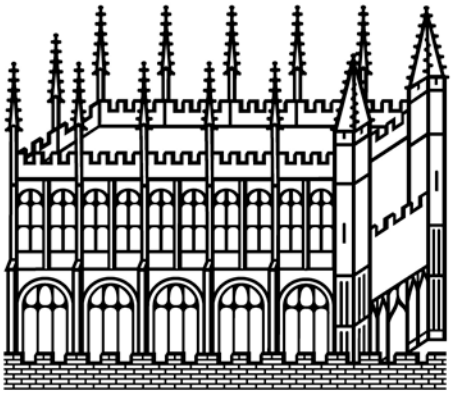

THE STORY OF CRANMER

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THE STORY OF CRANMER,

Archbishop of Canterbury.

BY THE

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EDINBURGH:
WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND CO.
1876.

MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

THE STORY OF CRANMER.

THOMAS CRANMER was born at Aslacton, Northamptonshire, on the 2d July 1489, being the second son of Thomas Cranmer and Agnes Hatfield. The family was old and respectable, and ranked among the landed gentry of the county. He was put to school in his birthplace, his teacher being 'a rude parish clerk,' more noted for the rigour of his discipline than for any other tutorial quality with which we have been made acquainted. His education in his boyhood, being meant for that of a gentleman, included other branches, as hunting, hawking, and riding, in which it would seem that he made as

much proficiency as in letters. It is recorded of him, that in after life, though his sight was very defective, he 'could shoot with the long-bow, and many times kill the deer with his cross-bow;' and that he could mount and ride the most spirited and unruly steed that came into his stables.

In 1503, before which he had lost his father, and when he was only fourteen years of age, he was sent to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he made good progress, became Master of Arts, and, about 1510, was elected a fellow of his college. Two years had not elapsed when he married, and thus forfeited his fellowship. His wife was related to the wife of the keeper of the Dolphin Inn, Cambridge. After their marriage, she resided in the house of that relation, which he, of course, frequented; and hence the silly gossip, not without a tinge of malignity, which, after he had risen to the Primacy, represented him as 'but an hostler, and therefore without all good learning.'

On the loss of his fellowship, he was appointed a reader or lecturer in Magdalen, then Buckingham, College. His college life was a life of assiduous

and unwearied study; and his studies were not confined within the ordinary academic range. He intermeddled with all knowledge, and sought it at all acceptable sources, old and new—in the writings of Erasmus and Luther, as well as in those of the Fathers and the Schoolmen. The controversies that had begun to be agitated about religion he appealed to the book of God, humbly and ingenuously asking, What saith the Scripture? This led him to the Bible, which became for a period of three years his almost exclusive study; and to this he owed much of that enlarged, accurate, and familiar acquaintance with the sacred volume by which he was distinguished. His mode of studying, too, was thorough and efficient. While the amount of his reading was great, reading was with him a very slow and laborious process. He read with pen in hand, and with a memorandum book open on his desk before him, which he filled with all that struck him as most noteworthy, transcribing many passages, and making references to and abstracts of others. These books grew in process of time into many volumes, which he

named his *Adversaria*, and which were of invaluable use to him in the discussions and controversies in which he had afterwards to take part.

About a year after his marriage, his wife died in childbed; and his own College of Jesus showed its esteem for him in a way as emphatic as it was uncommon. It re-elected him to the fellowship which he had sacrificed for connubial bliss, enabling him to prosecute his studies under the advantages which he had foregone; and this, doubtless, helped so to strengthen his attachment to his own college, that he declined the offer of a tempting preferment in Wolsey's new College of Christ Church, Oxford.

Cranmer took his degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1523, soon after which he was appointed to the Divinity lectureship in Jesus College, and to the office of a public examiner in Theology to the University. This gave him an opportunity, which he did not fail to improve, of promoting the study of the Scriptures in the University. In those days too many aspirants to Divinity degrees were as ignorant of the Scriptures as the Bishop of Dun-

keld, who thanked God that he knew neither the Old Testament nor the New. Cranmer refused the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor of Divinity to all candidates for them, till they satisfied him that they had acquired a decent measure of acquaintance with that volume which it is the office of divines to teach.

It was in 1529 that he first came under the notice of Henry VIII. Instead of deciding Henry's suit for a divorce from his queen, Catherine of Arragon, Campeggio and Wolsey had only reported their proceedings in the case to Rome. Henry was bitterly disappointed; and to soothe his mortified feelings, he made a progress through certain parts of his dominions, accompanied by the equally disappointed and mortified Anne Boleyn. Fox and Gardiner, afterwards Bishops of Hereford and Winchester, were in the King's suite in that progress, and incidentally spent an evening with Cranmer in the house of a Mr. Cressy, residing in the parish of Waltham Abbey, Essex, the education of whose sons Cranmer had charge of, and whither he had betaken himself on the outbreak

of a virulent epidemic at Cambridge. On that memorable evening they discussed with him the all-absorbing question of the royal divorce. Cranmer's opinion was, that the lawfulness of Henry's marriage to the wife of his deceased brother could be rightly decided only by Scripture, with the laws of which popes had no power to dispense; and that the law of Scripture on the point might be satisfactorily ascertained by inquiring of the divines in the several Universities of Europe.

Fox and Gardiner reported this opinion to Henry, who was beyond measure delighted with it.

'Where,' said he, 'is this Dr. Cranmer? Is he still at Waltham?'

'We left him there,' was the reply.

'Marry,' rejoined the King, 'I will surely speak with him. Therefore let him be sent for out of hand, for I perceive that he hath the right sow by the ears. If I had known this device but two years ago, it had saved me a great piece of money, and had also rid me of much disquietude.'

Cranmer was sent for accordingly, was brought to London much against his will, and was intro-

duced to Henry, who made his case in the matter of the divorce a most pious one; protesting that nothing but trouble of conscience, lest he should be living in sin, moved him to seek separation from a queen, than whom 'never had prince a more gentle, a more obedient and loving companion and wife; nor did he ever fancy women in all respects better, if this doubt (of the lawfulness of their marriage) had not arisen.' The interview ended with Cranmer's promising to write a treatise on the question, giving up for the present all other engagements, and being accommodated and entertained in the house of the Earl of Wiltshire (the father of Anne Boleyn), at Durham Place.

The treatise, when finished, was presented to Henry, who asked Cranmer, 'Will you abide by this that you have here written before the Bishop of Rome?'

'That will I do, by God's grace,' answered Cranmer, 'if your Majesty do send me there.'

'Marry,' said the King, 'I will send you even to him in a sure embassage.'

And so he did by and by. Cranmer's treatise

having been widely circulated in Europe, a royal commission was sent abroad to collect the opinions of the Universities, and to urge the divorce at Rome. The commission consisted of the Earl of Wiltshire, Cranmer, Lee, Stokesley, and other learned men. The Universities of the Continent generally declared in Henry's favour—those excepted which were under the influence of Charles v., Catherine's nephew. When the commissioners reached Rome, his Holiness received them in state, holding out his foot to be kissed by them; which the Earl of Wiltshire disdained to do, and the rest followed his example. They offered to prove that marriage to a brother's wife is contrary to the law of God, for the violation of which the Pope could legitimately give no dispensation. Promises that the question should be disputed were made again and again; days for disputing it were appointed again and again, but when they came, and Henry's ambassadors appeared, no man appeared to dispute with them. They were treated with courtesy and respect, but they made no progress with their mission; and, forced

to despair of making any, they all returned to London except Cranmer, and at the end of the year (1530) he followed them, returning by Germany, having seen in Rome 'many things contrary to God's honour.' His visit to the holy city had much the same effect on him as Luther's visit to it had upon him.

On his arrival in London, Cranmer found Henry in a state bordering on ecstasy. The foreign Universities had taken his side, pronouncing against the lawfulness of his marriage to Catherine, and in favour of the dissolution of it. The Convocations, both of Canterbury and York, had done the same. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had done the same, though not without great debate and difficulty, and a little royal pressure, in which the 'young gentlemen,' who proved more unmanageable than the old, were 'admonished that, if they went on to play the masters as they had begun to do, they would find it was not good *irritare crabones*—to meddle with waspish or angry people.' Cranmer having answered Cardinal Pole, who had written against

the proposed divorce, Henry next sent him to the Emperor Charles v., Catherine's nephew, to do what he could to overcome his opposition to the measure. He had no success in the more immediate object of his mission, but he transacted some other important business entrusted to him, having reference to the trade of England with the Low Countries. He had also much intercourse at that time with the German Reformers, which confirmed and increased his own Reforming tendencies. Moreover, he entered anew into the bond of wedlock with a sister of the celebrated Osiander of Nuremburg — an act by which he virtually renounced subjection to the Papal authority, which had enjoined celibacy on the priesthood.

It was while he was then sojourning in Germany that he received the tidings of the death of Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and of the King's intention to promote him to the vacant see. This high preferment he owed to the services he had rendered, and was expected still to render, to Henry in the divorce question. The

offer of it took Cranmer by surprise. He quailed as he thought of the giddy height and the grave responsibility to which his master proposed to raise him, and he begged him to look out for some person more worthy of the appointment. But Henry would listen to no denial on any such plea as personal unfitness. Cranmer therefore pleaded another, and a most formidable difficulty, He could not be installed in Canterbury without the Pope's bulls; these bulls could not be granted except on the condition of his swearing an oath of canonical obedience to his Holiness, and this was what one who had cast off his yoke could not do.

'If,' said he, 'I am to accept this place, I must, like my predecessors, receive it from the hands of the Pope, and this my conscience will not permit me to do. I am convinced that your Majesty is the only supreme head and governor of the Church of England, as well in causes ecclesiastical as temporal; to you, and not to any foreign authority, belongs the right of donation to all benefices and bishoprics; and therefore, if I am

to serve God, my sovereign, and my country in this dignity, I will consent to accept it from the King my master alone, and not from the hand of a stranger, who has no power within this realm.'

Unable to cope with this difficulty, Henry sought the advice of Doctor Oliver, an eminent civilian. The Doctor advised that a person should be sent to take the oath to the Pope in the name of the new Primate, and that the Primate should ratify this person's doing so under protestation. This course was adopted, and Cranmer was consecrated to the archbishopric of Canterbury on the 30th March 1533. He was invested with the pall in virtue of the Papal bulls which he received; and these proceeded on the oath of canonical obedience sworn in his name, while Cranmer was in the meantime declaring that he did not recognise the Pope, but his royal master, as conferring this ecclesiastical dignity; all which he followed up by this protest: 'That he took the oath of fidelity to the Pope in no sense but such as was wholly consistent with the

laws of God, the King's prerogative, and the statutes of the realm; that he did not thereby bind himself from speaking his mind freely in matters of religion, the government of the Church, and the rights of the crown; and that he meant on all occasions to oppose the illegal authority of the Pope, and to condemn his errors.'

Was this a dubious transaction? Would that we could rest in so faint a condemnation of it! But we cannot. It was a nefarious transaction, tampering with the sacredness of an oath. And it could have been no salve to Cranmer's conscience, if he had not been more anxious to have the splendid prize of the Primacy, than to have it with a good conscience. 'To take an oath, protesting that you do not believe in the assertions it contains, and in which its whole meaning and essence consists, is a transaction to which no conscientious minister in the present day could possibly become a party.'

Installed in the archbishopric, Cranmer had soon very momentous work to perform. He invited it, for he was accommodating enough to

address a letter to Henry, urging that the long pending question as to his marriage should be brought to a determination. Encouraged and fortified by the opinions in his favour which he had received, the King was to be no more mocked by Rome, but, disregarding it, was to have the question issued at home. And he was to have this done without delay. The case, indeed, had become one of great urgency. For five years he had separated himself from the society of Catherine. For three years he had lived with Anne Boleyn, whom he had ennobled by the title of the Marchioness of Pembroke—a life which was perfectly understood not to be Platonic. Anne's situation had become delicate, and he had privately married her, in an attic of Whitehall, in the last week of January. This was a state of things which could not brook delay. If his private marriage to Anne was to be valid, and her offspring legitimate, his previous marriage to Catherine, which had now subsisted for twenty-three years, must be annulled as unlawful and invalid. Cranmer accordingly received the King's

command to hold a court, and to give final judgment in the cause.

The Court, composed of canonists and divines, Cranmer convened at Dunstable, in the neighbourhood of Ampthill, where Catherine was residing. Cited to appear before it, Catherine disobeyed the summons, was pronounced contumacious, and the marriage between her and Henry was dissolved, as contrary to the law of God, and as therefore always null and void. The sentence was duly intimated to her, and that she was no longer Queen of England, but only Dowager-Princess of Wales, and was to be addressed and provided for accordingly. She received the intimation with great indignation, and declared that she would sooner be hewn in pieces than submit to such degradation and wrong. Another court was by and by held at Lambeth, in which, after the Royal Proctor had been heard, Cranmer judicially and solemnly 'declared that Henry and the Marchioness of Pembroke had been joined in lawful wedlock, and confirmed their marriage by his pastoral authority.' On the 1st June he crowned the new

Queen in Westminster Hall, the whole ceremonial of the coronation being of unrivalled magnificence; and on the 7th September she was delivered of a daughter, the future illustrious Queen Elizabeth, whom the Archbishop baptized, and to whom he had the honour of being godfather.

If there was in these things any promise of Cranmer's ultimate conversion from Romanism, he was as yet a Romanist in all points save one. Holding King Henry to be the only supreme head of the Church of England, he of course denied the Pope's headship over that Church. But, with this exception, he was yet a sincere and devoted Roman Catholic. He, for example, maintained firmly and jealously the absurd dogma of transubstantiation; and the Sacramentarians, as they were called, who had departed from the Popish faith on the sacrament of the altar, were with him heretics, to be adjudged to the fire. John Frith and Andrew Hewet are sample instances. Frith wrote a book against transubstantiation, and Hewet approved of the book. Frith, examined before Cranmer and the Bishops of London and Winchester,

and found an obstinate heretic, was doomed to the stake. Hewet received the same sentence; and both were burned together in Smithfield, on the 4th July 1533. Thirteen years afterwards, Mrs. Anne Askew and three companions suffered the same fate for the same heresy. Mrs. Askew is described as 'a lady of ancient family, remarkable accomplishments, and great beauty;' and the story of her martyrdom is most touching. 'Her chief offence appears to have been a denial of transubstantiation, upon which point she was repeatedly brought before the Council. Of her examination on these occasions she has left a pathetic and interesting account, which has been preserved by Foxe, and presents a picture of religious persecution which it is impossible to read without horror. On finding her fixed in the resolution to maintain her belief, the next object of the inquisitors was to discover her accomplices, as the King had been informed she could name, if she were willing, a great number of them. Strong suspicions were even entertained that she was secretly encouraged by some of the Privy Council. This, however,

she positively denied; upon which Gardiner and Wriothesley, the Lord Chancellor, ordered Knevet, the lieutenant of the Tower, to put her on the rack. She was then let down into the lower dungeon, where she beheld that dreadful instrument, and the jailor standing beside it, his sleeves tucked up, and ready for his office. Still her courage was unshaken; and the lieutenant, although compelled by his office to obey, was anxious to spare her the extremity of torture. He commanded the jailor to stretch her on the iron platform, but only to "pinch" her; after which, being about to take her down, he was reprimanded by Wriothesley, and ordered to proceed. This he refused, although threatened with the royal displeasure; upon which the other threw off his gown, and drew the rack himself, till her bones and joints were almost plucked asunder. She was then untied, and having fainted away from the excess of torture inflicted on her by this legal monster, was removed from the dungeon in a chair or litter. No persuasion, not even the offer of life, could prevail on her to recant; and she was soon after, with three

other Sacramentarians, publicly burnt at Smithfield.'

The new article on the royal supremacy in causes ecclesiastical, which Cranmer and Henry added to the standard faith of England, created, of course, a new heresy; and for the denial of the said supremacy they persecuted as relentlessly as they did for the denial of any article of the old faith. Ex-Chancellor Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher are again sample instances. It was for this new heresy, it was for refusing to acknowledge the Pope of England in the person of King Henry, that More was sent to the block; of whose trial and condemnation Lord Campbell says that, 'after the lapse of three centuries, during which statesmen, prelates, and kings have been unjustly brought to trial under the same roof, considering the splendour of his talents, the greatness of his acquirements, and the innocence of his life, we must still regard his murder as the blackest crime that ever has been perpetrated in England under the forms of law.' And who does not sympathize with his lordship when he declares, 'With all my Protestant

zeal, I must feel a higher reverence for Sir Thomas More than for Thomas Cromwell and for Cranmer'?

If, about the time of which we now write, there was one thing more than another which was secretly sapping Romanism in England, it was the attention and deference that had begun to be paid to the word of God; and in the circulation of the Scriptures in the English tongue Cranmer was very zealous. He took measures for improving Tyndale's translation of the New Testament. He induced Henry to rescind the interdict which he had laid, in 1531, on the reading of the Bible without the licence of spiritual superiors. He patronized Miles Coverdale in making the first translation of the whole Bible into English, which was published in 1535. In 1537 he encouraged Grafton to reprint the translation of Tyndale and Coverdale, commonly called the Great Bible, and afterwards Cranmer's Bible, from the preface to it written by him; which Bible, at his request, Cromwell showed to the King, and obtained his licence that it might be sold and read by all, till the bishops should set

forth a better translation; 'which,' said Cranmer, 'I think will not be till the day after doomsday.' Next year a royal ordinance informed the people that the King had commanded the Scriptures, in their own tongue, to be openly 'laid forth' in every parish church for their perusal.

All this was, however undesignedly on Cranmer's part, yet most effectively undermining the system of Popery in the land; and this the clergy were astute enough to discern.

'I marvel,' said Stokesley, Bishop of London, 'what my Lord of Canterbury meaneth, that he thus abuseth the people in giving them liberty to read the Scriptures, which doth nothing else but infect them with heresy.'

The curates were of the same mind. The royal ordinance of 1538, to which we have just alluded, they read in their churches, as they were required to do; but they read it 'so low and confusedly that it could not be understood; and some went so far as to exhort their parishioners to neglect it, bidding them live as their fathers had done in times past, the old fashion being the best.' But

in spite of the clergy, large numbers of the people appreciated the boon bestowed on them.

'It was wonderful,' says Strype, 'to see with what joy this book of God was received, not only among the more learned, and those who were noted lovers of the Reformation, but generally all over England among all the common people, and with what greediness God's word was read, and what resort there was to the place appointed for reading it. Every one that could bought the book, and busily read it, or heard it read; and many elderly persons learned to read on purpose.'

The Cromwell whom we have once and again mentioned as concurring and co-operating with Cranmer was Thomas, Lord Cromwell, afterwards created Earl of Essex. Introduced to Henry in 1531, he was the first to advise him to throw off the yoke of Rome, and to take to himself the authority which the Pope had usurped in England. The King was mightily pleased with his views, for, as Godwin says, he was 'much prone to reformation, especially if anything might be gotten by it;' took him into his service, and

made him a Privy Councillor. Having followed his advice as to making himself Pope in his dominions, he by and by appointed Cromwell his Vicar-General, which vested in him all the spiritual authority that belonged to the King as the head of the Church. He was no sooner promoted to this office than he advised a visitation of the monasteries of the kingdom. Commissioners were appointed for this purpose, with ample powers and instructions. Their report was in due time made; and the revelations which it gave of the interior of the religious houses were so revolting to all who had any sense of religion, or morals, or common decency, that the Vicar-General had little difficulty in accomplishing the object he had in view,—the suppression of those houses, and the confiscation of their revenues. In 1536 Parliament passed an Act which suppressed 380 lesser monasteries, which brought a revenue of £32,000 a year to the public exchequer, besides £100,000 in plate and precious stones. The greater revenues were surrendered apace, and yielded to the King £100,000 a year, besides

a large sum in plate and jewels. Such was the computation, but the real value amounted to these sums several times over—some of them, Burnet says, ten times over.

Of this measure Cranmer did not fully approve. It was his 'wish that three or four religious houses should have been preserved in every county, which, under proper regulation, might have offered shelter to contemplative piety, and might have opened a quiet harbour for many a troubled spirit that sighed for rest. It was also his wish, which on proper occasions he never ceased to urge, that the revenues of those establishments, instead of being confiscated to enrich rapacious courtiers, should be reserved as a fund for the establishment and maintenance of schools and colleges throughout the country.'

To the acts of insubordination and rebellion against Rome which have come under our notice, others of a like character were added. Such were the abolition by Parliament of the annats, or first-fruits, which had yielded the Papal See a large revenue; the prohibition of appeals from England

to Rome; and the confirmation to the King of the title of Supreme Head of the Church, with all that the title implied. All these things widened Henry's rupture with Rome; and the Pope retaliated. On Catherine's appeal, he had annulled Cranmer's judgment in the divorce between her and Henry, and had threatened Henry with excommunication, if he did not, before a given date, separate from his new Queen. Next year, Henry having proved disobedient, the Pope executed this threat. He published his bull of excommunication against the obstinate rebel, casting him out of the Holy Church, depriving him of his crown, absolving his subjects from their allegiance, and exhorting all Christian princes to declare war against him.

Henry's loves were in the highest degree capricious and inconstant. His love of Anne Boleyn did not last for quite three years after their marriage. The voluptuous monarch took a fancy for Jane Seymour, daughter of Sir John Seymour of Wolff Hall, Wiltshire, one of Anne's maids of honour; and that the maid might be raised to the

place of the mistress, the latter must be got out of the way. To put her out of the way, Henry had her arrested on the 2d May 1536, thrown into the Tower, tried on a charge of criminal intercourse (which was high treason in her) with five persons, one of whom was her own brother, Viscount Rochford, and sentenced to be 'burned or beheaded at the King's pleasure.' That Anne was innocent of the crime for which she suffered there can be no reasonable doubt. The evidence on which she was convicted would not have the weight of a feather now-a-days in a court of justice. She was sacrificed to Henry's guilty passion for Jane Seymour. The slave of that passion, there was no enormity that could secure and speed the gratification of it to which he was not equal. For this he, more than the tools that did his bidding, murdered Anne Boleyn. On the morning of the day of her execution, the heartless murderer went to hunt in Epping Forest. As he was breakfasting, and looking thoughtful and anxious, the report of a distant gun, the preconcerted signal, was heard.

'Ah! it is done!' he cried, starting up; 'the business is done! Uncouple the dogs, and let us follow the sport.'

In the evening he returned from the Forest gay and merry, and on the following morning he married Jane Seymour, Anne's maid of honour.

Cranmer owed much to the friendship of Anne Boleyn and her family; and truth constrains us to say, that he does not rise in our estimation by the part which he acted in connection with her murder. On the day of her arrest, Henry, to prevent his interference in the case, ordered him to keep to his palace at Lambeth, and on no account to appear at court. Cranmer was dreadfully alarmed. He did indeed venture to intercede for the doomed Queen in letters to the King, but it was in a way which showed that he was as much concerned for his own safety as for hers. He tenderly sympathized with Henry (so he wrote in his letters) in this bitter affliction, and besought him to bear it with resignation! His former good opinion of the Queen made him believe her innocent, but his knowledge of the King's justice and

prudence induced him to believe her guilty! He might be permitted, he hoped, to pray that she might prove her innocence; but if she could not, the man was a traitor who did not call for the severest punishment! How Henry must have laughed in his own sleeve at the intercession of the timid, cringing, selfish, unctuous Primate!

But this was not the worst of Cranmer's conduct in this horrid case. Having divorced Henry and Catherine of Arragon, he had declared the marriage between him and Anne Boleyn valid, and had solemnly sanctioned it by his authority as Metropolitan and judge. This marriage Henry now commanded him to dissolve; and he obeyed! His own heart must have condemned him in doing this; and the wrong which he did he aggravated by attempting to justify it, resting his judgment on a pretended confession which he had extorted from Anne, to the effect that 'there were, and had always been, just and lawful impediments to her marriage to Henry, which had made it always null and void.'

On this proceeding Lord Campbell remarks:

'Not satisfied with knowing that she whom he had so passionately loved was doomed in her youth to suffer a violent and cruel death, he (Henry) resolved before her execution to have a sentence pronounced dissolving his marriage with her, and declaring that it had been null and void from the beginning; not seeing, in the blindness of his rage, that in this case she could not have been guilty of adultery or treason. Nevertheless, in a divorce suit which lasted only a few hours, which Audley (the Lord Chancellor) sanctioned, and in which Cranmer personally pronounced the sentence,—some say on the ground of a pre-contract with the Earl of Northumberland, which he on his oath denied—some on the ground that Henry had cohabited with Mary Boleyn, the sister of Anne,—that marriage was declared null and void which Cranmer himself had solemnized, and which had been declared valid by an Act of Parliament then remaining on the Statute-Book.' His lordship adds, in bitter but just irony, which points to the true explanation of the whole shameless proceeding: 'It is well that Henry did not direct

that Audley should officiate as executioner, with Cranmer as his assistant; for they probably would have obeyed, sooner than have given up the Seals or the Primacy.'

Cranmer continued equally pliant and serviceable to Henry in the difficulties and troubles which he had with future queens.

Jane Seymour, twelve days after giving birth to a son, who became Edward VI., had the felicity of making her exit out of this world by a natural death; and Henry, though very diligent in search of a fourth wife, had to remain a widower for the space of two years. He proposed to several, but his eligibility had rather fallen in the matrimonial market. The Duchess-Dowager of Milan, for example, replied to his proposal, that if she had two heads, one should be at the service of his Majesty, but having only one, she declined his offer. At length he was accepted by the Princess Anne, daughter of John, Duke of Cleves, one of the Protestant princes of Germany. Cromwell's commendations of Anne, and Holbein's flattering miniature of her, made Henry believe that she

was very handsome. But the first sight he had of her most painfully disappointed him; and though he proceeded with the marriage, so disgusting to him were her clumsy person and coarse manners, that in a few months he broke out in violent upbraiding of Cromwell for the imposition he had practised on him, and imperiously commanded him to devise some method by which he might be separated from so unlovely a companion.

Before he had discovered the device wanted, Cromwell had lost his head on Tower Hill. Cranmer at first wrote in his behalf; but his servility to the enthroned butcher he carried so far, that he afterwards gave his vote against his friend! But 'where there's a will there's a way;' and the way taken was, to raise doubts as to the validity of the union between Henry and Anne. A servile Parliament anticipated Henry's wishes by requesting him to investigate the case. It was referred to the 'judgment and determination of grave, learned, honest, and pious ecclesiastics, viz. the archbishops and bishops;' and, to 'the unspeakable disgrace of Cranmer and the other

prelates, whether inclining to the old or the new religion, they declared to the House of Lords that they had examined into the affair of the marriage, by virtue of the King's commission directed to them, and that both by divine and human law they found it invalid;' the reason being twofold, — that Henry had married the princess without the inward consent of his own mind, and there had been a pre-contract between her and the young Prince of Lorraine! A bill founded on this report speedily passed both Houses of Parliament, and received the royal assent. Anne had meekness and wisdom enough to acquiesce, and to say that she would be content with being a humble servant and sister to Henry, in place of his wife; and thus his fourth queen was conveniently disposed of.

The fifth queen was Catherine Howard, niece of the Duke of Norfolk, with whom Henry had fallen deeply in love before his release from Anne of Cleves, and whom he married immediately after. For a year his connubial bliss was perfect; for which he had publicly rendered thanks in his

own chapel, and had ordered the Bishop of Lincoln to prepare a form of thanksgiving for it, to be used in all churches and chapels throughout the kingdom, when, lo! it was pretended to be discovered that, both prior to her marriage and after it, Catherine had led a most abandoned life. Cranmer divulged the dread secret to the astounded King; and, avoiding going into the sickening details of his conduct in the case, suffice it to say that, in getting up evidence against the Queen, he laboured so diligently and so cunningly as to secure the object desired. That object was Catherine Howard's destruction. This Henry desired; and now, as always, there was no lack of instruments to do his will. On the ground of infidelity to his bed, Parliament attainted Catherine of high treason; and on the 13th February 1542, she and Lady Rochford, who had been condemned as an accomplice, were executed within the Tower. Dereham and Culpepper, the Queen's alleged paramours, had been hanged some time before.

An impartial historical writer well remarks:

'The Protestants were as ready to believe in the guilt of the Papist Catherine Howard, as the Papists had been to believe in the guilt of the Protestant Anne Boleyn. Since the triumph and firm establishment of the Reformed doctrines, sympathy and admiration have been incessantly demanded for the unfortunate mother of Queen Elizabeth; but no Protestant tears have been shed for the still more unhappy Catherine Howard. Yet an attentive examination of documents, contemporary histories, and traditions, will convince every impartial mind that the frailties and guilt of Catherine were no more substantiated and proved than were the guilt and frailties of Anne; and that, in the case of both ladies, the tyrant and his slaves bade defiance to all law and justice. A living and distinguished Roman Catholic historian turns Anne Boleyn into a wanton, and Catherine into an innocent martyr. Alas for the slow progress of truth and impartiality! Are these, and other historical subjects of still greater weight, always to be treated of with the same angry passions and the same wilful blindness to

evidence? Is prejudice to hold for ever the scales? Must every history continue to be one-sided?'

While the case of Catherine Howard was pending, Cranmer got a terrible fright. The Duke of Cleves proposed to Henry that he should take back to wife his sister Anne, and sent ambassadors to England on this fool's errand. Cranmer trembled lest he should be suspected of complicity in the heinous offence of attempting to impose on his master so loathed a helpmate, wrote the King a most characteristic letter, and refused to have anything to do with the Cleves ambassadors, 'unless it please the King's Majesty to command him!'

. Henry's sixth and last Queen was Catherine Parr, daughter of Sir Thomas Parr, and widow of Neville, Lord Latimer. She was a well-informed and pretty decided Reformer, and exposed herself to imminent peril by talking a little too freely of her views to her royal consort. She made, indeed, a miraculous escape from the fate of so many of her predecessors; and she

did so by administering to her sovereign lord large doses of ingenious flattery. By these she lulled his rising suspicions and dispelled his gathering ire, and saved Cranmer the task of finding pretexts for pronouncing her marriage to Henry invalid, and bringing her to the block.

Notwithstanding the infirmity with which we have been taxing him, Cranmer was a sincere friend of religious reformation, and an active promoter of it, as far as he thought he could safely be so under Henry, 'a most religious king,' as he described him. He was zealous, as we have seen, for the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular tongue, and for the circulation of them among the people. He rejoiced in the dissolution of the monasteries, those strongholds of Popery, though he disapproved of the secularization of their revenues. Reform in the doctrine of the Church made but little way in Henry's reign. But the beginning, or at least the promise of it, is discernible in the sort of symbolic books issued by his authority:—King Henry's *Primer;* his *Articles to establish Christian Quietness; The In-*

stitution of a Christian Man; and even the greatly deteriorated version of the latter which appeared under the title of *The Erudition of a Christian Man.* The doctrine of all these is a strange medley, a rude compound of Christian truth and antichristian error; 'a mingle-mangle, a hotch-potch,' as Latimer described it. But we owe it to Cranmer that the doctrine of them is not pure, undiluted Popery. Any element of Protestantism in it is to be traced, directly or indirectly, to him.

The reform which took place in Henry's time in the rites and ceremonies of the Church was more palpable, and must also be put to Cranmer's credit. When Henry, in 1536, sent a message to Convocation, commanding it to proceed to the reformation of the rites and ceremonies of the Church, Cranmer argued strenuously in favour of the royal behest. He took an active part in advising and carrying out measures, in the next two years, which sensibly abated some of the grosser superstitions of Popery which had been rampant in the land. A considerable reduction was made in the number of holidays; saint-worship was

rather discouraged; and the temptations to it, in images, relics, shrines, and pilgrimages thereto, were removed. 'One of the orders given to the visitors was to make a minute examination of all the relics and images in any of those houses to which pilgrimages were wont to be made. "In this," says Burnet, "Dr. London did great service. From Reading he writes that the chief relics of idolatry in the nation were these: an angel with one wing, that brought over the spear's head that pierced our Saviour's side. To which he adds a long inventory of their other relics, and says there were as many more as would fill four sheets of paper. He also writes from other places, that he had everywhere taken down their images and trinkets." Some of the images were brought to London, and, for the purpose of exposing the juggling impostures of the monks, were broken up at St. Paul's Cross in the sight of all the people. The rich shrines of our Lady of Walsingham, of Ipswich, of Islington, and many others, were now brought to London, and burned by order of Cromwell.

'The abolition of images and pilgrimages occupied a principal place in a new set of instructions which Cromwell issued to the clergy in 1538.'

In cherishing the infant Reformation, Cranmer did what he could to raise men of kindred views and spirit with himself to high and influential places in the Church. It was under his patronage that Latimer was made Bishop of Worcester, and Thaxton Bishop of Salisbury; and several other like promotions were effected through his influence.

But we have now reached the point at which Henry's apparent movement in the direction of Protestantism was arrested. From various causes, Cranmer's influence at Court began to decline, and that of Gardiner, the able and crafty Bishop of Winchester, to rise; which it did steadily, till, on the death of Cromwell, he became the chief counsellor of the Crown. In this altered state of things, Henry's course was retrograde rather than progressive. As if to make amends for having gone too far in the small reforms which we have

indicated, he sought occasion to make some grand exhibition of his inviolable attachment to the old faith; and he soon found one in the case of Lambert, a person in priest's orders, and teacher of a school in London. Reported to be unsound on the sacrament of the altar, Cranmer summoned him before him, and convicted him of heresy for dissenting from a sermon which he had heard in defence of the corporeal presence in the Eucharist. Like all his contemporaries, Cranmer regarded heretics as fuel for the fire; and the denial of transubstantiation was yet with him one of the worst heresies. This was the last tenet of Popery which he renounced.

From the judgment of the Primate, Lambert appealed to that of the King; and his court for hearing the appeal Henry held in Westminster Hall, with great pomp, and in the presence of a large and most imposing assembly. The Bishop of Chichester opened the proceedings, stating that, from the fact of this appeal having been taken, his 'Majesty was inclined to credit a report which had reached his ears, that credulous people

were persuaded that he had embraced the new doctrines lately circulated in Germany. True it was, he had found the tyranny of Rome intolerable, and had therefore shaken it off; he had discovered monks to be the drones in the bee-hive, and had expelled them; he had abolished the idolatrous worship of images, and given to his people the power of reading God's word, which had hitherto been prohibited by the Church of Rome; but in all other things he had resolved that, during his reign, there should be no further change, and this resolution he was now prepared to enforce.' It was a fine opportunity for Henry displaying not only his zeal for orthodoxy, but his theological erudition and his dialectic powers; and he made the most of it. And parasites did not fail to persuade him, that 'he had got so much reputation to himself by it, that it would effectually refute all aspersions which had been cast on him as if he intended to change the faith; neither did they forget to approach him on his weak side, and magnify all that he had said as if the oracle had uttered it, by which they said it

appeared that he was indeed a defender of the Faith, and supreme head of the Church. The following paragraph is from Tytler's *Life of Henry the Eighth,* and it opens all the glimpse of the proceedings of the court on Lambert's appeal which we can afford to give:—

'The Bishop (of Chichester) having concluded his oration, Henry rose, and looking sternly on the accused, exclaimed: "Ho! good fellow, what is thy name?"

'The prisoner, kneeling, replied, "His real name was Nicolson, although of many he was called Lambert."

'"What!" said the King, "have you two names? I would not trust a man with two names, were he my own brother." Waiving this, however, the monarch came to the main point in debate. "What sayest thou as to the sacrament of the altar? Wilt thou agree to the doctrine of the Church, or wilt thou deny that it is the body of Christ?" at which word he lifted his cap.

'The other then proceeded, but with less vigour

and resolution than had been expected, to declare his reasons against admitting the real presence. Henry replied; then came Cranmer; and for five hours the disputation lasted, the King being his principal opponent, whilst the Archbishop and nine other prelates pressed their arguments upon the prisoner. Lambert, however, was not convinced; and the day being past, and torches beginning to be lighted, it was judged time to conclude the disputation.

'"What sayest thou now," exclaimed the royal disputant, "after these solid reasons and instructions brought forward by such learned men? Wilt thou live or die?"

'"I commit myself," replied he, "into the hands of your Majesty."

'"Then," said the King, "commit thyself into the hands of God, and not into mine."

'"My soul, indeed, I do commend into the hands of God," was the reply of the meek but courageous prisoner, "but my body I wholly yield unto your clemency."

'"Then," said the King, "if you do commend

yourself unto my judgment, you must die, for I will not be a patron unto heretics."

'Cromwell was then desired to read the sentence. It condemned him, "as an obstinate opponent of the truth," to be led to the stake; and he was accordingly executed a few days afterwards.

'"As touching the terrible manner and fashion," says Foxe, "of the burning of this blessed martyr, here it is to be noted that, of all others that have been burned and offered up at Smithfield, there was yet none so cruelly and pitilessly handled as he. For after his legs were consumed and burned up to the stumps, and that the wretched tormentors and enemies of God had withdrawn the fire from him, so that but a small fire and coals were left under him, these two that stood on each side of him, with their halberds, pitched him upon their spikes as far as the chain would reach; and he, lifting up such hands as he had, and his finger-ends flaming with fire, cried unto the people in these words: 'None but Christ, none but Christ;' and so, being let down again from their halberds, fell into the fire, and gave up his life."'

One of the results of the growing ascendancy of Gardiner was the passing, in 1539, of the infamous Act for abolishing diversities of opinion in religion. It was called the Law of the Six Articles, because it established—(1) the doctrine of the real presence in the Eucharist; (2) communion in one kind; (3) the perpetual obligation of vows of chastity; (4) the utility of private masses; (5) the celibacy of the clergy; and (6) the necessity of auricular confession. It was also called the Bloody Statute, because of the penalties by which those Six Articles were enforced. Those who spoke, preached, or wrote against the first Article were to be judged heretics, and burned, without being allowed to recant, and were to forfeit their real and personal estate to the King. Those who preached or obstinately disputed against the other Articles were to suffer death as felons, without benefit of clergy; and those who were, in word or in writing, to declare against them, were to be prisoners during the King's pleasure and to forfeit their goods and chattels for the first offence, and to suffer death for the second. All

incumbents were to read this Act in their churches once a quarter.

Cranmer honoured himself by the strenuous opposition which he offered to the enactment of this statute, though he did not, like Latimer and Thaxton, resign his see when it was adopted; and he would have honoured himself still more had he rested his opposition on the sacred ground of religious liberty; but the idea of liberty, or even of toleration, never dawned on him. The statute bore upon himself very directly and uncomfortably; and this, doubtless, had its own influence in rousing his hostility to it. He had, as we have stated, married a wife on the Continent; and if he was not to be one of the first victims of this barbarous law, he must part with her; and he did so, sending her and the children she had borne him back to her relatives in Germany.

For a while after the passing of the Bloody Statute, Smithfield blazed more than ever with the flames in which heretics were consumed. Henry fed them with Reformers who rejected

any of the theological tenets of Popery; and Papists who refused to own him to be the supreme head of the Church of England, he, at the same time, hanged or beheaded and quartered. To point to a single illustration: In August 1542, Barnes, Garret, and Jerome, distinguished preachers among the Reformers, having been 'committed to the torments of the merciless fire,' the royal savage, to show his impartiality against offenders alike of the old and the new religion, had Powell, Abel, and Featherstone, three Papists, hanged and quartered for denying his ecclesiastical supremacy.

'On this occasion, as on some others, they were coupled together, a Catholic with a Protestant, on the same hurdle, and so drawn to Smithfield, to the horror of both sects. A Frenchman is said to have exclaimed, "Good God, how do people make a shift to live here, where Papists are hanged and anti-Papists are burned?" In the next month the Prior of Doncaster and six others were hanged for defending the institution of the monastic life, a crime now become as capital as the greatest.'

It was not to be expected that, with such new life and energy, Popery would long allow the free circulation among the people of its greatest enemy, the word of God. Accordingly, Henry's preface to the *Erudition of a Christian Man*, published in 1543, bore that the reading and studying of the Old and New Testaments, though necessary to those who were ordained to teach, was not so necessary to those who were taught. Soon after, Parliament enacted 'that the Bible should not be read in public; that it should not be read aloud in any private families, except such as were of noble or gentle degree; that it should not be read privately to oneself, except by men who were householders, and by females who were well-born. By any other women, or any artificer, apprentice, journeyman, servant, or labourer, the opening of the book was unlawful, and an offence to be punished with one month's imprisonment!' This occasioned another weak compliance of Cranmer, and involved him in very melancholy inconsistency.

'Cranmer and *all* the bishops, whether Papists

or Protestants, or half-and-half, concurred in these regulations!'

When Gardiner and his party thought themselves sufficiently strong for effecting Cranmer's destruction, they set themselves to compass it. They concocted a charge of heresy against him, spread out into a long series of articles, which they got the prebendaries of his own cathedral to father, and to send to the Privy Council.

Henry, estimating duly their affected zeal for orthodoxy, resolved at once to thwart their plot against Cranmer. Ordering his barge, he proceeded to Lambeth; called to the Archbishop, as he appeared on the steps by the water-side to welcome his sovereign, 'Oh, my chaplain, now I know who is the greatest heretic in Kent!' and drew out of his sleeve the articles of impeachment against him, many being among his accusers whom he had laid under the deepest obligations to him.

The Primate, falling on his knees, implored the appointment of a commission to thoroughly expiscate the case.

The King answered: 'A commission there shall be; but the Archbishop of Canterbury shall be at the head of it, with such clergy as he may be pleased to appoint.'

A friendly or at least an impartial commission was appointed; and, setting to work promptly and vigorously, brought to light the whole of the dark design hatched against the Primate. Gardiner and the prebendaries had to humble themselves in the dust before their intended victim, who forgave them, and dismissed them with an admonition,—a fine instance of that mildness and clemency to his enemies which gave rise to the current saying about him, 'Do my Lord of Canterbury an ill turn, and he will be your friend as long as he lives.'

Sir John Gostwick was fain to perform like humiliation before Cranmer. In his place in Parliament he attacked him for speaking heretically of the sacrament of the altar.

Hearing of the attack, the King exclaimed in a rage, 'Tell that varlet Gostwick that he hath played a villanous part to abuse in open Par-

liament the Primate of the realm. If he does not instantly acknowledge his fault to my Lord of Canterbury, I will make him the poorest Gostwick that ever bore the name. What! does he pretend that, being in Bedfordshire, he could hear my Lord of Canterbury preaching in Kent?'

Sir John was terror-struck, fled to Lambeth, cast himself on the Archbishop's mercy, and begged him to use his influence to allay the tempest of the royal ire.

On the death, in 1545, of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, Henry's brother-in-law, the most powerful of all Cranmer's friends, his enemies made yet another attempt to accomplish his destruction. They complained to the King that he and his fellow-Reformers had so infected the land with their unsavoury doctrines, that three-fourths of the people had become abominable heretics; and that the plague could not be stayed so long as Cranmer was at large, and a member of his Majesty's Council. Henry affected to listen to them, and to consent that the Primate should be

thrown into the Tower; but that very night he sent for him to Whitehall, and apprised him of the complaint, and of what had passed between him and the complainers.

Cranmer professed his readiness to go to the Tower, provided he had liberty to defend himself against his accusers; when Henry ejaculated, 'O Lord God, what simplicity is yours! Know you not this, that no sooner shall you be in the Tower than the knaves will come forward to arraign you, who, while you are at liberty, will not dare to show their face? No, no; not so, my Lord of Canterbury. Go you to the Council to-morrow, and when you appear before them, demand to be confronted with your accusers. Should there be a moment's hesitation, produce this ring, the sight of which will instantly bring the matter before me.'

Early next morning the Archbishop was in attendance on the Council. They were not ready to admit him, and he was kept waiting among the attending servants in the anteroom, a whisper of which usage was carried to the King. When he

was at length admitted to the Council, and the complaint against him had been heard, he asked to be confronted with his accusers. To this no attention was paid. When he was about to be removed to the Tower, he produced the ring which the King had given him. Filled with consternation, and covered with confusion, they betook themselves to the royal presence, where they were rated soundly.

'Ha, my lords!' said the King, 'I thought that I had a wise and discreet Council; but now I find that I am deceived. How have you handled here my Lord of Canterbury? What make ye of him? Is he a slave, that ye shut him out of the Council chamber among serving-men? Would ye be so handled yourselves?' After discharging at them other taunts and gibes, he said, with much emphasis and solemnity: 'I would have you well understand that I account my Lord of Canterbury a faithful man towards me as ever was prelate in this realm, and one to whom I am in many ways beholden; and therefore' (laying his hand on his breast), 'by the faith I owe unto

God, whosoever loveth me will on that account regard him.'

Abject apology and deprecation followed, and protestations that they were to commit the Primate to the Tower only because they felt assured that, after trial, he would come forth with increased reputation and glory; to which Henry scornfully and indignantly replied: 'Well, I pray you use not my friends so. I perceive now well enough how the world goeth among you. There remaineth malice among you one to another. Let it be avoided out of hand, I would advise you.'

Of Cranmer's personal habits and manner of life at Lambeth, we are told that it was his delight, when public business permitted, to spend three-fourths of the day in study, as he had been wont to do at Cambridge. His usual hour for rising in the morning was five. The next four hours were given to reading and devotion. From nine to dinner (probably about noon) was dedicated to public business, the reception of suitors, and matters connected with his ecclesiastical office. If any of these were not overtaken before dinner,

they were despatched after it. If not so employed, he spent an hour or two at chess, or in looking on others playing that game. He then went to his study, and pursued his literary labours, not sitting in a chair, but standing at a desk. The interval from five to supper was occupied partly in hearing the Common Prayer, and partly in walking or in some other recreation. At supper he was often only an onlooker, conversing with the guests who were enjoying his hospitality. An hour of gentle exercise or of cheerful pastime followed; and at nine he returned to his study, where he remained till he retired to rest.

This economy of time was one of the great secrets of his eminence and usefulness. As has been said of him, 'He was not a bright or ready man, not inventive, utterly without imagination; but his judgment was strong, his powers of analysis great, and his resources were not only boundless, but effectively produced when allowed to produce them in his own way. This was so well understood by Henry the Eighth, that when he was desirous of having any doubt or question solved,

"he would," says Morice, Cranmer's secretary, "but send word to my lord over night, and the next day the King would have in writing notes of the doctors' minds, as well divines as lawyers, both old and new, with a conclusion of his own mind; which he could never get in such readiness of any one, no, not of all his clergy and chaplains about him, in so short a time. For, being thoroughly seen in all kinds of expositors, he could incontinently lay open thirty, forty, sixty, or more somewhiles, of authors. And so, rendering the notes of them altogether, would advertise the King more in one day than all his learned men could do in a month. . . . And therefore it was that the King said on a time to the Bishop of Winchester (Gardiner), the King and my Lord of Winchester defending together that the Canons of the Apostles were of as good authority as the four Evangelists, contrary to my Lord Cranmer's assertion: 'My Lord of Canterbury,' said the King, 'is too old a truant for us twain.'"'

Though as fickle in his attachments as he was violent in his resentments, Henry continued to

the last a fast friend of Cranmer. This great monarch was a very pitiable object in the closing months of his life. His body was a woeful burden. In consequence of the gluttonous habits in which he latterly indulged, it had swollen to such a size that it could not pass through an ordinary door; and it was so weighty and unwieldy, that it had to be moved from one room to another by means of machinery, or by the assistance of numerous attendants. His mind was almost as diseased as his body. The old issue in his leg had become an inveterate ulcer, which kept him in a constant state of pain and excessive irritability. It was alike offensive to the senses and dangerous to life and property to approach this corrupt mass of dying tyranny. The slightest thing displeased him, and his displeasure was a fury and a madness, and nothing on earth could give him a wholesome, pleasurable feeling.

On the 27th January 1547, the physicians in attendance on him gave their opinion that his end was near, and wished their apprehensions to be made known to the sufferer. One courtier after

another shrank from the task. At length Sir Anthony Denny, approaching the bed, and leaning over his Majesty, whispered to him that death was at hand, and recommended him to turn his thoughts to Heaven, and to seek from the mercy of God in Christ an entrance into it for the soul which was about to quit the falling tabernacle.

He thanked Sir Anthony for his fidelity, acknowledged his many and great sins, but expressed the hope of pardon and salvation through Christ.

A conference with some divines was then suggested to him.

'With none other,' said he, 'but the Archbishop Cranmer; and not with him yet. I will first repose myself a little, and, as I then find myself, will determine accordingly.'

After an hour's sleep or stupor, he felt that he was going, and commanded that the Archbishop should be sent for immediately.

He was at Croydon, and posted to Court with all speed on receiving the royal summons; but

before he arrived the King was speechless. He knew him, however, and took him by the hand. Cranmer spoke a few wise, tender, and earnest words of counsel to him as a dying man, and besought him to give a sign if he had hope in his death.

The King responded by grasping the Archbishop's hand as hard as he could, and expired a few moments after, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and the thirty-eighth of his reign.

In his testament, Henry had appointed a regency of sixteen persons, to be governors of his son Edward VI. and of the kingdom till Edward should complete his eighteenth year. Most of those persons were favourably disposed to the Reformed doctrines, and Cranmer was placed at the head of them. He interfered little with civil things, but he took the lead in ecclesiastical affairs; and, as has been said, 'it was in a great measure owing to his exertions that the reformation of the Church of England was nearly advanced to that point where it still rests. That this reformation should then have been left so incomplete is

less surprising than that it should scarcely have been resumed for two hundred and fifty years.'

The young King's sympathies were strongly on the side of reformation; and, as the basis of all the measures taken to further it in his reign, the spiritual supremacy of the Crown was recognised and confirmed, and Cranmer took from Edward a new licence for the exercise of all his ecclesiastical functions. The Archbishop was already further advanced in his views as a Reformer than he himself had been well aware of while he was under the repressing and numbing influence of Henry's capricious and iron tyranny. Now, however, he was in a condition to act on his own convictions, and to carry out the objects that were dear to his heart; and he set himself to do so with alacrity and energy. As Burnet expresses it, 'Being now delivered from the too awful subjection that he had been held under by King Henry, he resolved to go on more vigorously in purging out abuses.' If he did not move quite so fast or go quite so far as some wished, he nevertheless accomplished in a short period a mighty and blessed religious

revolution in England; and, looking at the fearful odds with which he had to contend, something might be said for the policy on which he and his friends acted; which was, in the words of Burnet, 'to carry on the Reformation, but by slow and safe degrees, not hazarding too much at once.'

In the first year of the reign of Edward, the whole system of the Papacy in England was undermined, and the foundation laid for a Church, Protestant both in doctrine and in worship.

Cranmer and his associates began with a general visitation of the dioceses of the kingdom; the visitors having put into their hands a body of injunctions, which they must publish wherever they went, and which must be obeyed, on pain of excommunication, sequestration, or deprivation, as the Ordinaries, whom the justices of the peace were commanded to assist, should answer to the King.

While the most eminent preachers of the Reformed doctrines were dispersed over the kingdom with the visitors, the right of all other clergy-

men to preach was in effect taken from them, unless they obtained a licence from the Primate or from Protector Somerset. All monuments of idolatry must be removed out of the walls and windows of churches. The people were not to despise any of the ceremonies not yet abrogated; but it was ordered that they 'should be taught to beware of the superstitions of sprinkling their beds with holy water, of ringing of bells, and of using blessed candles for driving away devils.'

Images were yet somewhat tenderly dealt with, and private persons must not touch them; but curates were directed 'to take down such as they knew were abused by pilgrimages or offerings to them.'

Of course, the partisans of the old religion could not obey such injunctions as these. Bonner, Bishop of London, and Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, the two most formidable Popish zealots whom Cranmer had to contend with, opposed them, and were put out of the way by being committed to the Fleet.

Parliament, which met in November 1547, repealed both the old laws against the Lollards and the intolerant Acts of the last reign, including the Statute of the Six Articles; ordered that the communion should be given in both kinds to the laity as well as the clergy; and appointed that all collations to bishoprics should in future be made by direct nomination of the Crown. The free use of the Scriptures was again allowed; and a bill, which Cranmer strongly opposed, passed both Lords and Commons, 'making over to the Crown all the chantries, colleges, and free chapels throughout the kingdom that yet remained unconfiscated.'

This was a good stroke of reforming business for the first year of Edward; and it was vigorously prosecuted in succeeding years. The law of celibacy was repealed, and the clergy were permitted to marry. Auricular confession was no more required. All images were removed from the churches. Prayers for the dead were no longer offered. Though the cup was given to the laity, the mass was not yet abolished, but the Epistle

and Gospel used in the service were appointed to be read in English; and it was enjoined that on every Sunday and holiday, a chapter of the New Testament should be read at matins, and a chapter of the Old Testament at vespers,—an order exchanged, in 1549, for the reading of two lessons from the Old and New Testament respectively, immediately after the Psalms, at morning and evening prayer. Preaching was revived. It had in a great measure fallen into disuse, and any of it that remained was mostly a mockery of the ordinance. Till the clergy should be better qualified for the performance of this great duty, Cranmer had the Homilies prepared, to be read by incumbents who could not themselves preach; and three of the Homilies, those on salvation, faith, and good works, were his own composition. Most important service in diffusing the elements of Christian knowledge among both old and young was likewise done by *A Short Instruction into Christian Religion; being a Catechism set forth by Archbishop Cranmer in* MDXLVIII.

In the same year a committee of bishops and

other divines was appointed to revise all the Offices of the Church. They prepared a uniform order for the communion, according to the rules of Scripture and the use of the primitive Church. Next year, they were charged to compose a new Liturgy, or Book of Common Prayer, to supersede the old Latin Mass-book; which they had ready in a few months, and in which they included the new Communion Office.

This book Cranmer afterwards revised; and in the changes made upon it he omitted various ceremonies savouring of superstition, as the use of oil in baptism, the anointing of the sick, the mixing of water with the wine, and several others. He disapproved, too, of the clerical habits which it prescribed; and kneeling at the sacrament he explained, with the view of preventing it from being confounded with the idolatrous worship of the wafer.

'The new book contained very little that was not in the old one; but was principally distinguished from it by its omission of many forms that were held to be superstitious, and by its

being throughout in English. The chief addition was the Litany, which was the same that is still in use, except only that it contained originally a petition for deliverance from the Bishop of Rome, which was struck out in the reign of Elizabeth.'

This production Parliament, in 1548, sanctioned, under the title of 'The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, after the use of the Church of England;' and ordered it to be used by all ministers in the celebration of divine service.

Bonner and Gardiner were irreconcilably opposed to these changes, and were thrown into the Tower, where they were kept in close custody till the end of this reign.

In 1550 Cranmer published his *Defence of the True Doctrine of the Sacrament.* This treatise Gardiner keenly attacked, with all the learning and subtlety of which he was master. Cranmer answered him promptly and vigorously; and both the treatise and his vindication of it show

that, by this time, he was quite purged from the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, which had taken a very strong and tenacious hold of his mind.

The doctrines of the Reformed Church of England had not yet been authoritatively settled and declared. This Cranmer had postponed, till other changes should pave the way for its being more easily and satisfactorily accomplished.

Many were of opinion, as Burnet tells us, that the Reformers ought to have begun with doctrine. 'But Cranmer, upon good reasons, was of another mind, though much pressed by Bucer about it. Till the order of bishops was brought to such a model that the far greater part of them would agree to it, it was much fitter to let that design go on slowly, than to set out a profession of their belief to which so great a part of the chief masters might be obstinately averse.'

But Gardiner, Bonner, Heath, and Day having been all disposed of (the latter two had been

deprived and imprisoned), and Ridley, Coverdale, Hooper, and other zealous friends of the Reformation having been raised to the episcopal bench, the preparation of the articles of religion was proceeded with in 1551, and finished by the beginning of 1552; and they were forthwith published by the King's authority. They were the work of Cranmer and Ridley, chiefly of the former. The articles were then forty-two in number; but in the reign of Elizabeth they were revised, very slightly altered, and reduced to thirty-nine—the matters omitted in the revised version relating to the resurrection of the dead, the imperishable nature of the soul, millenarianism, and universal salvation.

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England are Protestant, purely Protestant. It is her Liturgy and her Homilies that still retain such pieces of the old leaven of Popery as the sacramental character of marriage, baptismal regeneration, and the real presence in the Eucharist. Her Articles are also Calvinistic, thoroughly Calvinistic; and she requires subscription to

them *ex animo* by all who are admitted into holy orders and ecclesiastical benefices.

These things show the magnitude of the reforming work which Cranmer accomplished. He was assisted in it by two classes. The first class was the English Reformers, who, having taken refuge in foreign countries from Henry's persecutions, returned on Edward's accession, imbued with the Protestantism of the places where they had been sojourning; among whom were Coverdale, Hooper, Philpot, and Rogers. The second class was the learned foreigners, who, persecuted on the Continent, now sought refuge in England, bringing their Protestantism with them; among whom were Peter Martyr, Bucer, Aless, and Fagius, whom the Primate entertained at Lambeth, and afterwards settled in professorships—Martyr at Oxford, and Bucer and Fagius at Cambridge. By intercourse with such eminent men, and by correspondence with Osiander, Melancthon, and Calvin, his own views on doctrine were gradually brought into entire harmony with those of the Reformed Churches on the

Continent, which he ardently desired to see united with one another and with the Church of England. The differences which then divided them were almost wholly on matters of ritual or ceremony; on which it has been often boasted that the Church of England, in her moderation, occupied middle ground between Rome and Geneva.

There was yet another work to which Cranmer and his associates devoted not a little time and attention—the reform, namely, of the ecclesiastical or canon law. A collection of canons, drafted by a first commission on the subject, and sent to a second for revision, was intended to be a complete code of Protestant canon law. The collection was published, but had not been sanctioned when Edward died, and, owing to the events that followed, the project was never resumed; but the draft is valuable for the light which it sheds on the opinions, on many points, of the fathers of the English Reformation. To point to only one instance: Their canons were in principle as intolerant as those of the Church of

Rome, from the tyranny of which they had just made their escape. People were to be as much under their jurisdiction in religion, and were to be as amenable to them for their faith and worship, as they had been to the Bishop of Rome.

As Hallam says, 'Tolerance in religion, it is well known, so unanimously admitted at least verbally, even by theologians in the present century, was scarcely considered as practicable, much less as a matter of right, during the period of the Reformation. The difference in this between the Catholics and Protestants was only in degree, and in degree there was much less difference than we are apt to believe. Persecution is the deadly original sin of the Reformed Churches—that which cools every honest man's zeal for their cause, in proportion as his reading becomes more extensive.'

Rome burned those whom she thought heretics; and Cranmer's canons provided that those whom he thought heretics should be burned too. A question has been raised, whether he was for burning *all* heretics; to which we think it suffi-

cient to answer, that he seems to have contemplated no change in this respect on the previously existing law. When his canons were drawn up, the writ *de hæretico comburendo* was in force; and there is no hint that he designed to abolish or alter that writ.

Cranmer's practice illustrates the intolerance of his principles, and of the canons which he wished to see legalized. A commission, of which he was the head, was appointed to examine and search after all Anabaptists, and other heretics and contemners of the Book of Common Prayer. Before this commission was brought Joan Bocher, or Joan of Kent. On the incarnation of the Saviour she had imbibed and disseminated some strange, mystical notions—erroneous, we daresay, if they were intelligible; heresy, if they were not nonsense.

Adhering to her opinions in spite of all the efforts of the Commission to get her to renounce them, she was condemned as an obstinate heretic, and delivered over to the secular power. Edward shrank from signing the warrant to burn

her. Cranmer employed all his casuistry to remove the scruples of the young King; the latter asking, 'What, my lord! would you have me to send her quick to the devil in her delusion?' and the former pleading that fundamental errors, those 'subversions of the Apostles' Creed, were impieties against the Almighty, which the Prince, as God's substitute, ought to extirpate, in the same manner as the King's substitutes were bound to punish offences against the King's person!'

Edward at length consented, with tears in his eyes, to put his hand to the paper; protesting, however, that if the act was wrong, Cranmer must answer to God for it, as it was done only in submission to his advice and importunity.

To obviate, if possible, the necessity of the execution, Cranmer laid siege to the condemned woman in her cell, plying her with every imaginable argument and motive to induce her to abjure her heresy. But he made no impression on her, so that there was no alternative but to consign her to the flames.

Next year a Dutchman, named Von Paris, who lived in London, and practised the profession of a surgeon, was brought before the same Commission, charged with denying the divinity of Christ. The panel admitted the charge. He confessed himself an Arian, who held that Jesus Christ was only a creature, though the first and highest of creatures. He was sent to the stake, and endured death at it not only with firmness, but in a sort of rapture, 'hugging and caressing the faggots that were consuming him,—a species of resolution [Hume makes it 'frenzy'] of which there were many instances among the martyrs of that age.'

Even Mary, the sister of Edward and the heir-presumptive to the throne, ran imminent risk of suffering the same fate. She was an avowed and resolute Papist, and in 1549 the Popish worship which she practised had been made unlawful. She was saved that year by the interposition of her kinsman, the Emperor Charles v., in deference to whom the new law, proscribing her worship, was not for the present enforced in her case.

But next year she was in as great danger as ever; and when it was bruited that she meant to quit the kingdom, a fleet was sent to sea to prevent her escape.

Soon after, her two chaplains were indicted. Three months after that, she herself was brought before the Council; and her royal brother Edward expended, to no purpose, all his theological lore and all his persuasive art to effect her conversion.

Next day the German ambassador delivered a message, to the effect that, if the Princess was not indulged in the free exercise of her religion, his imperial master would immediately declare war against England.

Cranmer, who had a wonderful faculty for reconciling duty and interest, both in his own case and in his master's, now discovered and advised Edward that, 'though to give licence to sin was sin, yet to suffer and wink at it for a time was excusable!'

Edward on hearing this gave way; 'yet not so easily,' says Burnet, 'but that he burst forth

in tears, lamenting his sister's obstinacy, and that he must suffer her to continue in so lamentable a way of worship as he esteemed the mass.'

Nor was she even yet suffered to do so without molestation. 'The chief officers of her household were commanded to prevent the use of the Romish service in her family, and, on their refusal to comply, were committed to the Tower. After that, the Lord Chancellor and the chief members of the Council were sent to hold a conference with her on the subject, at her residence of Copthall, Essex; but she continued, as before, immoveable.'

On the death of Edward, and the establishment of the 'Bloody Mary' on the throne, which took place in 1553, Cranmer foreboded his fate. He, above all others, had brought the divorce question between Henry and Catherine to the issue to which it had come, and which made Mary illegitimate. He had been the father of the Reformation, which Mary abhorred. And to all previous counts against him, fell to be added his joining, however reluctantly, in the attempt that

had just been made to divert the succession to the crown from Mary to Lady Jane Grey.

Under the apprehensions which these things naturally excited, he now directed his steward to pay all his debts, remarking, 'In a short time, perhaps, we may not be able;' and this being done, he said, 'I thank God I am now mine own man, and with God's help am able to answer all the world, and all worldly adversities.'

The Duke of Northumberland and his two sons, the Earl of Warwick and the Marquis of Northampton, were the first who were brought to trial for abetting and supporting Lady Jane Grey's pretensions to the throne—Cranmer and other accomplices sitting in judgment on them, and condemning them to suffer the death of traitors.

But this had no influence to avert Cranmer's own doom, which he himself hastened by contradicting the calumnies which represented him as now beginning to return to Rome, and by offering, at the same time, to vindicate against all gainsayers the Reformation accomplished in Edward's reign.

In November 1553 he was arraigned for participating in the attempt to alter the succession to the crown, and found guilty. Mary pardoned his treason, but ordered him to be detained in the Tower on the perilous charge of heresy.

About this time friends strongly advised him to save himself by fleeing from England, but he would not. Having been the prime mover in the changes for which vengeance was now to be taken, he felt that it became him to stand his ground, and to brave the consequences, whatever they might be. He was very desirous of a private audience of her Majesty, whom in other days he had laid under deep obligations to him; but she was resolute that he should never see her face.

After lying for a while in the Tower, he was summoned before the Convocation, which met in St. Paul's, but was adjourned to Oxford, the chief subject on which he was to be examined being the sacrament of the altar. Ridley and Latimer were already his fellow-prisoners in the Tower.

In March 1554 the three were taken to Oxford, and on the 14th April were brought from their

prisons to St. Mary's Church, and interrogated on transubstantiation, and the efficacy of the mass as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the quick and the dead. 'They were allowed to debate these points in public, and if they could convince their mortal enemies, then their prison gates would be opened. But the orthodox controversialists did not give themselves the trouble to preserve even the appearance of fair play; they would allow their opponents no books, no time for preparation, nor would they let them argue together. Cranmer was to face alone their entire battery on the 16th of April, Ridley on the 17th, and Latimer on the 18th. On the day appointed Cranmer appeared before the Consistory, assembled in the Divinity School, and, with more courage than had been expected from him, he proceeded to support the tenets which he had taught. But there were many voices to one; the doctors called him unlearned, unskilful, ignorant; and the Oxford scholars very generally hissed and hooted and clapped their hands whenever he advanced any opinion they disliked.' The other

two witnesses were treated similarly on the following days; and on the 28th of the month the three were condemned as gross and obstinate heretics.

Their persecutors made more haste than speed. In their impatience for the life of their victims, they forgot their own canons, according to which Ridley and Latimer could not be tried for heresy till the Pope's authority was formally re-established in England, which it had not yet been; and according to which Cranmer, the Metropolitan, could not be tried except by a commission appointed by the Pope, and which could only take evidence in the case, and refer it for judgment to Rome.

A new trial had therefore to be gone through; but it had, of course, the same issue. On the 16th of October 1555, Ridley and Latimer were led forth to the stake, which was erected in the ditch on the north side of Oxford, over against Balliol College.

A Dr. Smith, who had renounced Popery in King Edward's time, but who, as is usual with trimmers, was all the more zealous for it now,

preached the execution sermon, which was a vehement philippic against the heretics. They were then stripped and fastened to the stake, both evincing a calmness and a courage which even the fire could not ruffle or shake.

Latimer, stooping and shrivelled with age, and hardly able to stand with infirmity, played the hero to perfection, thus addressing his companion, when he saw a friend throwing down at his feet a bag of gunpowder, with the view of shortening his sufferings: 'Be of good comfort, Mr. Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.'

Of the commission appointed by the Pope to try Cranmer anew, with all due canonical formality, the chief commissioner was Cardinal de Puteo, who did not come to England, but authorized Dr. Brokes, Bishop of Gloucester, to act as his substitute and representative.

Brought before his judges, Cranmer saluted Drs. Martin and Story, the royal proctors, but not Dr. Brokes, the Papal commissioner; and when

taxed for this studied omission, he explained that he had taken a vow never in any way to acknowledge the Pope's authority in the realm of England.

We cannot detail the proceedings. They partook largely of the nature of a debate on the matters in controversy between Papists and Protestants. On one subject his antagonists rather gravelled Cranmer. Who was the supreme head of the Church of England? Henry VIII. had made himself such, with Cranmer's approval. In enacting the supremacy of the Crown in all causes, and over all persons, ecclesiastical as well as civil, he had stepped into the Pope's shoes, and assumed his prerogatives.

This supremacy of the Crown Cranmer felt so difficult of defence, that he was driven to deny it, and to support the denial by what looks very like a quibble. 'Christ,' he said, in reply to Dr. Martin, 'is the supreme Head of the Church of England, as He is of the whole body of the universal Church.'

'Why,' said Martin, 'you made Henry VIII. the supreme head of the Church.'

'Yea,' replied Cranmer, 'of all the people in England, as well ecclesiastical as temporal.'

'And not of the Church?' asked Martin.

'No,' rejoined Cranmer, 'for Christ is the only Head of the Church, and of the faith and religion of the same. The King is head and governor of his people, which are the visible Church.'

So that the Crown's headship over the Church of England meant nothing more than that the Crown was the head and governor of the people of England, which were the visible Church of it.

Was it so in Cranmer's days? and is it so yet? Does the Crown claim no authority over the Church in regard to 'the faith and religion of the same?' Does it not give law to the people composing that Church in matters of faith and worship?

The Commission closed its proceedings on the 13th of September, having agreed on the report on the case which they should send up to Rome. On the 7th of that month Cranmer had received a citation to appear at Rome within eighty days, to answer for himself before the sovereign Pon-

tiff; which the Pontiff knew very well that he could not do, being kept in close custody at Oxford.

Four days after the expiry of the eighty, Cranmer was deprived of his archbishopric, and excommunicated, at the instance of Cardinal de Puteo; and by and by the Pope's judgment on the case was received. It declared Cranmer guilty of contumacy for not obeying the citation to appear at Rome, and guilty also of heresy and other enormities; for which causes he was to be excommunicated (which de Puteo had anticipated), and Bonner, Bishop of London, and Thirlby, Bishop of Ely, were to degrade him, and deliver him to the secular power.

The degradation was done in St. Mary's on the 14th of February 1556, according to the form in the Pope's pontifical. They first arrayed him in a coarse imitation of all the robes worn by an archbishop at his installation, with a mock mitre on his head, and a mock crosier in his hand.

Bonner then addressed the assembly thus: 'This is the man that hath ever despised the Pope's holiness, and now is to be judged by him.

This is the man that hath pulled down so many churches, and now is come to be judged in a church. This is the man that contemned the blessed sacrament of the altar, and now is come to be condemned before that blessed sacrament hanging over the altar. This is the man that, like Lucifer, sat in the place of Christ upon an altar to judge others, and now is come before an altar to be judged himself.'

They next disrobed him: Thirlby, gently and tenderly; Bonner, with 'coarse brutality and scornful jests.' 'Last of all they stripped him of his gown to his jacket, and put upon him a poor yeoman beadle's gown, both bare and slovenly made as one could see, and a townsman's cap on his head, and so delivered him to the secular power.'

According to the usual course followed in such cases, it now remained that Cranmer should be given to the flames. But his enemies were not to be satisfied with the burning of his body.

They must 'seek the ruin of his honour, and the infamy of his name.' He was known to be soft, timid, and pliant, compared with many who

passed through the same fiery trials. Of late he had been making application to Mary in terms somewhat abject. He had also been receiving in his cell visits from Popish emissaries, and had been listening to them as if he were still open to conviction. Might he not, then, be even yet prevailed with to abjure his heresies? They resolved to try; and they made the trial with the serpent's cunning.

Shunning dispute on the matters at issue between them and him, they condoled with him on his woeful condition. They affected a pity for him, than which nothing could have more strongly importuned him to have pity upon himself. They took him to the house of the Dean of Christchurch, where he exchanged the miseries of a prison for every refinement and luxury, and for the most lettered society which Oxford could furnish. In the grounds of that house he was allowed to walk at liberty. He was fond of bowls, and they often asked him to join in a game at them. In short, nothing was omitted that could flatter and gratify him—nothing that

could work up his love of life to the highest pitch, and make the horrors of the death to which he was doomed overwhelming to him.

Meantime, while thus assailed, he was studiously assured that between him and his lost dignity, or, if he preferred it, an opulent and honourable retirement for the residue of his days, there was only one thing, and that one thing RECANTATION. In an evil hour he yielded, and signed scroll after scroll of a document, till the number amounted to six, the tenor of which was, that he renounced and abhorred all his Reformed principles; believed in the sacrament of the altar and the other six sacraments, in purgatory, and in all else that Rome held and taught; and submitted himself to the Church and to the Pope, and to their most excellent Majesties, Philip and Mary, King and Queen of the realm of England, and to all their laws and ordinances.

The triumph of Cranmer's enemies over him was now complete, and his sun threatened to set in the darkest cloud. But happily for him and his fame, and for the great cause with which

he was so much identified, his enemies did not know how to use their triumph. They printed his recantation, and circulated it far and wide; and for fear of his revoking it, should he be suffered to live, they hurried his death.

The Queen sent secret orders to Dr. Cole, Provost of Eton College, to prepare his condemned sermon for the 21st of March. Visiting him in prison the evening before, Cole was the first to intimate to him indirectly that his doom was at hand. Before this, his recantation had filled him with profound remorse; and he immediately set about preparing to revoke it publicly on the morrow, in the most emphatic manner possible.

About 9 o'clock next morning, Lord Williams of Thames, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, received him at the gate of his prison, and conducted him to St. Mary's Church, where he was set on a stage erected for him over against the pulpit. Dr. Cole preached, justifying the execution although Cranmer had abjured his errors, as by other considerations, so by this, that God Himself not seldom punishes penitents for

sins which He has pardoned. Sermon being ended, Cole asked the audience to join in silent prayer for the doomed man. He asked Cranmer to assure them of his sincerity in his recantation, by repeating it with his own lips, and declaring that he died in the faith of the Church of Rome.

The audience complied, kneeling for a few moments as they poured out a silent prayer for him, Cranmer kneeling with them; after which he said: 'I had myself intended to have desired your prayers; my desires have been anticipated, and I return you all that a dying man can give you—my sincerest thanks. To your prayers let me add my own.' He then ejaculated a few fervent petitions to God for His mercy; and this done, he drew from his bosom a paper, which he read to the people, the gist of which was an explicit and solemn recall of his recantation, confessing it a heinous sin, which had cost him many bitter tears, and protesting that the fear of death alone had tempted him to commit it.

After some good exhortations to the people, and a general profession of his faith, 'Now,' said

he, 'I come to the great thing which so much troubleth my conscience, more than anything that ever I did or said in my whole life, and that is the setting abroad of a writing contrary to the truth, which now here I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life if it might be; and that is, all such bills and papers which I have written or signed with my hand since my degradation, wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished for it; for when I come to the fire it shall be first burned.

'And as for the Pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine.

'And as for the sacrament, I believe as I have taught in my book against the Bishop of Winchester, which teacheth so true a doctrine of the sacrament that it shall stand at the last day before the judgment of God, when the papistical doctrine shall be ashamed to show her face.'

Astonishment and confusion seized on all present, accompanied with boundless rage in most ecclesiastic bosoms. The reproaches and execrations darted at Cranmer were provoking him to speak in defence of his real faith which he had just avowed, when Cole cried out, 'Stop the heretic's mouth, and take him away!'

A crowd of friars rushed forward, pulled him down from the stage, and, loading him with revilings, hurried away with him to the spot where Ridley and Latimer had suffered about five months before. When he had prayed and put off his garments to his shirt, they chained him to the stake; and most signal was his victory over the death which he had so much dreaded.

The pile being kindled, and the fire beginning to burn near him, he stretched out his arm, to put the offending right hand which had subscribed the recantation into the flames; which, to quote yet once more the words of Foxe, 'he held so stedfast and immoveable, that all men might see his hand burned before his body was touched. His body did so abide the burning of

the flame with such constancy and stedfastness, that, standing always in one place, without moving his body, he seemed to move no more than the stake to which he was bound; his eyes were lifted up to heaven, and oftentimes he repeated, "This unworthy right hand!" so long as his voice would suffer him; and using often the words of Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" in the greatness of the flame he gave up the ghost.'

Thus died Cranmer, on the 21st of March 1556, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, and twenty years after he had been raised to the Primacy. It may be stated that he and Ridley and Latimer were but three of a murdered contemporary host, impressively showing how just the brand is that attaches to Mary's memory. Her reign was mercifully limited to five years; but during these the blood of the Protestant Reformers in England was poured out like water, or, as it would be more correct literally to say, the fire devoured them as stubble.

John Rogers, her first victim, suffered in February 1554, about six months after her ac-

cession. The last five victims suffered in November 1558, only seven days before her death. Now it is computed that, from the beginning to the end of this fiery period, no fewer than two hundred and eighty persons were burned for their religion in different parts of England. Among these were five bishops, twenty-one inferior clergymen, fifty-five women, and four children. In addition to these, several hundreds were tortured in their bodies and ruined in their estates; many died of hunger in their prisons; and many were driven into exile, or, as the destroyers of the land phrased it, had 'contemptuously gone over the seas.'

At the head of this host was Cranmer; and well might he have said to his Protestant friends, as Paul wrote to the Church at Philippi, 'Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.'

His death was more fatal to Popery than his life had been. 'Of all the martyrdoms during this great persecution,' says Southey, 'this was in all its circumstances the most injurious to the

Roman cause. It was a manifestation of inveterate and deadly malice towards one who had borne his honours with almost unexampled meekness. It sufficiently disproved the argument on which the Romanists rested, that the constancy of our martyrs arose not from confidence in their faith, and the strength which they derived therefrom, but from vain-glory, the pride of consistency, and the shame of retracting what they had so long professed. Such deceitful reasoning could have no place here. Cranmer had retracted, and the sincerity of his contrition for that sin was too plain to be denied, too public to be concealed, too memorable ever to be forgotten. The agony of his repentance had been seen by thousands; and tens of thousands had witnessed how, when that agony was past, he stood calm and immoveable amid the flames, a patient and willing holocaust, triumphant not over his persecutors alone, but over himself,—over the mind as well as the body, over fear, and weakness, and death.'

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