day laughed to scorn. Verily it was a sermon more fit to be preached on a stage than in a pulpit; for at the last you said I wore a pair of red gloves — I should say bloody gloves (quoth you).....Eh! what think you, master doctor?” Barnes, wishing to elude these embarrassing questions, answered vaguely: “I spoke nothing but the truth out of the Scriptures, according to my conscience and according to the old doctors.” He then presented to the cardinal a statement of his teaching.

Wolsey received the papers with a smile: “Oh, ho!” said he as he counted the six sheets, “I perceive you intend to stand to your articles and to

show your learning." "With the grace of God," said Barnes. Wolsey then began to read them, and stopped at the sixth article, which ran thus: "I will never believe that one man may, by the law of God, be bishop of two or three cities, yea, of a whole country, for it is contrary to St. Paul, who saith: I have left thee behind, to set in every city a bishop." Barnes did not quote correctly, for the apostle says: "to ordain elders in every city." (Kai< katasth>shv kata< po>lin presqute>rouv. Titus 1:5.) Wolsey was displeased at this thesis: "Ah! this touches me," he said: "Do you think it wrong (seeing the ordinance of the church) that one bishop should have so many cities underneath him?" — "I know of no ordinance of the church," Barnes replied, "as concerning this thing, but Paul's saying only." Although this controversy interested the cardinal, the personal attack of which he had to complain touched him more keenly. "Good," said Wolsey; and then with a condescension hardly to be expected from so proud a man, he deigned almost to justify himself. "You charge me with displaying a royal pomp; but do you not understand that, being called to represent

his majesty, I must strive by these means to strike terror into the wicked?" — "It is not your pomp or your poleaxes," Barnes courageously answered, "that will save the king's person.....God will save him, who said: Per me reges regnant." Barnes, instead of profiting by the cardinal's kindness to present an humble justification, as Dean Colet had formerly done to Henry VIII dared preach him a second sermon to his face. Wolsey felt the color mount to his cheeks. "Well, gentlemen," said he, turning to Fox and Gardiner, "you hear him! Is this the wise and learned man of whom you spoke to me?" At these words both steward and secretary fell on their knees, saying: "My lord, pardon him for mercy's sake." — "Can you find ten or even six doctors of divinity willing to swear that you are free from heresy?" asked Wolsey. Barnes offered twenty honest men, quite as learned as himself, or even more so. "I must have doctors in divinity, men as old as yourself." — "That is impossible," said the prior. "In that case you must be burnt," continued the cardinal. "Let him be taken to the Tower." Gardiner and Fox offering to become his sureties, Wolsey permitted him to pass the night at

Parnell’s.

“It is no time to think of sleeping,” said Barnes as he entered the house, “we must write.” Those harsh and terrible words, you must be burnt, resounded continually in his ears. He dictated all night to his three young friends a defense of his articles.

The next day he was taken before the chapter, at which Clarke, bishop of Bath, Standish, and other doctors were present. His judges laid before him a long statement, and said to him: “Promise to read this paper in public, without omitting or adding a single word.” It was then read to him. “I would die first,” was his reply. “Will you abjure or be burnt alive?” said his judges; “take your choice.” The alternative was dreadful. Poor Barnes, a prey to the deepest agony, shrank at the thought of the stake; then, suddenly his courage revived, and he exclaimed: “I would rather be burnt than abjure.” Gardiner and Fox did all they could to persuade him. “Listen to reason,” said they craftily: “your articles are true; that is not the question. We

want to know whether by your death you will let error triumph, or whether you would rather remain to defend the truth, when better days may come." They entreated him; they put forward the most plausible motives; from time to time they uttered the terrible words burnt alive! His blood froze in this veins; he knew not what he said or did.....they placed a paper before him — they put a pen in his hand — his head was bewildered, he signed his name with a deep sigh. This unhappy man was destined at a later period to be a faithful martyr of Jesus Christ; but he had not yet learnt to "resist even unto blood." Barnes had fallen.

On the following morning (Sunday, 11th February) a solemn spectacle was preparing at St. Paul's. Before daybreak, all were astir in the prison of the poor prior; and at eight o'clock, the knight-marshal with his tipstaves, and the warden of the Fleet prison with his billmen, conducted Barnes to St.

Paul's, along with four of the Hanse merchants who had first brought to London the New

Testament of Jesus Christ in English. The fifth of these pious merchants held an immense taper in his hands. A persevering search had discovered that it was these men to whom England was indebted for the so much dreaded book; their warehouses were surrounded and their persons arrested. On the top of St. Paul's steps was a platform, and on the platform a throne, and on the throne the cardinal, dressed in scarlet — like a "bloody antichrist," says the chronicler. On his head glittered the hat of which Barnes had spoken so ill; around him were thirty-six bishops, abbots, priors, and all his doctors, dressed in damask and satin; the vast cathedral was full. The bishop of Rochester having gone into a pulpit placed at the top of the steps, Barnes and the merchants, each bearing a fagot, were compelled to kneel and listen to a sermon intended to cure these poor creatures of that taste for insurrection against popery which was beginning to spread in every quarter. The sermon ended, the cardinal mounted his mule, took his station under a magnificent canopy, and rode off. After this Barnes and his five companions walked three times round a fire, lighted before the cross at

the north gate of the cathedral. The dejected prior, with downcast head, dragged himself along, rather than walked.

After the third turn, the prisoners threw their fagots into the flames; some “heretical” books also were flung in; and the bishop of Rochester having given absolution to the six penitents, they were led back to prison to be kept there during the lord cardinal’s pleasure. Barnes could not weep now; the thought of his relapse, and of the effects so guilty an example might produce, had deprived him of all moral energy. In the month of August, he was led out of prison and confined in the Augustine convent.

Barnes was not the only man at Cambridge upon whom the blow had fallen. Since the year 1520, a monk named Richard Bayfield had been an inmate of the abbey of Bury St. Edmunds. His affability delighted every traveler. One day, when engaged as chamberlain in receiving Barnes, who had come to visit Dr. Ruffam, his fellow-student at Louvain, two men entered the convent. They were

pious persons, and of great consideration in London, where they carried on the occupation of brick making, and had risen to be wardens of their guild. Their names were Maxwell and Stacy, men "well grafted in the doctrine of Christ," says the historian, who had led many to the Savior by their conversation and exemplary life. Being accustomed to travel once a year through the counties to visit their brethren, and extend a knowledge of the gospel, they used to lodge, according to the usages of the time, in the convents and abbeys. A conversation soon arose between Barnes, Stacy, and Maxwell, which struck the lay-brother. Barnes, who had observed his attention, gave him, as he was leaving the convent, a New Testament in Latin, and the two brickmakers added a New Testament in English, with The Wicked Mammon, and The Obedience of a Christian Man. The lay-brother ran and hid the books in his cell, and for two years read them constantly. At last he was discovered, and reprimanded; but he boldly confessed his faith.

Upon this the monks threw him into prison, set

him in the stocks, put a gag in his mouth, and cruelly whipped him, to prevent his speaking of grace. The unhappy Bayfield remained nine months in this condition.

When Barnes repeated his visit to Bury at a later period, he did not find the amiable chamberlain at the gates of the abbey. Upon inquiry he learnt his condition, and immediately took steps to procure his deliverance. Dr. Ruffam came to his aid: “Give him to me,” said Barnes, “I will take him to Cambridge.” The prior of the Augustines was at that time held in high esteem; his request was granted, in the hope that he would lead back Bayfield to the doctrines of the church. But the very reverse took place: intercourse with the Cambridge brethren strengthened the young monk’s faith. On a sudden his happiness vanished. Barnes, his friend and benefactor, was carried to London, and the monks of Bury St. Edmunds, alarmed at the noise this affair created, summoned him to return to the abbey. But Bayfield, resolving to submit to their yoke no longer, went to London, and lay concealed at Maxwell and Stacy’s. One

day, having left his hiding-place, he was crossing Lombard street, when he met a priest named Pierson and two other religious of his order, with whom he entered into a conversation which greatly scandalized them. “You must depart forthwith,” said Maxwell and Stacy to him on his return. Bayfield received a small sum of money from them, went on board a ship, and as soon as he reached the continent, hastened to find Tyndale. During this time scenes of a very different nature from those which had taken place at Cambridge, but not less heartrending, were passing at Oxford.

The storm of persecution was raging there with more violence than at Cambridge. Clark and the other confessors of the name of Christ were still confined in their under-ground prison. The air they breathed, the food they took (and they ate nothing but salt fish), the burning thirst this created, the thoughts by which they were agitated, all together combined to crush these noble-hearted men. Their bodies wasted day by day; they wandered like specters up and down their gloomy cellar. Those animated discussions in which the deep questions

then convulsing Christendom were so eloquently debated were at an end; they were like shadow meeting shadow. Their hollow eyes cast a vague and haggard glance on one another, and after gazing for a moment they passed on without speaking. Clark, Sumner, Bayley, and Goodman, consumed by fever, feebly crawled along, leaning against their dungeon walls. The first, who was also the eldest, could not walk without the support of one of his fellow-prisoners. Soon he was quite unable to move, and lay stretched upon the damp floor. The brethren gathered round him, sought to discover in his features whether death was not about to cut short the days of him who had brought many of them to the knowledge of Christ. They repeated to him slowly the words of Scripture, and then knelt down by his side and uttered a fervent prayer.

Clark, feeling his end draw near, asked for the communion. The jailers conveyed his request to their master; the noise of the bolts was soon heard, and a turnkey, stepping into the midst of the disconsolate band, pronounced a cruel no! On

hearing this, Clark looked towards heaven, and exclaimed with a father of the church: Crede et manducasti, Believe and thou hast eaten. He was lost in thought: he contemplated the crucified Son of God; by faith he ate and drank the flesh and blood of Christ, and experienced in his inner life the strengthening action of the Redeemer. Men might refuse him the host, but Jesus had given him his body; and from that hour he felt strengthened by a living union with the King of heaven.

Not alone did Clark descend into the shadowy valley: Sumner, Bayley, and Goodman were sinking rapidly. Death, the gloomy inhabitant of this foul prison, had taken possession of these four friends. Their brethren addressed fresh solicitations to the cardinal, at that time closely occupied in negotiations with France, Rome, and Venice. He found means, however, to give a moment to the Oxford martyrs; and just as these Christians were praying over their four dying companions, the commissioner came and informed them, that “his lordship, of his great goodness, permitted the sick persons to be removed to their own chambers.”

Litters were brought, on which the dying men were placed and carried to their rooms; the doors were closed again upon those whose lives this frightful dungeon had not yet attacked.

It was the middle of August. The wretched men who had passed six months in the cellar were transported in vain to their chambers and their beds; several members of the university ineffectually tried by their cares and their tender charity to recall them to life. It was too late. The severities of popery had killed these noble witnesses. The approach of death soon betrayed itself; their blood grew cold, their limbs stiff, and their bedimmed eyes sought only Jesus Christ, their everlasting hope. Clark, Sumner, and Bayley died in the same week. Goodman followed close upon them. This unexpected catastrophe softened Wolsey. He was cruel only as far as his interest and the safety of the church required. He feared that the death of so many young men would raise public opinion against him, or that these catastrophes would damage his college; perhaps even some sentiment of humanity may have touched his heart.

“Set the rest at liberty,” he wrote to his agents, “but upon condition that they do not go above ten miles from Oxford.” The university beheld these young men issue from their living tomb pale, wasted, weak, and with faltering steps. At that time they were not men of mark; it was their youth that touched the spectators’ hearts; but in after-years they all occupied an important place in the church. They were Cox, who became bishop of Ely, and tutor to Edward the Prince Royal; Drumm, who under Cranmer became one of the six preachers at Canterbury; Udal, afterwards master of Westminster and Eton schools; Salisbury, dean of Norwich, and then bishop of Sodor and Man, who in all his wealth and greatness often recalled his frightful prison at Oxford as a title to glory; Ferrar, afterwards Cranmer’s chaplain, bishop of St. David’s, and a martyr even unto death, after an interval of thirty years; Fryth, Tyndale’s friend, to whom this deliverance proved only a delay; and several others. When they came forth from their terrible dungeon, their friends ran up to them, supported their faltering steps, and embraced them amidst floods of tears. Fryth quitted the university

not long after and went to Flanders. Thus was the tempest stayed which had so fearfully ravaged Oxford. But the calm was of no long duration; an unexpected circumstance became perilous to the cause of the Reformation.

Chapter 4

Luther’s Letter to the King

Henry was still under the impression of the famous Supplication of the Beggars, when Luther’s interference increased his anger. The letter which, at the advice of Christiern, king of Denmark, this reformer had written to him in September 1525, had miscarried. The Wittenberg doctor hearing nothing of it, had boldly printed it, and sent a copy to the king. “I am informed,” said Luther, “that your Majesty is beginning to favor the gospel, and to be disgusted with the perverse race that fights against it in your noble kingdom.....It is true that, according to Scripture, the kings of the earth take counsel together against the Lord, and we cannot, consequently, expect to see them favorable to the truth. How fervently do I wish that this miracle may be accomplished in the person of your Majesty.” We may imagine Henry’s wrath as he read this letter. “What!” said he, “does this apostate monk dare print a letter addressed to us, without having even sent it, or at the least without knowing

if we have ever received it?.....And as if that were not enough, he insinuates that we are among his partisans.....He wins over also one or two wretches, born in our kingdom, and engages them to translate the New Testament into English, adding thereto certain prefaces and poisonous glosses." Thus spoke Henry. The idea that his name should be associated with that of the Wittenberg monk called all the blood into his face. He will reply right royally to such unblushing impudence. He summoned Wolsey forthwith.

"Here!" said he, pointing to a passage concerning the prelate, "here!" read what is said of you!" And then he read aloud: "Illud monstrum et publicum odium Dei et hominum, cardinalis Eboracensis, pestis illa regni tui. You see, my lord, you are a monster, an object of hatred both to God and man, the scourge of my kingdom!" The king had hitherto allowed the bishops to do as they pleased, and observed a sort of neutrality. He now determined to lay it aside and begin a crusade against the gospel of Jesus Christ, but he must first answer this impertinent letter. He consulted Sir

Thomas More, shut himself in his closet, and dictated to his secretary a reply to the reformer: “You are ashamed of the book you have written against me,” he said, “I would counsel you to be ashamed of all that you have written. They are full of disgusting errors and frantic heresies; and are supported by the most audacious obstinacy. Your venomous pen mocks the church, insults the fathers, abuses the saints, despises the apostles, dishonors the holy virgin, and blasphemes God, by making him the author of evil.....And after all that, you claim to be an author whose like does not exist in the world.” “You offer to publish a book in my praise.....I thank you!.....You will praise me most by abusing me; you will dishonor me beyond measure if you praise me. I say with Seneca: Tam turpe tibi sit laudari a turpibus, quam si lauderis ob turpia.” This letter, written by the king of the English to the king of the heretics, was immediately circulated throughout England bound up with Luther’s epistle. Henry, by publishing it, put his subjects on their guard against the unfaithful translations of the New Testament, which were besides about to be burnt everywhere.

“The grapes seem beautiful,” he said, “but beware how you wet your lips with the wine made from them, for the adversary hath mingled poison with it.” Luther, agitated by this rude lesson, tried to excuse himself. “I said to myself, There are twelve hours in the day. Who knows? perhaps I may find one lucky hour to gain the king of England. I therefore laid my humble epistle at his feet; but alas! the swine have torn it. I am willing to be silent.....but as regards my doctrine, I cannot impose silence on it. It must cry aloud, it must bite. If any king imagines he can make me retract my faith, he is a dreamer. So long as one drop of blood remains in my body, I shall say NO. Emperors, kings, the devil, and even the whole universe, cannot frighten me when faith is concerned. I claim to be proud, very proud, exceedingly proud. If my doctrine had no other enemies than the king of England, Duke George, the pope and their allies, all these soapbubbles..... one little prayer would long ago have worsted them all. Where are Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas now? Where are Nero, Domitian, and Maximilian? Where are Arius, Pelagius, and Manes? — Where are

they?.....Where all our scribes and all our tyrants will soon be. — But Christ? Christ is the same always.

“For a thousand years the Holy Scriptures have not shone in the world with so much brightness as now. I wait in peace for my last hour; I have done what I could. O princes, my hands are clean from your blood; it will fall on your own heads.” Bowing before the supreme royalty of Jesus Christ, Luther spoke thus boldly to King Henry, who contested the rights of the word of God.

A letter written against the reformer was not enough for the bishops.

Profiting by the wound Luther had inflicted on Henry’s self-esteem, they urged him to put down this revolt of the human understanding, which threatened (as they averred) both the popedom and the monarchy. They commenced the persecution. Latimer was summoned before Wolsey, but his learning and presence of mind procured his dismissal. Bilney also, who had been ordered to

London, received an injunction not to preach Luther's doctrines. "I will not preach Luther's doctrines, if there are any peculiar to him," he said; "but I can and I must preach the doctrine of Jesus Christ, although Luther should preach it too." And finally Garret, led into the presence of his judges, was seized with terror, and fell before the cruel threats of the bishop. When restored to liberty, he fled from place to place, endeavoring to hide his sorrow, and to escape from the despotism of the priests, awaiting the moment when he should give his life for Jesus Christ.

The adversaries of the Reformation were not yet satisfied. The New Testament continued to circulate, and depots were formed in several convents. Barnes, a prisoner in the Augustine monastery in London, had regained his courage, and loved his Bible more and more. One day about the end of September, as three or four friends were reading in his chamber, two simple peasants, John Tyball and Thomas Hilles, natives of Bumpstead in Essex, came in. "How did you come to a knowledge of the truth?" asked Barnes. They drew

from their pockets some old volumes containing the Gospels, and a few of the Epistles in English. Barnes returned them with a smile. “They are nothing,” he told them, “in comparison with the new edition of the New Testament,” a copy of which the two peasants bought for three shillings and twopence. “Hide it carefully,” said Barnes. When this came to the ears of the clergy, Barnes was removed to Northampton to be burnt at the stake; but he managed to escape; his friends reported that he was drowned; and while strict search was making for him during a whole week along the seacoast, he secretly went on board a ship, and was carried to Germany. “The cardinal will catch him even now,” said the bishop of London, “whatever amount of money it may cost him.” When Barnes was told of this, he remarked: “I am a poor simple wretch, not worth the tenth penny they will give for me.

Besides, if they burn me, what will they gain by it?.....The sun and the moon, fire and water, the stars and the elements — yea, and also stones shall defend this cause against them, rather than the truth

should perish.” Faith had returned to Barnes’s feeble heart.

His escape added fuel to the wrath of the clergy. They proclaimed, throughout the length and breadth of England, that the Holy Scriptures contained an infectious poison, and ordered a general search after the word of God. On the 24th of October 1526, the bishop of London enjoined on his archdeacons to seize all translations of the New Testament in English with or without glosses; and, a few days later, the archbishop of Canterbury issued a mandate against all the books which should contain “any particle of the New Testament.” The primate remembered that a spark was sufficient to kindle a large fire.

On hearing of this order, William Roy, a sarcastic writer, published a violent satire, in which figured Judas (Standish), Pilate (Wolsey), and Caiaphas (Tonstall). The author exclaimed with energy: God, of his goodness, grudged not to die, Man to deliver from deadly damnation; Whose will is, that we should know perfectly What he here

hath done for our salvation.

O cruel Caiaphas! full of crafty conspiration, How durst thou give them false judgment To burn God’s word — the Holy Testament. The efforts of Caiaphas and his colleagues were indeed useless: the priests were undertaking a work beyond their strength. If by some terrible revolution all social forms should be destroyed in the world, the living church of the elect, a divine institution in the midst of human institutions, would still exist by the power of God, like a rock in the midst of the tempest, and would transmit to future generations the seeds of Christian life and civilization. It is the same with the word, the creative principle of the church. It cannot perish here below. The priests of England had something to learn on this matter.

While the agents of the clergy were carrying out the archiepiscopal mandate, and a merciless search was making everywhere for the New Testaments from Worms, a new edition was discovered, fresh from the press, of a smaller and more portable, and consequently more dangerous

size. It was printed by Christopher Eyndhoven of Antwerp, who had consigned it to his correspondents in London. The annoyance of the priests was extreme, and Hackett, the agent of Henry VIII in the Low Countries, immediately received orders to get this man punished. “We cannot deliver judgment without inquiry into the matter,” said the lords of Antwerp; “we will therefore have the book translated into Flemish.” — “God forbid,” said Hackett in alarm, “What! would you also on your side of the ocean translate this book into the language of the people?” — “Well then,” said one of the judges, less conscientious than his colleagues, “let the king of England send us a copy of each of the books he had burnt, and we will burn them likewise.” Hackett wrote to Wolsey for them, and as soon as they arrived the court met again. Eyndhoven’s counsel called upon the prosecutor to point out the heresies contained in the volume. The margrave (an officer of the imperial government) shrank from the task, and said to Hackett, “I give up the business!” The charge against Eyndhoven was dismissed.

Thus did the Reformation awaken in Europe the slumbering spirit of law and liberty. By enfranchising thought from the yoke of popery, it prepared the way for other enfranchisements; and by restoring the authority of the word of God, it brought back the reign of the law among nations long the prey of turbulent passions and arbitrary power. Then, as at all times, religious society forestalled civil society, and gave it those two great principles of order and liberty, which popery compromises or annuls. It was not in vain that the magistrates of a Flemish city, enlightened by the first dawn of the Reformation, set so noble an example; the English, who were very numerous in the Hanse Towns, thus learned once more the value of that civil and religious liberty which is the timehonored right of England, and of which they were in after-years to give other nations the so much needed lessons.

“Well then,” said Hackett, who was annoyed at their setting the law above his master’s will, “I will go and buy all these books, and send them to the cardinal, that he may burn them.” With these words

he left the court. But his anger evaporating, he set off for Malines to complain to the regent and her council of the Antwerp decision. “What!” said he, “you punish those who circulate false money, and you will not punish still more severely the man who coins it? — in this case, he is the printer.” “But that is just the point in dispute,” they replied; “we are not sure the money is false.” — “How can it be otherwise,” answered Henry’s agent, “since the bishops of England have declared it so?” The imperial government, which was not very favorably disposed towards England, ratified Eyndhoven’s acquittal, but permitted Hackett to burn all the copies of the New Testament he could seize. He hastened to profit by this concession, and began hunting after the Holy Scriptures, while the priests eagerly came to his assistance. In their view, as well as in that of their English colleagues, the supreme decision in matter of faith rested not with the word of God but with the pope; and the best means of securing this privilege to the pontiff was to reduce the Bible to ashes.

Notwithstanding these trials, the year 1526 was

a memorable one for England. The English New Testament had been circulated from the shores of the Channel to the borders of Scotland, and the Reformation had begun in that island by the word of God. The revival of the sixteenth century was in no country less than in England the emanation of a royal mandate. But God, who had disseminated the Scriptures over Britain, in defiance of the rulers of the nation, was about to make use of their passions to remove the difficulties which opposed the final triumph of his plans. We here enter upon a new phasis in the history of the Reformation; and having studied the work of God in the faith of the little ones, we proceed to contemplate the work of man in the intrigues of the great ones of the earth.

Chapter 5

Wolsey desires to be revenged

Wolsey, mortified at not being able to obtain the pontifical throne, to which he had so ardently aspired, and being especially irritated by the illwill of Charles V, meditated a plan which, entirely unsuspected by him, was to lead to the enfranchisement of England from the papal yoke. “They laugh at me, and thrust me into the second rank,” he had exclaimed. “So be it! I will create such a confusion in the world as has not been seen for ages.....I will do it, even should England be swallowed up in the tempest!” Desirous of exciting imperishable hatred between Henry VIII and Charles V, he had undertaken to break the marriage which Henry VII and Ferdinand the Catholic had planned to unite for ever their families and their crowns. His hatred of Charles was not his only motive. Catherine had reproached him for his dissolute life, and he had sworn to be revenged.

There can be no doubt about Wolsey's share in the matter. "The first terms of the divorce were put forward by me," he told the French ambassador. "I did it," he added, "to cause a lasting separation between the houses of England and Burgundy." The best informed writers of the sixteenth century, men of the most opposite parties, Pole, Polydore Virgil, Tyndale, Meteren, Pallavicini, Sanders, and Roper, More's son-in-law, all agree in pointing to Wolsey as the instigator of that divorce, which has become so famous. He desired to go still farther, and after inducing the king to put away his queen, he hoped to prevail on the pope to depose the emperor. It was not his passion for Anne Boleyn, as so many of the Romish fabulists have repeated, but the passion of a cardinal for the triple crown which gave the signal of England's emancipation. Offended pride is one of the most active principles of human nature.

Wolsey's design was a strange one, and difficult of execution, but not impossible. Henry was living apparently on the best terms with

Catherine; on more than one occasion Erasmus had spoken of the royal family of England as the pattern of the domestic virtues. But the most ardent of Henry's desires was not satisfied; he had no son; those whom the queen had borne him had died in their infancy, and Mary alone survived. The deaths of these little children, at all times so heartrending, were particularly so in the palace of Greenwich. It appeared to Catherine that the shade of the last Plantagenet, immolated on her marriage-altar, came forth to seize one after another the heirs she gave to the throne of England, and to carry them away to his tomb. The queen shed tears almost unceasingly, and implored the divine mercy, while the king cursed his unhappy fate. The people seemed to share in the royal sorrow; and men of learning and piety (Longland was among their number) declared against the validity of the marriage. They said that "the papal dispensations had no force when in opposition to the law of God." Yet hitherto Henry had rejected every idea of a divorce. The times had changed since 1509. The king had loved Catherine; her reserve, mildness, and dignity, had charmed him. Greedy of

pleasure and applause, he was delighted to see his wife content to be the quiet witness of his joys and of his triumphs. But gradually the queen had grown older, her Spanish gravity had increased, her devout practices were multiplied, and her infirmities, become more frequent, had left the king no hope of having a son. From that hour, even while continuing to praise her virtues, Henry grew cold towards her person, and his love by degrees changed into repugnance. And then he thought that the death of his children might be a sign of God's anger. This idea had taken hold of him, and induced him to occupy apartments separate from the queen's. Wolsey judged the moment favorable for beginning the attack. It was in the latter months of 1526, when calling Longland, the king's confessor, to him, and concealing his principal motive, he said: "You know his majesty's anguish. The stability of his crown and his everlasting salvation seem to be compromised alike. To whom can I unbosom myself, if not to you, who must know the inmost secrets of his soul?" The two bishops resolved to awaken Henry to the perils incurred by his union with Catherine; but Longland

insisted that Wolsey should take the first steps.

The cardinal waited upon the king, and reminded him of his scruples before the betrothal; he exaggerated those entertained by the nation, and speaking with unusual warmth, he entreated the king to remain no longer in such danger: “The holiness of your life and the legitimacy of your succession are at stake.” — “My good father,” said Henry, “you would do well to consider the weight of the stone that you have undertaken to move.

The queen is a woman of such exemplary life that I have no motive for separating from her.” The cardinal did not consider himself beaten; three days later he appeared before the king accompanied by the bishop of Lincoln. “Most mighty prince,” said the confessor, who felt bold enough to speak after the cardinal, “you cannot, like Herod, have your brother’s wife. I exhort and conjure you, as having the care of your soul, to submit the matter to competent judges.” Henry consented, and perhaps not unwillingly.

It was not enough for Wolsey to separate Henry from the emperor; he must, for greater security, unite him to Francis I. The king of England shall repudiate the aunt of Charles V, and then marry the sister of the French king. Proud of the success he had obtained in the first part of his plan, Wolsey entered upon the second. “There is a princess,” he told the king, “whose birth, graces, and talents charm all Europe. Margaret of Valois, sister of King Francis, is superior to all of her sex, and no one is worthier of your alliance.” Henry made answer that it was a serious matter, requiring deliberate examination. Wolsey, however, placed in the king’s hands a portrait of Margaret, and it has been imagined that he even privily caused her sentiments to be sounded. Be that as it may, the sister of Francis I having learnt that she was pointed at as the future queen of England, rebelled at the idea of taking from an innocent woman a crown she had worn so nobly. “The French king’s sister knows too much of Christ to consent unto such wickedness,” said Tyndale. Margaret of Valois replied: “Let me hear no more of a marriage that can be effected only at the expense of

Catherine of Aragon’s happiness and life.” The woman who was destined in future years to fill the throne of England was then residing at Margaret’s court. Shortly after this, on the 24th of January 1527, the sister of Francis I married Henry d’Albret, king of Navarre.

Henry VIII, desirous of information with regard to his favorite’s suggestion, commissioned Fox, his almoner, Pace, dean of St. Paul’s, and Wakefield, professor of Hebrew at Oxford, to study the passages of Leviticus and Deuteronomy which related to marriage with a brother’s wife. Wakefield, who had no wish to commit himself, asked whether Henry was for or against the divorce. Pace replied to this servile hebraist that the king wanted nothing but the truth.

But who would take the first public step in an undertaking so hazardous?

Everyone shrank back; the terrible emperor alarmed them all. It was a French bishop that hazarded the step; bishops meet us at every turn in

this affair of the divorce, with which bishops have so violently reproached the Reformation. Henry, desirous of excusing Wolsey, pretended afterwards that the objections of the French prelate had preceded those of Longland and the cardinal. In February 1527, Francis I had sent an embassy to London, at the head of which was Gabriel de Grammont, bishop of Tarbes, with the intention to procure the hand of Mary of England. Henry's ministers having inquired whether the engagement of Francis with the queen-dowager of Portugal did not oppose the commission with which the French bishop was charged, the latter answered: "I will ask you in turn what has been done to remove the impediments which opposed the marriage of which the Princess Mary is issue." They laid before the ambassador the dispensation of Julius II, which he returned, saying, that the bull was not sufficient, seeing that such a marriage was forbidden jure divino; and he added: "Have you English a different gospel from ours?" The king, when he heard these words (as he informs us himself), was filled with fear and horror. Three of the most respected bishops of Christendom united to accuse

him of incest! He began to speak of it to certain individuals: “The scruples of my conscience have been terribly increased (he said) since the bishop spoke of this matter before my council in exceedingly plain words.” There is no reason to believe that these terrible troubles of which the king speaks were a mere invention on his part. A disputed succession might again plunge England into civil war.

Even if no pretenders should spring up, might they not see a rival house, a French prince for instance, wedded to Henry’s daughter, reigning over England? The king, in his anxiety, had recourse to his favorite author, Thomas Aquinas, and this angel of the schools declared his marriage unlawful. Henry next opened the Bible, and found this threat against the man who took his brother’s wife: “He shall be childless!” The denunciation increased his trouble, for he had no heir. In the midst of this darkness a new perspective opened before him. His conscience might be unbound; his desire to have a younger wife might be gratified; he might have a son!.....The king resolved to lay the

matter before a commission of lawyers, and this commission soon wrote volumes. During all this time Catherine, suspecting no evil, was occupied in her devotions. Her heart, bruised by the death of her children and by the king's coldness, sought consolation in prayer both privately and in the royal chapel. She would rise at midnight and kneel down upon the cold stones, and never missed any of the canonical services. But one day (probably in May or June 1527) some officious person informed her of the rumors circulating in the city and at court. Bursting with anger and alarm, and all in tears, she hastened to the king, and addressed him with the bitterest complaints. Henry was content to calm her by vague assurances; but the unfeeling Wolsey, troubling himself still less than his master about Catherine's emotion, called it, with a smile, "a short tragedy." The offended wife lost no time: it was necessary that the emperor should be informed promptly, surely, and accurately of this unprecedented insult.

A letter would be insufficient, even were it not intercepted. Catherine therefore determined to send

her servant Francis Philip, a Spaniard, to her nephew; and to conceal the object of his journey, they proceeded, after the tragedy, to play a comedy in the Spanish style. “My mother is sick and desires to see me,” said Philip. Catherine begged the king to refuse her servant’s prayer; and Henry, divining the stratagem, resolved to employ trick against trick. “Philip’s request is very proper,” he made answer; and Catherine, from regard to her husband, consented to his departure.

Henry meantime had given orders that, “notwithstanding any safeconduct, the said Philip should be arrested and detained at Calais, in such a manner, however, that no one should know whence the stoppage proceeded.” It was to no purpose that the queen indulged in a culpable dissimulation; a poisoned arrow had pierced her heart, and her words, her manners, her complaints, her tears, the numerous messages she sent, now to one and now to another, betrayed the secret which the king wished still to conceal.

Her friends blamed her for this publicity; men

wondered what Charles would say when he heard of his aunt’s distress; they feared that peace would be broken; but Catherine, whose heart was “rent in twain,” was not to be moved by diplomatic considerations. Her sorrow did not check Henry; with the two motives which made him eager for a divorce — the scruples of his conscience and the desire of an heir — was now combined a third still more forcible. A woman was about to play an important part in the destinies of England.

Chapter 6

Anne Boleyn appointed Maid of Honor to Catherine

Anne Boleyn, who had been placed by her father at the court of France, had returned to England with Sir Thomas, then ambassador at Paris, at the time that an English army made an incursion into Normandy (1522). It would appear that she was presented to the queen about this period, and appointed one of Catherine’s maids of honor. The following year was a memorable one to her from her first sorrow.

Among the young noblemen in the cardinal’s household was Lord Percy, eldest son of the Earl of Northumberland. While Wolsey was closeted with the king, Percy was accustomed to resort to the queen’s apartments, where he passed the time among her ladies. He soon felt a sincere passion for Anne, and the young maid of honor, who had been cold to the addresses of the gentlemen at the court

of Francis, replied to the affections of the heir of Northumberland. The two young people already indulged in daydreams of a quiet, elegant, and happy life in their noble castles of the north; but such dreams were fated to be of short duration.

Wolsey hated the Norfolks, and consequently the Boleyns. It was to counterbalance their influence that he had been first introduced at court. He became angry, therefore, when he saw one of his household suing for the hand of the daughter and niece of his enemies. Besides, certain partisans of the clergy accused Anne of being friendly to the Reformation. ....It is generally believed that even at this period Wolsey had discovered Henry's eyes turned complacently on the young maid of honor, and that this induced him to thwart Percy's love; but this seems improbable. Of all the women in England, Anne was the one whose influence Wolsey would have had most cause to fear, and he really did fear it; and he would have been but too happy to see her married to Percy. It has been asserted that Henry prevailed on the cardinal to thwart the affection of the two young people; but in

that case did he confide to Wolsey the real motive of his opposition? Did the latter entertain criminal intentions? Did he undertake to yield up to dishonor the daughter and niece of his political adversaries?

This would be horrible, but it is possible, and may even be deduced from Cavendish's narrative; yet we will hope that it was not so. If it were, Anne's virtue successfully baffled the infamous plot.

But be that as it may, one day when Percy was in attendance upon the cardinal, the latter rudely addressed him: "I marvel at your folly, that you should attempt to contract yourself with that girl without your father's or the king's consent. I command you to break with her." Percy burst into tears, and besought the cardinal to plead his cause. "I charge you to resort no more into her company," was Wolsey's cold reply, after which he rose up and left the room. Anne received an order at the same time to leave the court. Proud and bold, and ascribing her misfortune to Wolsey's hatred, she

exclaimed as she quitted the palace, “I will be revenged for this insult.” But she had scarcely taken up her abode in the gothic halls of Hever Castle, when news still more distressing overwhelmed her. Percy was married to Lady Mary Talbot. She wept long and bitterly, and vowed against the young nobleman who had deserted her a contempt equal to her hatred of the cardinal. Anne was reserved for a more illustrious, but more unhappy fate.

This event necessarily rendered her residence in this country far from attractive to Anne Boleyn. “She did not stay long in England,” says Burnet, following Camden: “she served Queen Claude of France till her death, and after that she was taken into service by King Francis’ sister.” Anne Boleyn, lady-inwaiting to Margaret of Valois, was consoled at last.

She indulged in gaieties with all the vivacity of her age, and glittered among the youngest and the fairest at all the court festivities.

In Margaret’s house she met the most enlightened men of the age, and her understanding and heart were developed simultaneously with the graces.

She began to read, without thoroughly understanding it, the holy book in which her mistress (as Brantome informs us) found consolation and repose, and to direct a few light and passing thoughts to that “mild Emanuel,” to whom Margaret addressed such beautiful verses.

At last Anne returned definitively to England. It had been asserted that the queen-regent, fearing that Henry after the battle of Pavia would invade France, had sent Anne to London to dissuade him from it. But it was a stronger voice than hers which stopped the king of England. “Remain quiet,” wrote Charles V to him; “I have the stag in my net, and we have only to think of sharing the spoils.” Margaret of Valois having married the king of Navarre at the end of January 1527, and quitted Paris and her brother’s court, it is supposed that Sir Thomas Boleyn, who was unwilling that his

daughter should take up her abode in the Pyrenees, recalled her to England probably in the winter or spring of the same year. “There is not the least evidence that she came to it earlier,” says a modern author. She appeared once more at court, and the niece of the duke of Norfolk soon eclipsed her companions, “by her excellent gesture and behavior,” as we learn from a contemporary unfriendly to the Boleyns. All the court was struck by the regularity of her features, the expression of her eyes, the gentleness of her manners, and the majesty of her carriage. “She was a beautiful creature,” says an old historian, “well proportioned, courteous, amiable, very agreeable, and a skillful musician.” While entertainments were following close upon each other at the court of Henry VIII, a strange rumor filled all England with surprise. It was reported that the imperialist soldiers had taken Rome by assault, and that some Englishmen were among those who had mounted the breach. One Thomas Cromwell was specially named — the man who nearly twenty years before had obtained certain indulgences from Julius II, by offering him some jars of English confectionary. This soldier

carried with him the New Testament of Erasmus, and he is said to have learnt it by heart during the campaign. Being gay, brave, and intelligent, he entertained, from reading the gospel and seeing Rome, a great aversion for the policy, superstitions, and disorders of the popedom. The day of the 7th May 1527 decided the tenor of his life. To destroy the papal power became his dominant idea. On returning to England he entered the cardinal's household.

However, the captive pope and cardinals wrote letters "filled with tears and groans." Full of zeal for the papacy, Wolsey ordered a public fast.

"The emperor will never release the pope, unless he be compelled," he told the king. "Sir, God has made you defender of the faith; save the church and its head!" — "My lord," answered the king with a smile, "I assure you that this war between the emperor and the pope is not for the faith, but for temporal possessions and dominions." But Wolsey would not be discouraged; and, on the 3rd of July, he passed through the streets of

London, riding a richly caparisoned mule, and resting his feet on gilt stirrups, while twelve hundred gentlemen accompanied him on horseback. He was going to entreat Francis to aid his master in saving Clement VII. He had found no difficulty in prevailing upon Henry; Charles talked of carrying the pope to Spain, and of permanently establishing the apostolic see in that country. Now, how could they obtain the divorce from a Spanish pope? During the procession, Wolsey seemed oppressed with grief, and even shed tears; but he soon raised his head and exclaimed: “My heart is inflamed, and I wish that it may be said of the pope per secula sempiterna, “Rediit Henrici octavi virtute serena.” Desirous of forming a close union between France and England for the accomplishment of his designs, he had cast his eyes on the Princess Renee, daughter of Louis XII, and sister-in-law to Francis I, as the future wife of Henry VIII. Accordingly the treaty of alliance between the two crowns having been signed at Amiens on the 18th of August (1527), Francis, with his mother and the cardinal, proceeded to Compiegne, and there Wolsey, styling Charles the

most obstinate defender of Lutheranism, promising “perpetual conjunction on the one hand [between France and England], and perpetual disjunction on the other” [between England and Germany], demanded Renee’s hand for King Henry. Staffileo, dean of Rota, affirmed that the pope had been able to permit the marriage between Henry and Catherine only by an error of the keys of St. Peter. This avowal, so remarkable on the part of the dean of one of the first jurisdictions of Rome, induced Francis’ mother to listen favorably to the cardinal’s demand. But whether this proposal was displeasing to Renee, who was destined on a future day to profess the pure faith of the Gospel with greater earnestness than Margaret of Valois, or whether Francis was not over-anxious for a union that would have given Henry rights over the duchy of Brittany, she was promised to the son of the Duke of Ferrara. It was a check to the cardinal; but it was his ill fortune to receive one still more severe on his return to England.

The daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, (who had been created Viscount Rochford in 1525,) was

constantly at court, “where she flourished in great estimation and favor,” says Cavendish, “having always a private indignation against the cardinal for breaking off the pre-contract made between Lord Percy and her,” little suspecting that Henry had had any share in it. Her beauty, her graceful carriage, her black hair, oval face, and bright eyes, her sweet voice in singing, her skill and dignity in the dance, her desire to please, which was not entirely devoid of coquetry, her sprightliness, the readiness of her repartees, and above all the amiability of her character, won every heart. She brought to Greenwich and to London the polished manners of the court of Francis I. Every day (it was reported) she invented a new style of dress, and set the fashion in England. But to all these qualities, she added modesty, and even imposed it on others by her example. The ladies of the court, who had hitherto adopted a different fashion (says her greatest enemy), covered the neck and bosom as she did; and the malicious, unable to appreciate Anne’s motives, ascribed this modesty on the young lady’s part to a desire to hide a secret deformity.

Numerous admirers once more crowded round Anne Boleyn, and among others, one of the most illustrious noblemen and poets of England, Sir Thomas Wyatt, a follower of Wickliffe. He, however, was not the man destined to replace the son of the Percies.

Henry, absorbed in anxiety about his divorce from Catherine, had become low-spirited and melancholy. The laughter, songs, repartees, and beauty of Anne Boleyn struck and captivated him, and his eyes were soon fixed complacently on the young maid of honor. Catherine was more than forty years old, and it was hardly to be expected that so susceptible a man as Henry would have made, as Job says, a covenant with his eyes not to think upon a maid. Desirous of showing his admiration, he presented Anne, according to usage, with a costly jewel; she accepted and wore it, and continued to dance, laugh, and chatter as before, without attaching particular importance to the royal present. Henry’s attentions became more continuous; and he took advantage of a moment

when he found Anne alone to declare his sentiments. With mingled emotion and alarm, the young lady fell trembling at the king's feet, and exclaimed, bursting into tears: "I think, most noble and worthy king, your majesty speaks these words in mirth to prove me.....I will rather lose my life than my virtue." Henry gracefully replied, that he should at least continue to hope. But Anne, rising up, proudly made answer: "I understand not, most mighty king, how you should retain any such hope; your wife I cannot be, both in respect of mine own unworthiness, and also because you have a queen already. Your mistress I will not be." Anne kept her word. She continued to show the king, even after this interview, all the respect that was due to him; but on several occasions she proudly, violently even, repelled his advances. In this age of gallantry, we find her resisting for nearly six years all the seductions Henry scattered round her. Such an example is not often met with in the history of courts. The books she had read in Margaret's palace gave her a secret strength. All looked upon her with respect; and even the queen treated her with politeness. Catherine showed, however, that

she had remarked the king’s preference. One day, as she was playing at cards with her maid of honor, while Henry was in the room, Anne frequently holding the king, she said: “My Lady Anne, you have good hap to stop ever at a king; but you are not like others, you will have all or none.” Anne blushed: from that moment Henry’s attentions acquired more importance; she resolved to withdraw from them, and quitted the court with Lady Rochford.

The king, who was not accustomed to resistance, was extremely grieved; and having learnt that Anne would not return to the court either with or without her mother, sent a courier to Hever with a message and a letter for her. If we recollect the manners of the age of Henry VIII, and how far the men, in their relations with the gentler sex, were strangers to that reserve which society now imposes upon them, we cannot but be struck by the king’s respectful tone. He writes thus in French: — “As the time seems to me very long since I heard from you or concerning your health, the great love I have for you has constrained me to send this

bearer to be better informed both of your health and pleasure; particularly, because since my last parting with you, I have been told that you have entirely changed the mind in which I left you, and that you neither mean to come to court with your mother nor any other way; which report, if true, I cannot enough marvel at, being persuaded in my own mind that I have never committed any offense against you; and it seems hard, in return for the great love I bear you, to be kept at a distance from the person and presence of the woman in the world that I value the most. And if you love me with as much affection as I hope you do, I am sure the distance of our two persons would be equally irksome to you, though this does not belong so much to the mistress as to the servant.

“Consider well, my mistress, how greatly your absence afflicts me.

I hope it is not your will that it should be so; but if I heard for certain that you yourself desired it, I could but mourn my illfortune, and strive by degrees to abate of my great folly.

“And so for lack of time I make an end of this rude letter, beseeching you to give the bearer credence in all he will tell you from me. Written by the hand of your entire servant, “H.R.” The word servant (serviteur) employed in this letter explains the sense in which Henry used the word mistress. In the language of chivalry, the latter term expressed a person to whom the lover had surrendered his heart.

It would seem that Anne’s reply to this letter was the same she had made to the king from the very first; and Cardinal Pole mentions more than once her obstinate refusal of an adulterous love. At last Henry understood Anne’s virtue; but he was far from abating of his great folly, as he had promised. That tyrannical selfishness, which the prince often displayed in his life, was shown particularly in his amours. Seeing that he could not attain his end by illegitimate means, he determined to break, as quickly as possible, the bonds which united him to the queen. Anne’s virtue was the third cause of Henry’s divorce.

His resolution being once taken, it must needs be carried out. Henry having succeeded in bringing Anne back to court, procured a private interview with her, offered her his crown, and seizing her hand, took off one of her rings. But Anne, who would not be the king's mistress, refused also to be his wife. The glory of a crown could not dazzle her, said Wyatt, and two motives in particular counterbalanced all the prospects of greatness which were set before her eyes. The first was her respect for the queen: "How could I injure a princess of such great virtue?" she exclaimed. The second was the fear that a union with "one that was her lord and her king," would not give her that freedom of heart and that liberty which she would enjoy by marrying a man of the same rank with herself. Yet the noblemen and ladies of Henry's court whispered to one another that Anne would certainly become queen of England. Some were tormented by jealousy; others, her friends, were delighted at the prospect of a rapid advancement. Wolsey's enemies in particular were charmed at the thought of ruining the favorite. It was at the

very moment when all these emotions were so variously agitating the court that the cardinal, returning from his embassy to Francis, reappeared in London, where an unexpected blow struck him.

Wolsey was expressing his grief to Henry at having failed in obtaining either Margaret or Renee for him, when the king interrupted him: “Console yourself, I shall marry Anne Boleyn.” The cardinal remained speechless for a moment. What would become of him, if the king placed the crown of England on the head of the daughter and niece of his greatest enemies?

What would become of the church, if a second Anne of Bohemia should ascend the throne? Wolsey threw himself at the feet of his master, and entreated him to renounce so fatal a project. It was then no doubt that he remained (as he afterwards said) an hour or two on his knees before the king in his privy chamber, but without prevailing on Henry to give up his design. Wolsey, persuaded that if he continued openly to oppose Henry’s will, he would for ever lose his confidence, dissembled his

vexation, waiting an opportunity to get rid of this unfortunate rival by some intrigue. He began by writing to the pope, informing him that a young lady, brought up by the queen of Navarre, and consequently tainted by the Lutheran heresy, had captivated the king’s heart; and from that hour Anne Boleyn became the object of the hatred and calumnies of Rome.

But at the same time, to conceal his intentions, Wolsey received Henry at a series of splendid entertainments, at which Anne outshone all the ladies of the court.

Chapter 7

Bilney’s Preaching

While these passions were agitating Henry’s palace, the most moving scenes, produced by Christian faith, were stirring the nation. Bilney, animated by that courage which God sometimes gives to the weakest men, seemed to have lost his natural timidity, and preached for a time with an energy quite apostolic. He taught that all men should first acknowledge their sins and condemn them, and then hunger and thirst after that righteousness which Jesus Christ gives. To this testimony borne to the truth, he added his testimony against error. “These five hundred years,” he added, “there hath been no good pope; and in all the times past we can find but fifty: for they have neither preached nor lived well, nor conformably to their dignity; wherefore, unto this day, they have borne the keys of simony.” As soon as he descended from the pulpit, this pious scholar, with his friend Arthur, visited the neighboring towns and villages. “The Jews and Saracens would

long ago have become believers," he once said at Wilsdon, "had it not been for the idolatry of Christian men in offering candles, wax, and money to stocks and stones." One day when he visited Ipswich, where there was a Franciscan convent, he exclaimed: "The cowl of St.

Francis wrapped round a dead body hath no power to take away sins.....Ecce agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi." (John 1:29) The poor monks, who were little versed in Scripture had recourse to the Almanac to convict the Bible of error. "St. Paul did rightly affirm," said Friar John Brusierd, "that there is but one mediator of God and man, because as yet there was no saint canonized or put into the calendar." — "Let us ask of the Father in the name of the Son," rejoined Bilney, "and he will give unto us." — "You are always speaking of the Father and never of the saints," replied the friar; "you are like a man who has been looking so long upon the sun, that he can see nothing else." As he uttered these words the monk seemed bursting with anger. "If I did not know that the saints would take everlasting vengeance upon you, I would surely with these

nails of mine be your death.” Twice in fact did two monks pull him out of his pulpit. He was arrested and taken to London.

Arthur, instead of fleeing, began to visit the flocks which his friend had converted. “Good people,” said he, “if I should suffer persecution for the preaching of the gospel, there are seven thousand more that would preach it as I do now. Therefore, good people! good people!” (and he repeated these words several times in a sorrowful voice,) “think not that if these tyrants and persecutors put a man to death, the preaching of the gospel therefore is to be forsaken. Every Christian man, yea every layman, is a priest. Let our adversaries preach by the authority of the cardinal; others by the authority of the university; others by the pope’s; we will preach by the authority of God. It is not the man who brings the word that saves the soul, but the word which the man brings. Neither bishops nor popes have the right to forbid any man to preach the gospel; and if they kill him he is not a heretic but a martyr.” The priests were horrified at such doctrines. In their opinion, there was no God

out of their church, no salvation out of their sacrifices. Arthur was thrown into the same prison as Bilney.

On the 27th of November 1527, the cardinal and the archbishop of Canterbury, with a great number of bishops, divines, and lawyers, met in the chapter-house of Westminster, when Bilney and Arthur were brought before them. But the king’s prime minister thought it beneath his dignity to occupy his time with miserable heretics. Wolsey had hardly commenced the examination, when he rose, saying: “The affairs of the realm call me away; all such as are found guilty you will compel them to abjure, and those who rebel you will deliver over to the secular power.” After a few questions proposed by the bishop of London, the two accused men were led back to prison.

Abjuration or death — that was Wolsey’s order. But the conduct of the trial was confided to Tonstall; Bilney conceived some hope. “Is it possible,” he said to himself, “that the bishop of London, the friend of Erasmus, will gratify the

monks?.....I must tell him that it was the Greek Testament of his learned master that led me to the faith." Upon which the humble evangelist, having obtained paper and ink, set about writing to the bishop from his gloomy prison those admirable letters which have been transmitted to posterity. Tonstall, who was not a cruel man, was deeply moved, and then a strange struggle took place: a judge wishing to save the prisoner, the prisoner desiring to give up his life. Tonstall, by acquitting Bilney, had no desire to compromise himself. "Submit to the church," said the bishop, "for God speaks only through it." But Bilney, who knew that God speaks in the Scriptures, remained inflexible. "Very well, then," said Tonstall, taking up the prisoner's eloquent letters, "in discharge of my conscience I shall lay these letters before the court." He hoped, perhaps, that they would touch his colleagues, but he was deceived. He determined, therefore, to make a fresh attempt. On the 4th of December, Bilney was brought again before the court. "Abjure your errors," said Tonstall. Bilney refusing by a shake of the head, the bishop continued: "Retire into the next room

and consider." Bilney withdrew, and returning shortly after with joy beaming in his eyes, Tonstall thought he had gained the victory. "You will return to the church, then?" said he.....The doctor answered calmly: "Fiat judicium in nomine Domini." "Be quick," continued the bishop, "this is the last moment, and you will be condemned." "Hoec est dies quam fecit Dominus," answered Bilney, "exultemus et loetemur in ea!" (Psalm 118:24.) Upon this Tonstall took off his cap, and said: "In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.....Exsurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici ejus!" (Psalm lxviii. 1.) Then making the sign of the cross on his forehead and on his breast, he gave judgment: "Thomas Bilney, I pronounce thee convicted of heresy." He was about to name the penalty.....a last hope restrained him; he stopped: "For the rest of the sentence we take deliberation until tomorrow." Thus was the struggle prolonged between two men, one of whom desired to walk to the stake, the other to bar the way as it were with his own body.

"Will you return to the unity of the church?"

asked Tonstall the next day.

“I hope I was never separated from the church,” answered Bilney. “Go and consult with some of your friends,” said the bishop, who was resolved to save his life; “I will give you till one o’clock in the afternoon.” In the afternoon Bilney made the same answer. “I will give you two nights’ respite to deliberate,” said the bishop; “on Saturday, at nine o’clock in the forenoon, the court will expect a plain definitive answer.” Tonstall reckoned on the night with its dreams, its anguish, and its terrors, to bring about Bilney’s recantation.

This extraordinary struggle occupied many minds both in court and city.

Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII watched with interest the various phases of this tragic history. What will happen? was the general question. Will he give way? Shall we see him live or die? One day and two nights still remained; everything was tried to shake the Cambridge doctor. His friends crowded to his prison; he was overwhelmed with

arguments and examples; but an inward struggle, far more terrible than those without, agitated the pious Bilney. “Whoever will save his soul shall lose it,” Christ had said.

That selfish love of his soul, which is found even in the advanced Christian, — that self, which after his conversion had been not absorbed, but overruled by the Spirit of God, gradually recovered strength in his heart, in the presence of disgrace and death. His friends who wished to save him, not understanding that the fallen Bilney would be Bilney no longer, conjured him with tears to have pity on himself; and by these means his firmness was overcome. The bishop pressed him, and Bilney asked himself: “Can a young soldier like me know the rules of war better than an old soldier like Tonstall? Or can a poor silly sheep know his way to the fold better than the chief pastor of London?” His friends quitted him neither night nor, day, and, entangled by their fatal affection, he believed at last that he had found a compromise which would set his conscience at rest. “I will preserve my life,” he said, “to dedicate it to the Lord.” This delusion

had scarcely laid hold of his mind before his views were confused, his faith was veiled; the Holy Ghost departed from him; God gave him over to his carnal thoughts, and under the pretext of being useful to Jesus Christ for many years, Bilney disobeyed him at the present moment. Being led before the bishops on the morning of Saturday the 7th of December, at nine o'clock, he fell.....(Arthur had fallen before him), and while the false friends who had misled him hardly dared raise their eyes, the living church of Christ in England uttered a cry of anguish. "If ever you come in danger," said Latimer, "for God's quarrel, I would advise you, above all things, to abjure all your friendships; leave not one unabjured. It is they that shall undo you, and not your enemies. It was his very friends that brought Bilney to it." On the following day (Sunday, 8th December), Bilney was placed at the head of a procession, and the fallen disciple, bareheaded, with a fagot on his shoulders, stood in front of St. Paul's cross, while a priest from the pulpit exhorted him to repentance; after which he was led back to prison.

What a solitude for the wretched man! At one time the cold darkness of his cell appeared to him as a burning fire; at another he fancied he heard accusing voices crying to him in the silence of the night. Death, the very enemy he had wished to avoid, fixed his icy glance upon him and filled him with fear. He strove to escape from the horrible spectre, but in vain. Then the friends who had dragged him into this abyss crowded round and endeavored to console him; but if they gave utterance to any of Christ's gentle promises, Bilney started back with affright and shrank to the farthest part of the dungeon, with a cry "as though a man had run him through the heart with a sword." Having denied the word of God, he could no longer endure to hear it. The curse of the Apocalypse: Ye mountains, hide me from the wrath of the Lamb! was the only passage of Scripture in harmony with his soul. His mind wandered, the blood froze in his veins, he sank under his terrors; he lost all sense, and almost his life, and lay motionless in the arms of his astonished friends. "God," exclaimed those unhappy individuals who had caused his fall, "God, by a just judgment, delivers up to the tempests of

their conscience all who deny his truth." This was not the only sorrow of the church. As soon as Richard Bayfield, the late chamberlain of Bury, had joined Tyndale and Fryth, he said to them: "I am at your disposal; you shall be my head and I will be your hand; I will sell your books and those of the German reformers in the Low Countries, France, and England." It was not long indeed before he returned to London. But Pierson, the priest whom he had formerly met in Lombard Street, found him again, and accused him to the bishop. The unhappy man was brought before Tonstall. "You are charged," said the prelate, "with having asserted that praise is due to God alone, and not to saints or creatures." Bayfield acknowledged the charge to be true. "You are accused of maintaining that every priest may preach the word of God by the authority of the gospel without the license of the pope or cardinals." This also Bayfield acknowledged. A penance was imposed on him; and then he was sent back to his monastery with orders to show himself there on the 25th of April. But he crossed the sea once more, and hastened to join Tyndale.

The New Testaments, however, sold by him and others, remained in England. At that time the bishops subscribed to suppress the Scriptures, as so many persons have since done to circulate them; and, accordingly, a great number of the copies brought over by Bayfield and his friends were bought up. A scarcity of food was erelong added to the scarcity of the word of God; for as the cardinal was endeavoring to foment a war between Henry and the emperor, the Flemish ships ceased to enter the English ports. It was in consequence of this that the lord mayor and aldermen of London hastened to express their apprehensions to Wolsey almost before he had recovered from the fatigues of his return from France. “Fear nothing,” he told them; “the king of France assured me, that if he had three bushels of wheat, England should have two of them.” But none arrived, and the people were on the point of breaking out into violence, when a fleet of ships suddenly appeared off the mouth of the Thames. They were German and Flemish vessels laden with corn, in which the worthy people of the Low Countries had also concealed

the New Testament. An Antwerp bookseller, named John Raimond or Ruremond, from his birthplace, had printed a fourth edition more beautiful than the previous ones. It was enriched with references and engravings on wood, and each page bordered with red lines. Raimond himself had embarked on board one of the ships with five hundred copies of his New Testament. About Christmas 1527, the book of God was circulated in England along with the bread that nourishes the body. But certain priests and monks having discovered the Scriptures among the sacks of corn, they carried several copies to the bishop of London, who threw Raimond into prison. The greater part, however, of the new edition escaped him. The New Testament was read everywhere, and even the court did not escape the contagion. Anne Boleyn, notwithstanding her smiling face, often withdrew to her closet at Greenwich or at Hampton Court, to study the gospel. Frank, courageous, and proud, she did not conceal the pleasure she found in such reading; her boldness astonished the courtiers, and exasperated the clergy. In the city things went still farther: the New

Testament was explained in frequent conventicles, particularly in the house of one Russell, and great was the joy among the faithful. “It is sufficient only to enter London,” said the priests, “to become a heretic!” The Reformation was taking root among the people before it arrived at the upper classes.

Chapter 8

The Papacy intercepts the Gospel

The sun of the word of God, which daily grew brighter in the sky of the sixteenth century, was sufficient to scatter all the darkness in England; but popery, like an immense wall, intercepted its rays. Britain had hardly received the Scriptures in Greek and Latin, and then in English, before the priests began to make war upon them with indefatigable zeal. It was necessary that the wall should be thrown down in order that the sun might penetrate freely among the Anglo-Saxon people. And now events were ripening in England, destined to make a great breach in popery. The negotiations of Henry VIII with Clement VII play an important part in the Reformation. By showing up the Court of Rome, they destroyed the respect which the people felt for it; they took away that power and strength, as Scripture says, which the monarchy had given it; and the throne of the pope once fallen in England,

Jesus Christ uplifted and strengthened his own.

Henry, ardently desiring an heir, and thinking that he had found the woman that would ensure his own and England's happiness, conceived the design of severing the ties that united him to the queen, and with this view he consulted his most favorite councilors about the divorce. There was one in particular whose approval he coveted: this was Sir Thomas More. One day as Erasmus's friend was walking with his master in the beautiful gallery at Hampton Court, giving him an account of a mission he had just executed on the continent, the king suddenly interrupted him: "My marriage with the queen," he said, "is contrary to the laws of God, of the church, and of nature." He then took up the Bible, and pointed out the passages in his favor. "I am not a theologian," said More, somewhat embarrassed; "your majesty should consult a council of doctors." Accordingly, by Henry's order, Warham assembled the most learned canonists at Hampton Court; but weeks passed away before they could agree. Most of them quoted in the king's favor those passages in Leviticus

18:16; 20:21, which forbid a man to take his brother's wife. But Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and the other opponents of the divorce, replied that, according to Deuteronomy 25:5, when a woman is left a widow without children, her brother-in-law ought to take her to wife, to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel. "This law concerned the Jews only," replied the partisans of the divorce; they added that its object was "to maintain the inheritances distinct, and the genealogies intact, until the coming of Christ. The Judaical dispensation has passed away; but the law of Leviticus, which is a moral law, is binding upon all men in all ages." To free themselves from their embarrassment, the bishops demanded that the most eminent universities should be consulted; and commissioners were forthwith despatched to Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Orleans, Toulouse, Louvain, Padua, and Bologna, furnished with money to reward the foreign doctors for the time and trouble this question would cost them.

This caused some little delay, and every means was now to be tried to divert the king from his

purpose.

Wolsey, who was the first to suggest the idea of a divorce, was now thoroughly alarmed. It appeared to him that a nod from the daughter of the Boleyns would hurl him from the post he had so laboriously won, and this made him vent his ill-humor on all about him, at one time threatening Warham, and at another persecuting Pace. But fearing to oppose Henry openly, he summoned from Paris, Clarke, bishop of Bath and Wells, at that time ambassador to the French court.

The latter entered into his views, and after cautiously preparing the way, he ventured to say to the king: “The progress of the inquiry will be so slow, your majesty, that it will take more than seven years to bring it to an end!” — Since my patience has already held out for eighteen years,” the king replied coldly, “I am willing to wait four or five more.” As the political party had failed, the clerical party set in motion a scheme of another kind. A young woman, Elizabeth Barton, known as the holy maid of Kent, had been subject from

childhood to epileptic fits. The priest of her parish, named Masters, had persuaded her that she was inspired of God, and confederating with one Bocking, a monk of Canterbury, he turned the weakness of the prophetess to account. Elizabeth wandered over the country, passing from house to house, and from convent to convent; on a sudden her limbs would become rigid, her features distorted; violent convulsions shook her body, and strange unintelligible sounds fell from her lips, which the amazed bystanders received as revelations from the Virgin and the saints. Fisher, bishop of Rochester, Abel, the queen's ecclesiastical agent, and even Sir Thomas More, were among the number of Elizabeth's partisans. Rumors of the divorce having reached the saint's ears, an angel commanded her to appear before the cardinal. As soon as she stood in his presence, the color fled from her cheeks, her limbs trembled, and falling into an ecstasy, she exclaimed: "Cardinal of York, God has placed three swords in your hand: the spiritual sword, to range the church under the authority of the pope; the civil sword, to govern the realm; and the sword of justice, to prevent the

divorce of the king.....If you do not wield these three swords faithfully, God will lay it sore to your charge." After these words the prophetess withdrew.

But other influences were then dividing Wolsey's breast: hatred, which induced him to oppose the divorce; and ambition, which forboded his ruin in this opposition. At last ambition prevailed, and he resolved to make his objections forgotten by the energy of his zeal.

Henry hastened to profit by this change. "Declare the divorce yourself," said he to Wolsey; "has not the pope named you his vicar-general?" The cardinal was not anxious to raise himself so high. "If I were to decide the affair," said he, "the queen would appeal to the pope, we must therefore either apply to the holy father for special powers, or persuade the queen to retire to a nunnery. And if we fail in either of these expedients, we will obey the voice of conscience, even in despite of the pope." It was arranged to begin with the more regular attempt, and Gregory Da Casale, secretary

Knight, and the prothonotary Gambara, were appointed to an extraordinary mission at the pontifical court. Casale was Wolsey's man, and Knight was Henry's. Wolsey told the envoys: "You will demand of the pope, 1stly, a commission authorizing me to inquire into this matter; 2ndly, his promise to pronounce the nullity of Catherine's marriage with Henry, if we should find that her marriage with Arthur was consummated; and 3rdly, a dispensation permitting the king to marry again." In this manner Wolsey hoped to make sure of the divorce without damaging the papal authority. It was insinuated that false representations, with regard to the consummation of the first marriage, had been sent from England to Julius II, which had induced the pontiff to permit the second.

The pope being deceived as to the fact, his infallibility was untouched.

Wolsey desired something more; knowing that no confidence could be put in the good faith of the pontiff, he demanded a fourth instrument, by which the pope should bind himself never to recall the

other three; he only forgot to take precautions in case Clement should withdraw the fourth.

“With these four snares, skillfully combined,” said the cardinal, “I shall catch the hare; if he escapes from one, he will fall into the other.” The courtiers anticipated a speedy termination of the affair. Was not the emperor the declared enemy of the pontiff? Had not Henry, on the contrary, made himself protector of the Clementine league? Could Clement hesitate, when called upon, to choose between his jailer and his benefactor?

Indeed, Charles V, at this moment, was in a very embarrassing position. It is true, his guards were posted at the gates of the castle of St. Angelo, where Clement was a prisoner, and people in Rome said to one another with a smile: “Now indeed it is true, Papa non potest errare.” But it was not possible to keep the pope a prisoner in Rome; and then what was to be done with him? The viceroy of Naples proposed to Alercon, the governor of St. Angelo, to remove Clement to Gaeta; but the affrighted colonel exclaimed: “Heaven forbid that I

should drag after me the very body of God!” Charles thought one time of transporting the pontiff to Spain; but might not an enemy’s fleet carry him off on the road? The pope in prison was far more embarrassing to Charles than the pope at liberty.

It was at this critical time that Francis Philip, Queen Catherine’s servant, having escaped the snares laid by Henry VIII and Wolsey, arrived at Madrid, where he passed a whole day in conference with Charles V. This prince was at first astonished, shocked even, by the designs of the king of England. The curse of God seemed to hang over his house. His mother was a lunatic; his sister of Denmark expelled from her dominions; his sister of Hungary made a widow by the battle of Mohacz; the Turks were encroaching upon his territories; Lautrec was victorious in Italy, and the catholics, irritated by the pope’s captivity, detested his ambition. This was not enough. Henry VIII was striving to divorce his aunt, and the pope would naturally give his aid to this criminal design. Charles must choose between the pontiff and the king. The friendship of the king of England might

aid him in breaking the league formed to expel him from Italy, and by sacrificing Catherine he would be sure to obtain his support; but placed between reasons of state and his aunt’s honor, the emperor did not hesitate; he even renounced certain projects of reform that he had at heart.

He suddenly decided for the pope, and from that very hour followed a new course.

Charles, who possessed great discernment, had understood his age; he had seen that concessions were called for by the movement of the human mind, and would have desired to carry out the change from the middle ages to modern times by a carefully managed transition. He had consequently demanded a council to reform the church and weaken the Romish dominion in Europe. But very different was the result. If Charles turned away from Henry, he was obliged to turn towards Clement; and after having compelled the head of the church to enter a prison, it was necessary to place him once more upon the throne. Charles V sacrificed the interests of Christian society to the

interests of his own family. This divorce, which in England has been looked upon as the ruin of the popedom, was what saved it in continental Europe.

But how could the emperor win the heart of the pontiff, filled as it was with bitterness and anger? He selected for this difficult mission a friar of great ability, De Angelis, general of the Spanish Observance, and ordered him to proceed to the castle of St. Angelo under the pretext of negotiating the liberation of the holy father. The cordelier was conducted to the strongest part of the fortress, called the Rock, where Clement was lodged; and the two priests brought all their craft to bear on each other. The monk, assisted by the artful Moncade, adroitly mingled together the pope’s deliverance and Catherine’s marriage. He affirmed that the emperor wished to open the gates of the pontiff’s prison, and had already given the order; and then he added immediately: “The emperor is determined to maintain the rights of his aunt, and will never consent to the divorce.” — “If you are a good shepherd to me,” wrote Charles to the pope with his own hand on the 22nd of November, “I

will be a good sheep to you.” Clement smiled as he read these words; he understood his position; the emperor had need of the priest, Charles was at his captive’s feet; Clement was saved! The divorce was a rope fallen from the skies which could not fail to drag him out of the pit; he had only to cling to it quietly in order to reascend his throne. Accordingly from that hour Clement appeared less eager to quit the castle than Charles to liberate him. “So long as the divorce is in suspense,” thought the crafty De’ Medici, “I have two great friends; but as soon as I declare for one, I shall have a mortal enemy in the other.” He promised the monk to come to no decision in the matter without informing the emperor.

Meantime Knight, the envoy of the impatient monarch, having heard, as he crossed the Alps, that the pope was at liberty, hastened on to Parma, where he met Gambara: “He is not free yet,” replied the prothonotary; “but the general of the Franciscans hopes to terminate his captivity in a few days. Continue your journey,” he added. Knight could not do so without great danger. He

was told at Foligno, sixty miles from the metropolis, that if he had not a safe-conduct he could not reach Rome without exposing his life; Knight halted. Just then a messenger from Henry brought him despatches more pressing than ever; Knight started again with one servant and a guide. At Monte Rotondo he was nearly murdered by the inhabitants; but on the next day (25th November), protected by a violent storm of wind and rain, Henry's envoy entered Rome at ten o'clock without being observed, and kept himself concealed.

It was impossible to speak with Clement, for the emperor's orders were positive. Knight, therefore, began to practice upon the cardinals; he gained over the cardinal of Pisa, by whose means his despatches were laid before the pontiff. Clement after reading them laid them down with a smile of satisfaction. "Good!" said he, "here is the other coming to me now!" But night had hardly closed in before the cardinal of Pisa's secretary hastened to Knight and told him: "Don Alercon is informed of your arrival; and the pope entreats you

to depart immediately.” This officer had scarcely left him, when the prothonotary Gambara arrived in great agitation: “His holiness presses you to leave; as soon as he is at liberty, he will attend to your master’s request.” Two hours after this, two hundred Spanish soldiers arrived, surrounded the house in which Knight had concealed himself, and searched it from top to bottom, but to no purpose; the English agent had escaped. Knight’s safety was not the true motive which induced Clement to urge his departure. The very day on which the pope received the message from the king of England, he signed a treaty with Charles V, restoring him under certain conditions, to both his powers. At the same time the pontiff, for greater security, pressed the French general Lautrec to hasten his march to Rome in order to save him from the hands of the emperor. Clement, a disciple of Machiavelli, thus gave the right hand to Charles and the left to Francis; and as he had not another for Henry, he made him the most positive promises. Each of the three princes could reckon on the pope’s friendship, and on the same grounds.

The 10th of December (1527) was the day on which Clement's imprisonment would terminate; but he preferred owing his freedom to intrigue rather than to the emperor's generosity. He therefore procured the dress of a tradesman and, on the evening before the day fixed for his deliverance, his ward being already much relaxed, he escaped from the castle, and, accompanied only by Louis of Gonzago in his flight, he made his way to Orvieto.

While Clement was experiencing all the joy of a man just escaped from prison, Henry was a prey to the most violent agitation. Having ceased to love Catherine, he persuaded himself that he was the victim of his father's ambition, a martyr to duty, and the champion of conjugal sanctity. His very gait betrayed his vexation, and even among the gay conversation of the court, deep sighs would escape from his bosom. He had frequent interviews with Wolsey. "I regard the safety of my soul above all things," he said; "but I am concerned also for the peace of my kingdom. For a long while an unceasing remorse has been gnawing at my

conscience, and my thoughts dwell upon my marriage with unutterable sorrow. God, in his wrath, has taken away my sons, and if I persevere in this unlawful union, he will visit me with still more terrible chastisements. My only hope is in the holy father." Wolsey replied with a low bow: "Please your majesty, I am occupied with this business, as if it were my only means of winning heaven." And indeed he redoubled his exertions. He wrote to Sir Gregory Da Casale on the 5th of December (1527): "You will procure an audience of the pope at any price. Disguise yourself, appear before him as the servant of some nobleman, or as a messenger from the duke of Ferrara. Scatter money plentifully; sacrifice everything, provided you procure a secret interview with his holiness; ten thousand ducats are at your disposal. You will explain to Clement the king's scruples, and the necessity of providing for the continuance of his house and the peace of his kingdom. You will tell him that in order to restore him to liberty, the king is ready to declare war against the emperor, and thus show himself to all the world to be a true son of the church." Wolsey saw clearly that it was

essential to represent the divorce to Clement VII as a means likely to secure the safety of the popedom. The cardinal, therefore, wrote again to Da Casale on the 6th of December: “Night and day, I revolve in my mind the actual condition of the church, and seek the means best calculated to extricate the pope from the gulf into which he has fallen. While I was turning these thoughts over in my mind during a sleepless night.....one way suddenly occurred to me. I said to myself, the king must be prevailed upon to undertake the defense of the holy father. This was no easy matter, for his majesty is strongly attached to the emperor; however, I set about my task. I told the king that his holiness was ready to satisfy him; I staked my honor; I succeeded.....To save the pope, my master will sacrifice his treasures, subjects, kingdom, and even his life .....I therefore conjure his holiness to entertain our just demand.” Never before had such pressing entreaties been made to a pope.

Chapter 9

The English Envoys at Orvieto

The envoys of the king of England appeared in the character of the saviours of Rome. This was doubtless no stratagem; and Wolsey probably regarded that thought as coming from heaven, which had visited him during the weary sleepless night. The zeal of his agents increased. The pope was hardly set at liberty, before Knight and Da Casale appeared at the foot of the precipitous rock on which Orvieto is built, and demanded to be introduced to Clement VII. Nothing could be more compromising to the pontiff than such a visit. How could he appear on good terms with England, when Rome and all his states were still in the hands of Catherine’s nephew? The pope’s mind was utterly bewildered by the demand of the two envoys. He recovered however; to reject the powerful hand extended to him by England was not without its danger; and as he knew well how to bring a difficult negotiation to a successful conclusion, Clement regained confidence in his skill, and gave

orders to introduce Henry’s ambassadors.

Their discourse was not without eloquence. “Never was the church in a more critical position,” said they. “The unmeasured ambition of the kings who claim to dispose of spiritual affairs at their own pleasure (this was aimed at Charles V) holds the apostolical bark suspended over an abyss.

The only port open to it in the tempest is the favor of the august prince whom we represent, and who has always been the shield of the faith. But, alas! this monarch, the impregnable bulwark of your holiness, is himself the prey of tribulations almost equal to your own. His conscience torn by remorse, his crown without an heir, his kingdom without security, his people exposed once more to perpetual disorders.....Nay, the whole Christian world given up to the most cruel discord. ....Such are the consequences of a fatal union which God has marked with his displeasure.....There are also,” they added in a lower tone, “certain things of which his majesty cannot speak in his letter.....certain incurable disorders under which

the queen suffers, which will never permit the king to look upon her again as his wife. If your holiness puts an end to such wretchedness by annulling his unlawful marriage, you will attach his majesty by an indissoluble bond. Assistance, riches, armies, crown, and even life — the king our master is ready to employ all in the service of Rome. He stretches out his hand to you, most holy father.....stretch out yours to him; by your union the church will be saved, and Europe will be saved with it." Clement was cruelly embarrassed. His policy consisted in holding the balance between the two princes, and he was now called upon to decide in favor of one of them. He began to regret that he had ever received Henry's ambassadors. "Consider my position," he said to them, "and entreat the king to wait until more favorable events leave me at liberty to act." — "What!" replied Knight proudly, "has not your holiness promised to consider his majesty's prayer? If you fail in your promise now, how can I persuade the king that you will keep it some future day?" Da Casale thought the time had come to strike a decisive blow. "What evils," he exclaimed, "what inevitable misfortunes your

refusal will create!.....The emperor thinks only of depriving the church of its power, and the king of England alone has sworn to maintain it.” Then speaking lower, more slowly, and dwelling upon every word, he continued: “We fear that his majesty, reduced to such extremities.....of the two evils will choose the least, and supported by the purity of his intentions, will do of his own authority.....what he now so respectfully demands.....What should we see then?.....I shudder at the thought.....Let not your holiness indulge in a false security which will inevitably drag you into the abyss.....Read all.....remark all.....divine all.....take note of all .....Most holy father, this is a question of life and death.” And Da Casale’s tone said more than his words.

Clement understood that a positive refusal would expose him to lose England. Placed between Henry and Charles, as between the hammer and the forge, he resolved to gain time. “Well then,” he said to Knight and Da Casale, “I will do what you ask; but I am not familiar with the forms these dispensations require.....I will consult the Cardinal

Sanctorum Quatuor on the subject.....and then will inform you." Knight and Da Casale, wishing to anticipate Clement VII, hastened to Lorenzo Pucci, cardinal Sanctorum Quatuor, and intimated to him that their master would know how to be grateful. The cardinal assured the deputies of his affection for Henry VIII, and they, in the fullness of their gratitude, laid before him the four documents which they were anxious to get executed. But the cardinal had hardly looked at the first — the proposal that Wolsey should decide the matter of the divorce in England — when he exclaimed: "Impossible!.....a bull in such terms would cover with eternal disgrace not only his holiness and the king, but even the cardinal of York himself." The deputies were confounded, for Wolsey had ordered them to ask the pope for nothing but his signature. Recovering themselves, they rejoined: "All that we require is a competent commission." On his part, the pope wrote Henry a letter, in which he managed to say nothing. Of the four required documents there were two on whose immediate despatch Knight and Da Casale insisted: these were the commission to pronounce the divorce, and the

dispensation to contract a second marriage.

The dispensation without the commission was of no value; this the pope knew well; accordingly he resolved to give the dispensation only. It was as if Charles had granted Clement when in prison permission to visit his cardinals, but denied him liberty to leave the castle of St. Angelo. It is in such a manner as this that a religious system transformed into a political system has recourse, when it is without power, to stratagem. “The commission,” said the artful Medici to Knight, “must be corrected according to the style of our court; but here is the dispensation.” Knight took the document; it was addressed to Henry VIII and ran thus: “We accord to you, in case your marriage with Catherine shall be declared null, free liberty to take another wife, provided she have not been the wife of your brother.....” The Englishman was duped by the Italian. “To my poor judgment,” he said, “this document will be of use to us.” After this Clement appeared to concern himself solely about Knight’s health, and suddenly manifested the greatest interest for him. “It is proper that you

should hasten your departure," said he, "for it is necessary that you should travel at your ease. Gambara will follow you post, and bring the commission." Knight thus mystified, took leave of the pope, who got rid of Da Casale and Gambara in a similar manner. He then began to breathe once more. There was no diplomacy in Europe which Rome, even in its greatest weakness, could not easily dupe.

It had now become necessary to elude the commission. While the king's envoys were departing in good spirits, reckoning on the document that was to follow them, the general of the Spanish Observance reiterated to the pontiff in every tone: "Be careful to give no document authorizing the divorce, and above all, do not permit this affair to be judged in Henry's states." The cardinals drew up the document under the influence of De Angelis, and made it a masterpiece of insignificance. If good theology ennobles the heart, bad theology, so fertile in subtleties, imparts to the mind a skill by no means common; and hence the most celebrated diplomatists have often

been churchmen. The act being thus drawn up, the pope despatched three copies, to Knight, to Da Casale, and to Gambara.

Knight was near Bologna when the courier overtook him. He was stupified, and taking post-horses, returned with all haste to Orvieto. Gambara proceeded through France to England with the useless dispensation which the pope had granted.

Knight had thought to meet with more good faith at the court of the pope than with kings, and he had been outwitted. What would Wolsey and Henry say of his folly? His wounded self-esteem began to make him believe all that Tyndale and Luther said of the popedom. The former had just published the Obedience of a Christian Man, and the Parable of the Wicked Mammon, in which he represented Rome as one of the transformations of Antichrist. “Antichrist,” said he in the latter treatise, “is not a man that should suddenly appear with wonders; he is a spiritual thing, who was in the Old Testament, and also in the time of Christ and the apostles, and is now, and shall (I doubt not)

endure till the world's end. His nature is (when he is overcome with the word of God) to go out of the play for a season, and to disguise himself, and then to come in again with a new name and new raiment. The Scribes and Pharisees in the gospel were very Antichrists; popes, cardinals, and bishops have gotten their new names, but the thing is all one. Even so now, when we have uttered [detected] him, he will change himself once more, and turn himself into an angel of light. Already the beast, seeing himself now to be sought for, roareth and seeketh new holes to hide himself in, and changeth himself into a thousand fashions." This idea, paradoxical at first, gradually made its way into men's minds. The Romans, by their practices, familiarized the English to the somewhat coarse descriptions of the reformers. England was to have many such lessons, and thus by degrees learn to set Rome aside for the sake of her own glory and prosperity.

Knight and Da Casale reached Orvieto about the same time. Clement replied with sighs: "Alas! I am the emperor's prisoner. The imperialists are

every day pillaging towns and castles in our neighborhood.

....Wretch that I am! I have not a friend except the king your master, and he is far away.....If I should do anything now to displease Charles, I am a lost man.....To sign the commission would be to sign an eternal rupture with him.” But Knight and Da Casale pleaded so effectually with Cardinal Sanctorum Quatuor, and so pressed Clement, that the pontiff, without the knowledge of the Spaniard De Angelis, gave them a more satisfactory document, but not such as Wolsey required. “In giving you this commission,” said the pope, “I am giving away my liberty, and perhaps my life. I listen not to the voice of prudence, but to that of affection only. I confide in the generosity of the king of England, he is the master of my destiny.” He then began to weep, and seemed ready to faint. Knight, forgetting his vexation, promised Clement that the king would do everything to save him. — “Ah!” said the pope, “there is one effectual means.” — “What is that?” inquired Henry’s agents. — “M.

Lautrec, who says daily that he will come, but never does," replied Clement, "has only to bring the French army promptly before the gates of Orvieto; then I could excuse myself by saying that he constrained me to sign the commission." — "Nothing is easier," replied the envoys, "we will go and hasten his arrival." Clement was not even now at ease. The safety of the Roman church troubled him not less than his own.....Charles might discover the trick, and make the popedom suffer for it. There was danger on all sides. If the English spoke of independence, did not the emperor threaten a reform?.....The catholic princes, said the papal councilors, are capable, without perhaps a single exception, of supporting the cause of Luther to gratify a criminal ambition. The pope reflected, and withdrawing his word, promised to give the commission when Lautrec was under the walls of Orvieto; but the English agents insisted on having it immediately. To conciliate all, it was agreed that the pope should give the required document at once, but as soon as the French army arrived, he should send another copy bearing the date of the

day on which he saw Lautrec.

“Beseech the king to keep secret the commission I give you,” said Clement VII to Knight; “if he begins the process immediately he receives it, I am undone for ever.” The pope thus gave permission to act, on condition of not acting at all. Knight took leave on the 1st of January 1528; he promised all the pontiff desired, and then, as if fearing some fresh difficulty, he departed the same day. Da Casale, on his side, after having offered the Cardinal Sanctorum Quatuor a gift of 4000 crowns, which he refused, repaired to Lautrec, to beg him to constrain the pope to sign a document which was already on its way to England.

But while the business seemed to be clearing at Rome, it was becoming more complicated in London. The king’s project got wind, and Catherine gave way to the liveliest sorrow. “I shall protest,” said she, “against the commission given to the cardinal of York. Is he not the king’s subject, the vile flatterer of his pleasures?” Catherine did

not resist alone; the people, who hated the cardinal, could not with pleasure see him invested with such authority. To obviate this inconvenience, Henry resolved to ask the pope for another cardinal, who should be empowered to terminated the affair in London with or without Wolsey.

The latter agreed to the measure: it is even possible that he was the first to suggest it, for he feared to bear alone the responsibility of so hateful an inquiry. Accordingly, on the 27th of December, he wrote to the king's agents at Rome: "Procure the envoy of a legate, and particularly of an able, easy, manageable legate.....desirous of meriting the king's favor, Campeggio for instance. You will earnestly request the cardinal who may be selected, to travel with all diligence, and you will assure him that the king will behave liberally towards him." Knight reached Asti on the 10th of January, where he found letters with fresh orders. This was another check: at one time it is the pope who compels him to retrograde, at another it is the king. Henry's unlucky valetudinarian secretary, a man very susceptible of fatigue, and already wearied and

exhausted by ten painful journeys, was in a very bad humor.

He determined to permit Gambara to carry the two documents to England; to commission Da Casale, who had not left the pope's neighborhood, to solicit the despatch of the legate; and as regarded himself, to go and wait for further orders at Turin: — "If it be thought good unto the king's highness that I do return unto Orvieto, I shall do as much as my poor carcass may endure." When Da Casale reached Bologna, he pressed Lautrec to go and constrain the pontiff to sign the act which Gambara was already bearing to England.

On receiving the new despatches he returned in all haste to Orvieto, and the pope was very much alarmed when he heard of his arrival. He had feared to grant a simple paper, destined to remain secret; and now he is required to send a prince of the church! Will Henry never be satisfied?

"The mission you desire would be full of dangers," he replied; "but we have discovered

another means, alone calculated to finish this business.

Mind you do not say that I pointed it out to you," added the pope in a mysterious tone; "but that it was suggested by Cardinal Sanctorum Quatuor and Simonetta." Da Casale was all attention. "There is not a doctor in the world who can better decide on this matter, and on its most private circumstances, than the king himself. If therefore he sincerely believes that Catherine had really become his brother's wife, let him empower the cardinal of York to pronounce the divorce, and let him take another wife without any further ceremony; he can then afterwards demand the confirmation of the consistory. The affair being concluded in this way, I will take the rest upon myself." — "But," said Da Casale, somewhat dissatisfied with this new intrigue, "I must fulfill my mission, and the king demands a legate." — "And whom shall I send?" asked Clement. "Da Monte? he cannot move. De Caesis? he is at Naples. Ara Coeli? he has the gout. Piccolomini? he is of the imperial party.....Campeggio would be

the best, but he is at Rome, where he supplies my place, and cannot leave without peril to the church.".....And then with some emotion he added, "I throw myself into his majesty's arms. The emperor will never forgive what I am doing. If he hears of it he will summon me before his council; I shall have no rest until he has deprived me of my throne and my life." Da Casale hastened to forward to London the result of the conference.

Clement being unable to untie the knot, requested Henry to cut it. Will this prince hesitate to employ so easy a means, the pope (Clement declared it himself) being willing to ratify everything?

Here closes Henry's first campaign in the territories of the popedom. We shall now see the results of so many efforts.

Chapter 10

Disappointment in England

Never was disappointment more complete than that felt by Henry and Wolsey after the arrival of Gambara with the commission; the king was angry, the cardinal vexed. What Clement called the sacrifice of his life was in reality but a sheet of paper fit only to be thrown into the fire. “This commission is of no value,” said Wolsey. — “And even to put it into execution,” added Henry, “we must wait until the imperialists have quitted Italy! The pope is putting us off to the Greek calends.” — “His holiness,” observed the cardinal, “does not bind himself to pronounce the divorce; the queen will therefore appeal from our judgment.” — “And even if the pope had bound himself,” added the king, “it would be sufficient for the emperor to smile upon him, to make him retract what he had promised.” — “It is all a cheat and a mockery,” concluded both king and minister.

What was to be done next? The only way to

make Clement ours, thought Wolsey, is to get rid of Charles; it is time his pride was brought down.

Accordingly, on the 21st of January 1528, France and England declared hostilities against the Emperor. When Charles heard of this proceeding he exclaimed: “I know the hand that has flung the torch of war into the midst of Europe. My crime is not having placed the cardinal of York on St.

Peter’s throne.” A mere declaration of war was not enough for Wolsey; the bishop of Bayonne, ambassador from France, seeing him one day somewhat excited, whispered in his ear: “In former times popes have deposed emperors for smaller offenses.” Charles’s deposition would have delivered the king of France from a troublesome rival; but Du Bellay, fearing to take the initiative in so bold an enterprise, suggested the idea to the cardinal.

Wolsey reflected: such a thought had never before occurred to him. Taking the ambassador aside to a window, he there swore stoutly, said Du

Bellay, that he should be delighted to use all his influence to get Charles deposed by the pope. “No one is more likely than yourself,” replied the bishop, “to induce Clement to do it.” — “I will use all my credit,” rejoined Wolsey, and the two priests separated. This bright idea the cardinal never forgot, Charles had robbed him of the tiara; he will retaliate by depriving Charles of his crown. An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Staffileo, dean of the Rota, was then in London, and, still burning with resentment against the author of the Sack of Rome, he favorably received the suggestions Wolsey made to him; and, finally, the envoy from John Zapolya, king-elect of Hungary, supported the project. But the kings of France and England were not so easily induced to put the thrones of kings at the disposal of the priests. It appears, however, that the pope was sounded on the subject and if the emperor had been beaten in Italy, it is probable that the bull would have been fulminated against him. His sword preserved his crown, and the plot of the two bishops failed.

The king’s councilors began to seek for less

heroic means. “We must prosecute the affair at Rome,” said some. — “No,” said others, “in England. The pope is too much afraid of the emperor to pronounce the divorce in person.” — “If the pope fears the emperor more than the king of England,” exclaimed the proud Tudor, “we shall find some other way to set him at ease.” Thus, at the first contradiction, Henry placed his hand on his sword, and threatened to sever the ties which bound his kingdom to the throne of the Italian pontiff.

“I have hit it!” said Wolsey at length; “we must combine the two plans — judge the affair in London, and at the same time bind the pontiff at Rome.” And then the able cardinal proposed the draft of a bull, by which the pope, delegating his authority to two legates, should declare that the acts of that delegation should have a perpetual effect, notwithstanding any contrary decrees that might subsequently emanate from his infallible authority. A new mission was decided upon for the accomplishment of this bold design.

Wolsey, annoyed by the folly of Knight and his colleagues, desired men of another stamp. He therefore cast his eyes on his own secretary, Stephen Gardiner, an active man, intelligent, supple, and crafty, a learned canonist, desirous of the king's favor, and, above all, a good Romanist, which at Rome was not without its advantage. Gardiner was in small the living image of his master; and hence the cardinal sometimes styled him the half of himself. Edward Fox, the chief almoner, was joined with him — a moderate, influential man, a particular friend of Henry's, and a zealous advocate of the divorce. Fox was named first in the commission; but it was agreed that Gardiner should be the real head of the embassy. "Repeat without ceasing," Wolsey told them, "that his majesty cannot do otherwise than separate from the queen. Attack each one on his weak side.

Declare to the pope that the king promises to defend him against the emperor; and to the cardinals that their services will be nobly rewarded.

If that does not suffice, let the energy of your

words be such as to excite a wholesome fear in the pontiff." Fox and Gardiner, after a gracious reception at Paris (23rd February) by Francis I, arrived at Orvieto on the 20th of March, after many perils, and with their dress in such disorder, that no one could have taken them for ambassadors of Henry VIII. "What a city!" they exclaimed, as they passed through its streets; "what ruins, what misery! It is indeed truly called Orvieto (urbs vetus)!" The state of the town gave them no very grand idea of the state of the popedom, and they imagined that with a pontiff so poorly lodged, their negotiation could not be otherwise than easy. "I give you my house," said Da Casale, to whom they went, "my room and my own bed;" and as they made some objections, he added: "It is not possible to lodge you elsewhere; I have even been forced to borrow what was necessary to receive you." Da Casale, pressing them to change their clothes, which were still dripping (they had just crossed a river on their mules), they replied, that being obliged to travel post, they had not been able to bring a change of raiment. "Alas!" said Casale, "what is to be done? there are few persons in

Orvieto who have more garments than one; even the shopkeepers have no cloth for sale; this town is quite a prison.

People say the pope is at liberty here. A pretty liberty indeed! Want, impure air, wretched lodging, and a thousand other inconveniences, keep the holy father closer than when he was in the Castle of St. Angelo.

Accordingly, he told me the other day, it was better to be in captivity at Rome than at Liberty here." In two days, however, they managed to procure some new clothing; and being now in a condition to show themselves, Henry's agents were admitted to an after-dinner audience on Monday the 22nd of March (1528).

Da Casale conducted them to an old building in ruins. "This is where his holiness lives," he said. They looked at one another with astonishment, and crossing the rubbish lying about, passed through three chambers whose ceilings had fallen in, whose windows were curtainless, and in which thirty

persons, “riff-raff, were standing against the bare walls for a garnishment.” This was the pope’s court.

At length the ambassadors reached the pontiff’s room, and placed Henry’s letters in his hands. “Your holiness,” said Gardiner, “when sending the king a dispensation, was pleased to add, that if this document were not sufficient, you would willingly give a better. It is that favor the king now desires.” The pope with embarrassment strove to soften his refusal. “I am informed,” he said, “that the king is led on in this affair by a secret inclination, and that the lady he loves is far from being worthy of him.” Gardiner replied with firmness: “The king truly desires to marry again after the divorce, that he may have an heir to the crown; but the woman he proposes to take is animated by the noblest sentiments; the cardinal of York and all England do homage to her virtues.” The pope appeared convinced. “Besides,” continued Gardiner, “the king has written a book on the motives of his divorce.” — “Good! come and read it to me tomorrow,” rejoined Clement.

The next day the English envoys had hardly appeared before Clement took Henry’s book, ran over it as he walked up and down the room, and then seating himself on a long bench covered with an old carpet, “not worth twenty pence,” says an annalist, he read the book aloud. He counted the number of arguments, made objections as if Henry were present, and piled them one upon another without waiting for an answer. “The marriages forbidden in Leviticus,” said he, in a short and quick tone of voice, “are permitted in Deuteronomy; now Deuteronomy coming after Leviticus, we are bound by the latter. The honor of Catherine and the emperor is at stake, and the divorce would give rise to a terrible war.” The pope continued speaking, and whenever the Englishmen attempted to reply, he bade them be silent, and kept on reading. “It is an excellent book,” said he, however, in a courteous tone, when he had ended; “I shall keep it to read over again at my leisure.” Gardiner then presenting a draft of the commission which Henry required, Clement made answer: “It is too late to look at it now; leave it

with me.” — “But we are in haste,” added Gardiner.

— “Yes, yes, I know it,” said the pope. All his efforts tended to protract the business.

On the 28th of March, the ambassadors were conducted to the room in which the pope slept; the cardinals Sanctorum Quatuor and De Monte, as well as the councillor of the Rota, Simonetta, were then with him. Chairs were arranged in a semicircle. “Be seated,” said Clement, who stood in the middle. “Master Gardiner, now tell me what you want.” — “There is no question between us but one of time. You promised to ratify the divorce, as soon as it was pronounced; and we require you to do before what you engage to do after. What is right on one day, must be right on another.” Then, raising his voice, the Englishman added: “If his majesty perceives that no more respect is paid to him than to a common man, he will have recourse to a remedy which I will not name, but which will not fail in its effect.” The pope and his councilors looked at one another in silence; they had

understood him. The imperious Gardiner, remarking the effect which he had produced, then added in an absolute tone: “We have our instructions, and are determined to keep to them.” — “I am ready to do everything compatible with my honor,” exclaimed Clement, in alarm. — “What your honor would not permit you to grant,” said the proud ambassador, “the honor of the king, my master, would not permit him to ask.” Gardiner’s language became more imperative every minute. “Well, then,” said Clement, driven to extremity, “I will do what the king demands, and if the emperor is angry, I cannot help it.” The interview, which had commenced with a storm, finished with a gleam of sunshine.

That bright gleam soon disappeared: Clement, who imagined he saw in Henry a Hannibal at war with Rome, wished to play the temporizer, the Fabius Cunctator. “Bis dat qui cito dat,” said Gardiner sharply, who observed this manoeuvre. — “It is a question of law,” replied the pope, “and as I am very ignorant in these matters, I must give the doctors of the canon law the necessary time to

make it all clear.” — “By his delays Fabius Maximus saved Rome,” rejoined Gardiner; “you will destroy it by yours.” — “Alas!” exclaimed the pope, “if I say the king is right, I shall have to go back to prison.” — “When truth is concerned,” said the ambassador, “of what consequence are the opinions of men?” Gardiner was speaking at his ease, but Clement found that the castle of St. Angelo was not without weight in the balance. “You may be sure that I shall do everything for the best,” replied the modern Fabius. With these words the conference terminated.

Such were the struggles of England with the popedom — struggles which were to end in a definitive rupture. Gardiner knew that he had a skillful adversary to deal with; too cunning to allow himself to be irritated, he coolly resolved to frighten the pontiff: that was in his instructions. On the Friday before Palm Sunday, he was ushered into the pope’s closet; there he found Clement attended by De Monte, Sanctorum Quatuor, Simonetta, Staffileo, Paul, auditor of the Rota, and Gambara. “It is impossible,” said the cardinals, “to

grant a decretal commission in which the pope pronounces de jure in favor of the divorce, with a promise of confirmation de facto." Gardiner insisted; but no persuasion, "neither dulce nor poynante," could move the pontiff. The envoy judged the moment had come to discharge his strongest battery. "O perverse race," said he to the pontiff's ministers, "instead of being harmless as doves, you are as full of dissimulation and malice as serpents; promising everything but performing nothing. England will be driven to believe that God has taken from you the key of knowledge, and that the laws of the popes, ambiguous to the popes themselves, are only fit to be cast into the fire.(Digna esse quae mandetur flammis pontificia jura. Ibid.) The king has hitherto restrained his people, impatient of the Romish yoke; but he will now give them the rein." A long and gloomy silence followed. Then the Englishman, suddenly changing his tone, softly approached Clement, who had left his seat, and conjured him in a low voice to consider carefully what justice required of him. "Alas!" replied Clement, "I tell you again, I am ignorant in these matters. According to the maxims

of the canon law the pope carries all laws in the tablets of his heart, but unfortunately God has never given me the key that opens them." As he could not escape by silence, Clement retreated under cover of a jest, and heedlessly pronounced the condemnation of the popedom. If he had never received the famous key, there was no reason why other pontiffs should have possessed it. The next day he found another loophole; for when the ambassadors told him that the king would carry on the matter without him, he sighed, drew out his handkerchief, and said as he wiped his eyes: "Would to God that I were dead!" Clement employed tears as a political engine.

"We shall not get the decretal commission," (that which pronounced the divorce) said Fox and Gardiner after this, "and it is not really necessary.

Let us demand the general commission (authorizing the legates to pronounce it), and exact a promise that shall supply the place of the act which is denied us." Clement, who was ready to make all the promises in the world, swore to ratify

the sentence of the legates without delay. Fox and Gardiner then presented to Simonetta a draft of the act required. The dean, after reading it, returned it to the envoys, saying, “It is very well, I think, except the end; show it Sanctorum Quatuor.” The next morning they carried the draft to that cardinal: “How long has it been the rule for the patient to write the prescription? I always thought it was the physician’s business.” — “No one knows the disease so well as the patient,” replied Gardiner: “and this disease may be of such a nature that the doctor cannot prescribe the remedy without taking the patient’s advice.” Sanctorum Quatuor read the prescription, and then returned it, saying: “It is not bad, with the exception of the beginning. Take the draft to De Monte and the other councilors.” The latter liked neither beginning, middle, nor end. “We will send for you this evening,” said De Monte.

Three of four days having elapsed, Henry’s envoys again waited on the pope, who showed them the draft prepared by his councilors. Gardiner remarking in it additions, retrenchments, and

corrections, threw it disdainfully from him, and said coldly: “Your holiness is deceiving us; you have selected these men to be the instruments of your duplicity.” Clement, in alarm, sent for Simonetta; and after a warm discussion, the envoys, more discontented than ever, quitted the pope at one in the morning.

The night brings wisdom. “I only desire two little words more in the commission,” said Gardiner next day to Clement and Simonetta. The pope requested Simonetta to wait upon the cardinals immediately; the latter sent word that they were at dinner, and adjourned the business until the morrow.

When Gardiner heard of this epicurean message, he thought the time had come for striking a decisive blow. A new tragedy began. “We are deceived,” exclaimed he “you are laughing at us. This is not the way to gain the favor of princes. Water mixed with wine spoils it; your corrections nullify our document. These ignorant and suspicious priests have spelled over our draft as if a

scorpion was hidden under every word. — You made us come to Italy," said he to Staffileo and Gambara, "like hawks which the fowler lures by holding out to them a piece of meat; and now that we are here, the bait has disappeared, and, instead of giving us what we sought, you pretend to lull us to sleep by the sweet voice of the sirens." Then, turning to Clement, the English envoy added, "Your holiness will have to answer for this." The pope sighed and wiped away his tears. "It was God's pleasure," continued Gardiner, whose tone became more threatening every minute, "that we should see with our own eyes the disposition of the people here. It is time to have done. Henry is not an ordinary prince, — bear in mind that you are insulting the defender of the faith.....You are going to lose the favor of the only monarch who protects you, and the apostolical chair, already tottering, will fall into dust, and disappear entirely amidst the applause of all Christendom." Gardiner paused. The pope was moved. The state of Italy seemed to confirm but too strongly the sinister predictions of the envoy of Henry VIII. The imperial troops, terrified and pursued by Lautrec, had abandoned

Rome and retired on Naples. The French general was following up this wretched army of Charles V, decimated by pestilence and debauchery; Doria, at the head of his galleys, had destroyed the Spanish fleet; Gaeta and Naples only were left to the imperialists; and Lautrec, who was besieging the latter place, wrote to Henry on the 26th of August that all would soon be over. The timid Clement VII had attentively watched all these catastrophes. Accordingly, Gardiner had hardly denounced the danger which threatened the popedom, before he turned pale with affright, rose from his seat, stretched out his arms in terror, as if he had desired to repel some monster ready to devour him, and exclaimed, “Write, write!

Insert whatever words you please.” As he said this, he paced up and down the room, raising his hands to heaven and sighing deeply, while Fox and Gardiner, standing motionless, looked on in silence. A tempestuous wind seemed to be stirring the depths of the abyss; the ambassadors waited until the storm was abated. At last Clement recovered himself, made a few trivial excuses, and

dismissed Henry’s ministers. It was an hour past midnight.

It was neither morality, nor religion, nor even the laws of the church which led Clement to refuse the divorce; ambition and fear were his only motives.

He would have desired that Henry should first constrain the emperor to restore him his territories. But the king of England, who felt himself unable to protect the pope against Charles, required, however, this unhappy pontiff to provoke the emperor’s anger. Clement reaped the fruits of that fatal system which had transformed the church of Jesus Christ into a pitiful combination of policy and cunning.

On the next day, the tempest having thoroughly abated, Sanctorum Quatuor corrected the commission. It was signed, completed by a leaden seal attached to a piece of string, and then handed to Gardiner, who read it.

The bull was addressed to Wolsey, and "authorized him, in case he should acknowledge the nullity of Henry's marriage, to pronounce judicially the sentence of divorce, but without noise or display of judgment; for that purpose he might take any English bishop for his colleague." — "All that we can do you can do," said the pope. "We are very doubtful," said the importunate Gardiner after reading the bull, "whether this commission, without the clauses of confirmation and revocation, will satisfy his majesty; but we will do all in our power to get him to accept it." — "Above all, do not speak of our altercations," said the pope. Gardiner, like a discreet diplomatist, did not scruple to note down every particular in cipher in the letters whence these details are procured. "Tell the king," continued the pontiff, "that this commission is on my part a declaration of war against the emperor, and that I now place myself under his majesty's protection." The chief almoner of England departed for London with the precious document.

But one storm followed close upon another.

Fox had not long quitted Orvieto when new letters arrived from Wolsey, demanding the fourth of the acts previously requested, namely, the engagement to ratify at Rome whatever the commissioners might decide in England. Gardiner was to set about it in season and out of season; the verbal promise of the pope counted for nothing; this document must be had, whether the pope was ill, dying, or dead. “Ego et Rex meus, his majesty and I command you,” said Wolsey; “this divorce is of more consequence to us than twenty popedoms.” The English envoy renewed the demand. “Since you refuse the decretal,” he said, “there is the greater reason why you should not refuse the engagement.” This application led to fresh discussion and fresh tears. Clement gave way once more; but the Italians, more crafty than Gardiner, reserved a loophole in the document through which the pontiff might escape. The messenger Thaddeus carried it to London; and Gardiner left Orvieto for Rome to confer with Campeggio.

Clement was a man of penetrating mind, and although he knew as well as any how to deliver a

clever speech, he was irresolute and timid; and accordingly the commission had not long been despatched before he repented. Full of distress, he paced the ruined chambers of his old palace, and imagined he saw hanging over his head that terrible sword of Charles the Fifth, whose edge he had already felt. “Wretch that I am,” said he; “cruel wolves surround me; they open their jaws to swallow me up.....I see none but enemies around me. At their head is the emperor.....What will he do? Alas! I have yielded that fatal commission which the general of the Spanish observance had enjoined me to refuse. Behind Charles come the Venetians, the Florentines, the Duke of Ferrara.....They have cast lots upon my vesture. ....Next comes the king of France, who promises nothing, but looks on with folded arms; or rather, what perfidy! calls upon me at this critical moment to deprive Charles V of his crown.....And last, but not least, Henry VIII, the defender of the faith, indulges in frightful menaces against me.....The emperor desires to maintain the queen on the throne of England; the latter, to put her away.....Would to God that Catherine were in her

grave! But, alas! she lives.....to be the apple of discord dividing the two greatest monarchies, and the inevitable cause of the ruin of the popedom.....Wretched man that I am! how cruel is my perplexity, and around me I can see nothing but horrible confusion.”

Chapter 11

Fox’s Report to Henry and Anne

During this time Fox was making his way to England. On the 27th of April he reached Paris; on the 2nd of May he landed at Sandwich, and hastened to Greenwich, where he arrived the next day at five in the evening, just as Wolsey had left for London. Fox’s arrival was an event of great importance. “Let him go to Lady Anne’s apartments,” said the king, “and wait for me there.” Fox told Anne Boleyn of his and Gardiner’s exertions, and the success of their mission, at which she expressed her very great satisfaction. Indeed, more than a year had elapsed since her return to England, and she no longer resisted Henry’s project. “Mistress Anne always called me Master Stephen,” wrote Fox to Gardiner, “her thoughts were so full of you.” The king appeared and Anne withdrew.

“Tell me as briefly as possible what you have done,” said Henry. Fox placed in the king’s hands the pope’s insignificant letter, which he bade his almoner read; then that from Staffileo, which was put on one side; and, lastly, Gardiner’s letter, which Henry took hastily and read himself. “The pope has promised us,” said Fox, as he terminated his report, “to confirm the sentence of the divorce, as soon as it has been pronounced by the commissioners.” — “Excellent!” exclaimed Henry; and then he ordered Anne to be called in. “Repeat before this lady,” he said to Fox, “what you have just told me.” The almoner did so. “The pope is convinced of the justice of your cause,” he said in conclusion, “and the cardinal’s letter has convinced him that my lady is worthy of the throne of England.” — “Make your report to Wolsey this very night,” said the king.

It was ten o’clock when the chief almoner reached the cardinal’s palace; he had gone to bed, but immediate orders were given that Fox should be conducted to his room. Being a churchman, Wolsey could understand the pope’s artifices better

than Henry; accordingly, as soon as he learnt that Fox had brought the commission only, he became alarmed at the task imposed upon him. “What a misfortune!” he exclaimed: “your commission is no better than Gambara’s.....However, go and rest yourself; I will examine these papers tomorrow.” Fox withdrew in confusion. “It is not bad,” said Wolsey the next day, “but the whole business still falls on me alone! — Never mind, I must wear a contented look, or else.....” In the afternoon he summoned into his closet Fox, Dr. Bell, and Viscount Rochford: “Master Gardiner has surpassed himself,” said the crafty supple cardinal; “what a man! what an inestimable treasure! what a jewel in our kingdom!” He did not mean a word he was saying. Wolsey was dissatisfied with everything — with the refusal of the decretal, and with the drawing up of the commission, as well as of the engagement (which arrived soon after in good condition, so far as the outside was concerned). But the king’s ill humor would infallibly recoil on Wolsey; so, putting a good face on a bad matter, he ruminated in secret on the means of obtaining what had been refused him.

“Write to Gardiner,” said he to Fox, “that everything makes me desire the pope’s decretal — the need of unburdening my conscience, of being able to reply to the calumniators who will attack my judgment, and the thought of the accidents to which the life of man is exposed.

Let his holiness, then, pronounce the divorce himself; we engage on our part to keep his resolution secret. But order Master Stephen to employ every kind of persuasion that his rhetoric can imagine.” In case the pope should positively refuse the decretal, Wolsey required that at least Campeggio should share the responsibility of the divorce with him.

This was not all: While reading the engagement, Wolsey discovered the loophole which had escaped Gardiner, and this is what he contrived: — “The engagement which the pope has sent us,” he wrote to Gardiner, “is drawn up in such terms that he can retract it at pleasure; we must therefore find some good way to obtain another. You may do it under this pretense.

You will appear before his holiness with a dejected air, and tell him that the courier, to whom the conveyance of the said engagement was intrusted, fell into the water with his despatches, so that the rescripts were totally defaced and illegible; that I have not dared deliver it into the king's hands, and unless his holiness will grant you a duplicate, some notable blame will be imputed unto you for not taking better care in its transmission. And, further, you will continue: I remember the expressions of the former document, and to save your holiness trouble, I will dictate them to your secretary. Then," added Wolsey, "while the secretary is writing, you will find means to introduce, without its being perceived, as many fat, pregnant, and available words as possible, to bind the pope and enlarge my powers, the politic handling of which the king's highness and I commit unto your good discretion." Such was the expedient invented by Wolsey. The papal secretary, imagining he was making a fresh copy of the original document (which was, by the way, in perfect condition), was at the dictation of the

ambassador to draw up another of a different tenor. The “politic handling” of the cardinal-legate, which was not very unlike forgery, throws a disgraceful light on the policy of the sixteenth century.

Wolsey read this letter to the chief almoner; and then, to set his conscience at rest, he added piously: “In an affair of such high importance, on which depends the glory or the ruin of the realm, — my honor or my disgrace, — the condemnation of my soul or my everlasting merit, — I will listen solely to the voice of my conscience, and I shall act in such a manner as to be able to render an account to God without fear.” Wolsey did more; it seems that the boldness of his declarations reassured him with regard to the baseness of his works. Being at Greenwich on the following Sunday, he said to the king in the presence of Fox, Bell, Wolman, and Tuke: “I am bound to your royal person more than any subject was ever bound to his prince. I am ready to sacrifice my goods, my blood, my life for you.....

But my obligations towards God are greater

still. For that cause, rather than act against his will, I would endure the extremist evils. I would suffer your royal indignation, and, if necessary, deliver my body to the executioners that they might cut it in pieces." What could be the spirit then impelling Wolsey? Was it blindness or impudence? He may have been sincere in the words he addressed to Henry; at the bottom of his heart he may have desired to set the pope above the king, and the church of Rome above the kingdom of England; and this desire may have appeared to him a sublime virtue, such as would hide a multitude of sins. What the public conscience would have called treason was heroism to the Romish priest.

This zeal for the papacy is sometimes met with in conjunction with the most flagrant immorality. If Wolsey deceived the pope, it was to save popery in the realm of England. Fox, Bell, Wolman, and Tuke listened to him with astonishment. Henry, who thought he knew his man, received these holy declarations without alarm; and the cardinal, having thus eased his conscience, proceeded boldly in his iniquities. It seems, however, that the inward

reproaches which he silenced in public, had their revenge in secret. One of his officers entering his closet shortly afterwards, presented a letter addressed to Campeggio for his signature. It ended thus: “I hope all things shall be done according to the will of God, the desire of the king, the quiet of the kingdom, and to our honor with a good conscience.” The cardinal having read the letter, dashed out the four last words. Conscience has a sting from which none can escape, not even a Wolsey.

However, Gardiner lost no time in Italy. When he met Campeggio (to whom Henry VIII had given a palace at Rome, and a bishopric in England), he entreated him to go to London and pronounce the divorce. This prelate, who was to be empowered in 1530 with authority to crush Protestantism in Germany, seemed bound to undertake a mission that would save Romanism in Britain. But proud of his position at Rome, where he acted as the pope’s representative, he cared not for a charge that would undoubtedly draw upon him either Henry’s hatred or the emperor’s anger.

He begged to be excused. The pope spoke in a similar tone. When he was informed of this, the terrible Tudor, beginning to believe that Clement desired to entangle him, as the hunter entangles the lion in his toils, gave vent to his anger on Tuke, Fox, and Gardiner, but particularly on Wolsey.

Nor were reasons wanting for this explosion. The cardinal, perceiving that his hatred against Charles had carried him too far, pretended that it was without his orders that Clarencieux, bribed by France, had combined with the French ambassador to declare war against the emperor; and added that he would have the English king-at-arms put to death as he passed through Calais. This was an infallible means of preventing disagreeable revelations.

But the herald, who had been forewarned, crossed by way of Boulogne, and, without the cardinal’s knowledge, obtained an interview with Henry, before whom he placed the orders he had received from Wolsey in three consecutive letters.

The king, astonished at his minister's impudence, exclaimed profanely: "O Lord Jesu, the man in whom I had most confidence told me quite the contrary." He then summoned Wolsey before him, and reproached him severely for his falsehoods. The wretched man shook like a leaf. Henry appeared to pardon him, but the season of his favor had passed away. Henceforward he kept the cardinal as one of those instruments we make use of for a time, and then throw away when we have no further need of them.

The king's anger against the pope far exceeded that against Wolsey; he trembled from head to foot, rose from his seat, then sat down again, and vented his wrath in the most violent language: — "What!" he exclaimed, "I shall exhaust my political combinations, empty my treasury, make war upon my friends, consume my forces.....and for whom?.....for a heartless priest who, considering neither the exigencies of my honor, nor the peace of my conscience, nor the prosperity of my kingdom, nor the numerous benefits which I have lavished on him, refuses me a favor, which he

ought, as the common father of the faithful, to grant even to an enemy.....Hypocrite!.....You cover yourself with the cloak of friendship, you flatter us by crafty practices, but you give us only a bastard document, and you say like Pilate: It matters little to me if this king perishes, and all his kingdom with him; take him and judge him according to your law!.....I understand you.....you wish to entangle us in the briers, to catch us in a trap, to lure us into a pitfall.....But we have discovered the snare; we shall escape from your ambuscade, and brave your power." Such was the language then heard at the court of England, says an historian. The monks and priests began to grow alarmed, while the most enlightened minds already saw in the distance the first gleams of religious liberty. One day, at a time when Henry was proving himself a zealous follower of the Romish doctrines, Sir Thomas More was sitting in the midst of his family, when his son-in-law, Roper, now become a warm papist, exclaimed: "Happy kingdom of England, where no heretic dares show his face!" — "That is true, son Roper," said More; "we seem to sit now upon the mountains, treading

the heretics under our feet like ants; but I pray God that some of us do not live to see the day when we gladly would wish to be at league with them, to suffer them to have their churches quietly to themselves, so that they would be content to let us have ours peaceably to ourselves." Roper angrily replied: "By my word, sir, that is very desperately spoken!" More, however, was in the right; genius is sometimes a great diviner. The Reformation was on the point of inaugurating religious liberty, and by that means placing civil liberty on an immovable foundation.

Henry himself grew wiser by degrees. He began to have doubts about the Roman hierarchy, and to ask himself, whether a priest-king, embarrassed in all the political complications of Europe, could be the head of the church of Jesus Christ. Pious individuals in his kingdom recognized in Scripture and in conscience a law superior to the law of Rome, and refused to sacrifice at the command of the church their moral convictions, sanctioned by the revelation of God. The hierarchical system, which claims to absorb

man in the papacy, had oppressed the consciences of Christians for centuries.

When the Romish Church had required from such as Berengarius, John Huss, Savonarola, John Wesel, and Luther, the denial of their consciences enlightened by the word, that is to say, by the voice of God, it had shown most clearly how great is the immorality of ultra montane socialism. “If the Christian consents to this enormous demand of the hierarchy,” said the most enlightened men; “if he renounces his own notions of good and evil in favor of the clergy; if he reserves not his right to obey God, who speaks to him in the Bible, rather than men, even if their agreement were universal; if Henry VIII, for instance, should silence his conscience, which condemns his union with his brother’s widow, to obey the clerical voice which approves of it; by that very act he renounces truth, duty, and even God himself.” But we must add, that if the rights of conscience were beginning to be understood in England, it was not about such holy matters as these that the pope and Henry were contending. They were both intriguers — both

dissatisfied, the one desirous of love, the other of power.

Be that as it may, a feeling of disgust for Rome then took root in the king's heart, and nothing could afterwards eradicate it. He immediately made every exertion to attract Erasmus to London. Indeed, if Henry separated from the pope, his old friends, the humanists, must be his auxiliaries, and not the heretical doctors. But Erasmus, in a letter dated 1st June, alleged the weak state of his health, the robbers who infested the roads, the wars and rumors of wars then afloat. "Our destiny leads us," he said; "let us yield to it." It is a fortunate thing for England that Erasmus was not its reformer.

Wolsey noted this movement of his master's, and resolved to make a strenuous effort to reconcile Clement and Henry; his own safety was at stake. He wrote to the pope, to Campeggio, to Da Casale, to all Italy. He declared that if he was ruined, the popedom would be ruined too, so far at least as England was concerned: "I would obtain the decretal bull with my own blood, if possible,"

he added. “Assure the holy father on my life that no mortal eye shall see it.” Finally, he ordered the chief almoner to write to Gardiner: “If Campeggio does not come, you shall never return to England;” an infallible means of stimulating the secretary’s zeal.

This was the last effort of Henry VIII. Bourbon and the prince of Orange had not employed more zeal a year before in scaling the walls of Rome.

Wolsey’s fire had inflamed his agents; they argued, entreated, stormed, and threatened. The alarmed cardinals and theologians, assembling at the pope’s call, discussed the matter, mixing political interests with the affairs of the church. At last they understood what Wolsey now communicated to them. “Henry is the most energetic defender of the faith,” they said. “It is only by acceding to his demand that we can preserve the kingdom of England to the popedom. The army of Charles is in full flight, and that of Francis triumphs.” The last of these arguments decided the question; the pope suddenly felt a great

sympathy for Wolsey and for the English church; the emperor was beaten, therefore he was wrong. Clement granted everything.

First, Campeggio was desired to go to London. The pontiff knew that he might reckon on his intelligence and inflexible adhesion to the interests of the hierarchy; even the cardinal's gout was of use, for it might help to innumerable delays. Next, on the 8th of June, the pope, then at Viterbo, gave a new commission, by which he conferred on Wolsey and Campeggio the power to declare null and void the marriage between Henry and Catherine, with liberty for the king and queen to form new matrimonial ties. A few days later he signed the famous decretal by which he himself annulled the marriage between Henry and Catherine; but instead of intrusting it to Gardiner, he gave it to Campeggio, with orders not to let it go out of his hands. Clement was not sure of the course of events: if Charles should decidedly lose his power, the bull would be published in the face of Christendom; if he should recover it, the bull would be burnt.

In fact, the flames did actually consume some time afterwards this decree which Clement had wetted with his tears as he put his name to it.

Finally, on the 23rd of July, the pope signed a valid engagement, by which he declared beforehand that all retractation of these acts should be null and void. Campeggio and Gardiner departed. Charles's defeat was as complete at Rome as at Naples; the justice of his cause had vanished with his army.

Nothing, therefore, was wanting to Henry's desires. He had Campeggio, the commission, the decretal bull of divorce signed by the pope, and the engagement giving an irrevocable value to all these acts. Wolsey was conqueror, — the conqueror of Clement!.....He had often wished to mount the restive courser of the popedom and to guide it at his will, but each time the unruly steed had thrown him from the saddle. Now he was firm in his seat, and held the horse in hand. Thanks to Charles's reverses, he was master at Rome. The popedom,

whether it was pleased or not, must take the road he had chosen, and before which it had so long recoiled. The king’s joy was unbounded, and equalled only by Wolsey’s. The cardinal, in the fullness of his heart, wishing to show his gratitude to the officers of the Roman court, made them presents of carpets, horses, and vessels of gold. All near Henry felt the effects of his good humor. Anne smiled; the court indulged in amusements; the great affair was about to be accomplished; the New Testament to be delivered to the flames. The union between England and the popedom appeared confirmed for ever, and the victory which Rome seemed about to gain in the British isles might secure her triumph in the west. Vain omens! far different were the events in the womb of the future.