

# History of the English People, Volume III

John Richard Green

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**HISTORY  
OF  
THE ENGLISH PEOPLE**

**VOLUME III**

**BY  
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HONORARY FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD**

**THE PARLIAMENT, 1399-1461**

# THE MONARCHY, 1461-1540

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### Note

In Chapter I. some changes have been made which exactly follow corrections made by Mr. Green himself in the margin of his volume of the original edition.

A.S. GREEN.

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## BOOK IV THE PARLIAMENT 1399-1461

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### CHAPTER V THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER 1399-1422

#### Henry the Fourth

Once safe in the Tower, it was easy to wrest from Richard a resignation of his crown; and this resignation was solemnly accepted by the Parliament which met at the close of September 1399. But the resignation was confirmed by a solemn Act of Deposition. The coronation oath was read, and a long impeachment which stated the breach of the promises made in it was followed by a solemn vote of both Houses which removed Richard from the state and authority of king. According to the strict rules of hereditary descent as construed by the feudal lawyers by an assumed analogy with the rules which governed descent of ordinary estates the crown would now have passed to a house which had at an earlier period played a leading part in the revolutions of the Edwards. The great-grandson of the Mortimer who brought about the deposition of Edward the Second had married the daughter and heiress of Lionel of Clarence, the third son of Edward the Third. The childlessness

of Richard and the death of Edward's second son without issue placed Edmund Mortimer, the son of the Earl who had fallen in Ireland, first among the claimants of the crown; but he was now a child of six years old, the strict rule of hereditary descent had never received any formal recognition in the case of the Crown, and precedent suggested a right of Parliament to choose in such a case a successor among any other members of the Royal House. Only one such successor was in fact possible. Rising from his seat and crossing himself, Henry of Lancaster solemnly challenged the crown, "as that I am descended by right line of blood coming from the good lord King Henry the Third, and through that right that God of his grace hath sent me with help of my kin and of my friends to recover it: the which realm was in point to be undone by default of governance and undoing of good laws." Whatever defects such a claim might present were more than covered by the solemn recognition of Parliament. The two Archbishops, taking the new sovereign by the hand, seated him upon the throne, and Henry in emphatic words ratified the compact between himself and his people. "Sirs," he said to the prelates, lords, knights, and burgesses gathered round him, "I thank God and you, spiritual and temporal, and all estates of the land; and do you to wit it is not my will that any man think that by way of conquest I would disinherit any of his heritage, franchises, or other rights that he ought to have, nor put him out of the good that he has and has had by the good laws and customs of the realm, except those persons that have been against the good purpose and the common profit of the realm."

### **Statute of Heresy**

The deposition of a king, the setting aside of one claimant and the elevation of another to the throne, marked the triumph of the English Parliament over the monarchy. The struggle of the Edwards against its gradual advance had culminated in the bold effort of Richard the Second to supersede it by a commission dependent on the Crown. But the House of Lancaster was precluded by its very position from any renewal of the struggle. It was not merely that the exhaustion of the treasury by the war and revolt which followed Henry's accession left him even more than the kings who had gone before in the hands of the Estates; it was that his very right to the Crown lay in an acknowledgement of their highest pretensions. He had been raised to the throne by a Parliamentary revolution. His claim to obedience had throughout to rest on a

Parliamentary title. During no period of our early history therefore were the powers of the two Houses so frankly recognized. The tone of Henry the Fourth till the very close of his reign is that of humble compliance in all but ecclesiastical matters with the prayers of the Parliament, and even his imperious successor shrank almost with timidity from any conflict with it. But the Crown had been bought by pledges less noble than this. Arundel was not only the representative of constitutional rule; he was also the representative of religious persecution. No prelate had been so bitter a foe of the Lollards, and the support which the Church had given to the recent revolution had no doubt sprung from its belief that a sovereign whom Arundel placed on the throne would deal pitilessly with the growing heresy. The expectations of the clergy were soon realized. In the first Convocation of his reign Henry declared himself the protector of the Church and ordered the prelates to take measures for the suppression of heresy and of the wandering preachers. His declaration was but a prelude to the Statute of Heresy which was passed at the opening of 1401. By the provisions of this infamous Act the hindrances which had till now neutralized the efforts of the bishops to enforce the common law were utterly taken away. Not only were they permitted to arrest all preachers of heresy, all schoolmasters infected with heretical teaching, all owners and writers of heretical books, and to imprison them even if they recanted at the king's pleasure, but a refusal to abjure or a relapse after abjuration enabled them to hand over the heretic to the civil officers, and by these—so ran the first legal enactment of religious bloodshed which defiled our Statute-book—he was to be burned on a high place before the people. The statute was hardly passed when William Sautre became its first victim. Sautre, while a parish priest at Lynn, had been cited before the Bishop of Norwich two years before for heresy and forced to recant. But he still continued to preach against the worship of images, against pilgrimages, and against transubstantiation, till the Statute of Heresy strengthened Arundel's hands. In February, 1401, Sautre was brought before the Primate as a relapsed heretic, and on refusing to recant a second time was degraded from his orders. He was handed to the secular power, and on the issue of a royal writ publicly burned.

### **England and France**

The support of the nobles had been partly won by a hope hardly less fatal to the peace of the realm, the hope of a renewal of the strife with France. The peace of Richard's later years had sprung not merely from the policy of the English king, but from the madness of Charles the Sixth of France. France fell into the hands of its king's uncle, the Duke of Burgundy, and as the Duke was ruler of Flanders and peace with England was a necessity for Flemish industry, his policy went hand in hand with that of Richard. His rival, the king's brother, Lewis, Duke of Orleans, was the head of the French war-party; and it was with the view of bringing about war that he supported Henry of Lancaster in his exile at the French court. Burgundy on the other hand listened to Richard's denunciation of Henry as a traitor, and strove to prevent his departure. But his efforts were in vain, and he had to witness a revolution which hurled Richard from the throne, deprived Isabella of her crown, and restored to power the baronial party of which Gloucester, the advocate of war, had long been the head. The dread of war was increased by a pledge which Henry was said to have given at his coronation that he would not only head an army in its march into France but that he would march further into France than ever his grandfather had done. The French Court retorted by refusing to acknowledge Henry as king, while the truce concluded with Richard came at his death legally to an end. In spite of this defiance however Burgundy remained true to the interests of Flanders, and Henry clung to a truce which gave him time to establish his throne. But the influence of the baronial party in England made peace hard to keep; the Duke of Orleans urged on France to war; and the hatred of the two peoples broke through the policy of the two governments. Count Waleran of St. Pol, who had married Richard's half-sister, put out to sea with a fleet which swept the east coast and entered the Channel. Pirates from Brittany and Navarre soon swarmed in the narrow seas, and their ravages were paid back by those of pirates from the Cinque Ports. A more formidable trouble broke out in the north. The enmity of France roused as of old the enmity of Scotland; the Scotch king Robert the Third refused to acknowledge Henry, and Scotch freebooters cruised along the northern coast.

### **Richard's death**

Attack from without woke attack from within the realm. Henry had shown little taste for bloodshed in his conduct of the revolution. Save

those of the royal councillors whom he found at Bristol no one had been put to death. Though a deputation of lords with Archbishop Arundel at its head pressed him to take Richard's life, he steadily refused, and kept him a prisoner at Pomfret. The judgements against Gloucester, Warwick, and Arundel were reversed, but the lords who had appealed the Duke were only punished by the loss of the dignities which they had received as their reward. Richard's brother and nephew by the half-blood, the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey, became again Earls of Huntingdon and Kent. York's son, the Duke of Albemarle, sank once more into Earl of Rutland. Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, lost his new Marquisate of Dorset; Spenser lost his Earldom of Gloucester. But in spite of a stormy scene among the lords in Parliament Henry refused to exact further punishment; and his real temper was seen in a statute which forbade all such appeals and left treason to be dealt with by ordinary process of law. But the times were too rough for mercy such as this. Clouds no sooner gathered round the new king than the degraded lords leagued with the Earl of Salisbury and the deposed Bishop of Carlisle to release Richard and to murder Henry. Betrayed by Rutland in the spring of 1400, and threatened by the king's march from London, they fled to Cirencester; but the town was against them, its burghers killed Kent and Salisbury, and drove out the rest. A terrible retribution followed. Lord Spenser and the Earl of Huntingdon were taken and summarily beheaded; thirty more conspirators fell into the king's hands to meet the same fate. They drew with them in their doom the wretched prisoner in whose name they had risen. A great council held after the suppression of the revolt prayed "that if Richard, the late king, be alive, as some suppose he is, it be ordained that he be well and securely guarded for the safety of the states of the king and kingdom; but if he be dead, then that he be openly showed to the people that they may have knowledge thereof." The ominous words were soon followed by news of Richard's death in prison. His body was brought to St. Paul's, Henry himself with the princes of the blood royal bearing the pall: and the face was left uncovered to meet rumours that the prisoner had been assassinated by his keeper, Sir Piers Exton.

### **Revolt of Wales**

In June Henry marched northward to end the trouble from the Scots. With their usual policy the Scottish army under the Duke of Albany withdrew as the English crossed the border, and looked coolly on while

Henry invested the castle of Edinburgh. The wants of his army forced him in fact to raise the siege; but even success would have been fruitless, for he was recalled by trouble nearer home. Wales was in full revolt. The country had been devoted to Richard; and so notorious was its disaffection to the new line that when Henry's son knelt at his father's feet to receive a grant of the Principality a shrewd bystander murmured, "He must conquer it if he will have it." The death of the fallen king only added to the Welsh disquiet, for in spite of the public exhibition of his body he was believed to be still alive. Some hold that he had escaped to Scotland, and an impostor who took his name was long maintained at the Scottish Court. In Wales it was believed that he was still a prisoner in Chester Castle. But the trouble would have died away had it not been raised into revolt by the energy of Owen Glyndwr or Glendower. Owen was a descendant of one of the last native Princes, Llewelyn-ap-Jorwerth, and the lord of considerable estates in Merioneth. He had been squire of the body to Richard the Second, and had clung to him till he was seized at Flint. It was probably his known aversion from the revolution which had deposed his master that brought on him the hostility of Lord Grey of Ruthin, the stay of the Lancastrian cause in North Wales; and the same political ground may have existed for the refusal of the Parliament to listen to his prayer for redress and for the restoration of the lands which Grey had seized. But the refusal was embittered by words of insult; when the Bishop of St. Asaph warned them of Owen's power the lords retorted that "they cared not for barefoot knaves." They were soon to be made to care. At the close of 1400 Owen rose in revolt, burned the town of Ruthin, and took the title of Prince of Wales.

### **Owen Glyndwr**

His action at once changed the disaffection into a national revolt. His raids on the Marches and his capture of Radnor marked its importance, and Henry marched against him in the summer of 1401. But Glyndwr's post at Corwen defied attack, and the pressure in the north forced the king to march away into Scotland. Henry Percy, who held the castles of North Wales as Constable, was left to suppress the rebellion, but Owen met Percy's arrival by the capture of Conway, and the king was forced to hurry fresh forces under his son Henry to the west. The boy was too young as yet to show the military and political ability which was to find its first field in these Welsh campaigns, and his presence did little to stay

the growth of revolt. While Owen's lands were being harried Owen was stirring the people of Caermarthen into rebellion and pressing the siege of Abergavenny; nor could the presence of English troops save Shropshire from pillage. Everywhere the Welshmen rose for their "Prince"; the Bards declared his victories to have been foretold by Merlin; even the Welsh scholars at Oxford left the University in a body and joined his standard. The castles of Ruthin, Hawarden, and Flint fell into his hands, and with his capture of Conway gave him command of North Wales. The arrival of help from Scotland and the hope of help from France gave fresh vigour to Owen's action, and though Percy held his ground stubbornly on the coast and even recovered Conway he at last threw up his command in disgust. A fresh inroad of Henry on his return from Scotland again failed to bring Owen to battle, and the negotiations which he carried on during the following winter were a mere blind to cover preparations for a new attack. So strong had Glyndwr become in 1402 that in June he was able to face an English army in the open field at Brynglas and to defeat it with a loss of a thousand men. The king again marched to the border to revenge this blow. But the storms which met him as he entered the hills, storms which his archers ascribed to the magic powers of Owen, ruined his army, and he was forced to withdraw as of old. A raid over the northern border distracted the English forces. A Scottish army entered England with the impostor who bore Richard's name, and though it was utterly defeated by Henry Percy in September at Homildon Hill the respite had served Owen well. He sallied out from the inaccessible fastnesses in which he had held Henry at bay to win victories which were followed by the adhesion of all North Wales and of great part of South Wales to his cause.

### **The Percies**

What gave life to these attacks and conspiracies was the hostility of France. The influence of the Duke of Burgundy was still strong enough to prevent any formal hostilities, but the war party was gaining more and more the ascendant. Its head, the Duke of Orleans, had fanned the growing flame by sending a formal defiance to Henry the Fourth as the murderer of Richard. French knights were among the prisoners whom the Percies took at Homildon Hill; and it may have been through their intervention that the Percies themselves were now brought into correspondence with the court of France. No house had played a greater

part in the overthrow of Richard, or had been more richly rewarded by the new king. But old grudges existed between the house of Percy and the house of Lancaster. The Earl of Northumberland had been at bitter variance with John of Gaunt; and though a common dread of Richard's enmity had thrown the Percies and Henry together the new king and his powerful subjects were soon parted again. Henry had ground indeed for distrust. The death of Richard left the young Mortimer, Earl of March, next claimant in blood of the crown, and the king had shown his sense of this danger by imprisoning the earl and his sisters in the Tower. But this imprisonment made their uncle, Sir Edmund Mortimer, the representative of their house; and Edmund withdrew to the Welsh Marches, refusing to own Henry for king. The danger was averted by the luck which threw Sir Edmund as a captive into the hands of Owen Glyndwr in the battle of Brynglas. It was natural that Henry should refuse to allow Mortimer's kinsmen to ransom so formidable an enemy; but among these kinsmen Henry Percy ranked himself through his marriage with Sir Edmund's sister, and the refusal served as a pretext for a final breach with the king.

### **Overthrow of the Percies**

Percy had withdrawn from the Welsh war in wrath at the inadequate support which Henry gave him; and his anger had been increased by a delay in repayment of the sums spent by his house in the contest with Scotland, as well as by the king's demand that he should surrender the Earl of Douglas whom he had taken prisoner at Homildon Hill. He now became the centre of a great conspiracy to place the Earl of March upon the throne. His father, the Earl of Northumberland, his uncle, Thomas Percy, the Earl of Worcester, joined in the plot. Sir Edmund Mortimer negotiated for aid from Owen Glyndwr; the Earl of Douglas threw in his fortunes with the confederates; and Henry Percy himself crossed to France and obtained promises of support. The war party had now gained the upper hand at the French court; in 1403 preparations were made to attack Calais, and a Breton fleet put to sea. At the news of its presence in the Channel Henry Percy and the Earl of Worcester at once rose in the north and struck across England to join Owen Glyndwr in Wales, while the Earl of Northumberland gathered a second army and advanced more slowly to their support. But Glyndwr was still busy with the siege of Caermarthen, and the king by a hasty march flung himself across the road of the Percies as they reached Shrewsbury. On the twenty-third of

July a fierce fight ended in the defeat of the rebel force. Henry Percy was slain in battle, the Earl of Worcester taken and beheaded; while Northumberland, who had been delayed by an army under his rival in the north, Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, was thrown into prison, and only pardoned on his protestations of innocence. The quick, hard blow did its work. The young Earl of March betrayed the plans of his partizans to purchase pardon. The Breton fleet, which had defeated an English fleet in the Channel and made a descent upon Plymouth, withdrew to its harbours; and though the Duke of Burgundy was on the point of commencing the siege of Calais the plans of an attack on that town were no more heard of.

### **Henry's difficulties**

But the difficulty of Wales remained as great as ever. The discouragement of Owen at the failure of the conspiracy of the Percies was removed by the open aid of the French Court. In July 1404 the French king in a formal treaty owned Glyndwr as Prince of Wales, and his promises of aid gave fresh heart to the insurgents. What hampered Henry's efforts most in meeting this danger was the want of money. At the opening of 1404 the Parliament grudgingly gave a subsidy of a twentieth, but the treasury called for fresh supplies in October, and the wearied Commons fell back on their old proposal of a confiscation of Church property. Under the influence of Archbishop Arundel the Lords succeeded in quashing the project, and a new subsidy was voted; but the treasury was soon as empty as before. Treason was still rife; the Duke of York, who had played so conspicuous a part in Richard's day as Earl of Rutland, was sent for a while to the Tower on suspicion of complicity in an attempt of his sister to release the Earl of March; and Glyndwr remained unconquerable.

### **Turn of the tide**

But fortune was now beginning to turn. The danger from Scotland was suddenly removed. King Robert resolved to send his son James for training to the court of France, but the boy was driven to the English coast by a storm and Henry refused to release him. Had the Scots been friends, the king jested, they would have sent James to him for education, as he knew the French tongue quite as well as King Charles. Robert died of grief at the news; and Scotland fell into the hands of his brother, the

Duke of Albany, whose one aim was that his nephew should remain a prisoner. James grew up at the English Court; and, prisoner though he was, the excellence of his training was seen in the poetry and intelligence of his later life. But with its king as a hostage Scotland was no longer to be dreaded as a foe. France too was weakened at this moment; for in 1405 the long-smouldering jealousy between the Dukes of Orleans and of Burgundy broke out at last into open strife. The break did little indeed to check the desultory hostilities which were going on. A Breton fleet made descents on Portland and Dartmouth. The Count of Armagnac, the strongest supporter of Orleans and the war party, led troops against the frontier of Guienne. But the weakness of France and the exhaustion of its treasury prevented any formal denunciation of the truce or declaration of war. Though Henry could spare not a soldier for Guienne Armagnac did little hurt. An English fleet repaid the ravages of the Bretons by harrying the coast of Brittany; and the turn of French politics soon gave Frenchmen too much work at home to spare men for work abroad. At the close of 1407 the murder of the Duke of Orleans by the order of the Duke of Burgundy changed the weak and fitful strife which had been going on into a struggle of the bitterest hate. The Count of Armagnac placed himself at the head of the murdered duke's partizans; and in their furious antagonism Armagnac and Burgundian alike sought aid from the English king.

### **Prince Henry**

But the fortune which favoured Henry elsewhere was still slow to turn in the West. In the opening of 1405 the king's son, Henry Prince of Wales, had taken the field against Glyndwr. Young as he was, Henry was already a tried soldier. As a boy of thirteen he had headed an incursion into Scotland in the year of his father's accession to the throne. At fifteen he fought in the front of the royal army in the desperate fight at Shrewsbury. Slight and tall in stature as he seemed, he had outgrown the weakness of his earlier years and was vigorous and swift of foot; his manners were courteous, his air grave and reserved; and though wild tales ran of revels and riots among his friends, the poets whom he favoured and Lydgate whom he set to translate "the dreary piteous tale of him of Troy" saw in him a youth "both manful and vertuous." There was little time indeed for mere riot in a life so busy as Henry's, nor were many opportunities for self-indulgence to be found in campaigns against

Glyndwr. What fitted the young general of seventeen for the thankless work in Wales was his stern, immovable will. But fortune as yet had few smiles for the king in this quarter, and his constant ill-success continued to wake fresh troubles within England itself. The repulse of the young prince in a spring campaign in 1405 was at once followed by a revolt in the north. The pardon of Northumberland had left him still a foe; the Earl of Nottingham was son of Henry's opponent, the banished Duke of Norfolk; Scrope, Archbishop of York, was brother of Richard's counsellor, the Earl of Wiltshire, who had been beheaded on the surrender of Bristol. Their rising in May might have proved a serious danger had not the treachery of Ralph Neville, the Earl of Westmoreland, who still remained steady to the Lancastrian cause, secured the arrest of some of its leaders. Scrope and Lord Nottingham were beheaded, while Northumberland and his partizan Lord Bardolf fled into Scotland and from thence to Wales. Succours from France stirred the king to a renewed attack on Glyndwr in November; but with the same ill-success. Storms and want of food wrecked the English army and forced it to retreat; a year of rest raised Glyndwr to new strength; and when the long-promised body of eight thousand Frenchmen joined him in 1407 he ventured even to cross the border and to threaten Worcester. The threat was a vain one and the Welsh army soon withdrew; but the insult gave fresh heart to Henry's foes, and in 1408 Northumberland and Bardolf again appeared in the north. Their overthrow at Bramham Moor put an end to the danger from the Percies; for Northumberland and Bardolf alike fell on the field. But Wales remained as defiant as ever. In 1409 a body of Welshmen poured ravaging into Shropshire; many of the English towns had fallen into Glyndwr's hands; and some of the Marcher Lords made private truces with him.

### **Oldcastle**

The weakness which was produced by this ill-success in the West as well as these constant battlings with disaffection within the realm was seen in the attitude of the Lollards. Lollardry was far from having been crushed by the Statute of Heresy. The death of the Earl of Salisbury in the first of the revolts against Henry's throne, though his gory head was welcomed into London by a procession of abbots and bishops who went out singing psalms of thanksgiving to meet it, only transferred the leadership of the party to one of the foremost warriors of the time, Sir

John Oldcastle. If we believe his opponents, and we have no information about him save from hostile sources, he was of lowly origin, and his rise must have been due to his own capacity and services to the Crown. In his youth he had listened to the preaching of Wyclif, and his Lollardry—if we may judge from its tone in later years—was a violent fanaticism. But this formed no obstacle to his rise in Richard's reign; his marriage with the heiress of that house made him Lord Cobham; and the accession of Henry of Lancaster, to whose cause he seems to have clung in these younger days, brought him fairly to the front. His skill in arms found recognition in his appointment as sheriff of Herefordshire and as castellan of Brecknock; and he was among the leaders who were chosen in later years for service in France. His warlike renown endeared him to the king, and Prince Henry counted him among the most illustrious of his servants. The favour of the royal house was the more notable that Oldcastle was known as "leader and captain" of the Lollards. His Kentish castle of Cowling served as the headquarters of the sect, and their preachers were openly entertained at his houses in London or on the Welsh border. The Convocation of 1413 charged him with being "the principal receiver, favourer, protector, and defender of them; and that, especially in the dioceses of London, Rochester, and Hereford, he hath sent out the said Lollards to preach ... and hath been present at their wicked sermons, grievously punishing with threatenings, terror, and the power of the secular sword such as did withstand them, alleging and affirming among other matters that we, the bishops, had no power to make any such Constitutions" as the Provincial Constitutions, in which they had forbidden the preaching of unlicensed preachers. The bold stand of Lord Cobham drew fresh influence from the sanctity of his life. Though the clergy charged him with the foulest heresy, they owned that he shrouded it "under a veil of holiness." What chiefly moved their wrath was that he "armed the hands of laymen for the spoil of the Church." The phrase seems to hint that Oldcastle was the mover in the repeated attempts of the Commons to supply the needs of the State by a confiscation of Church property. In 1404 they prayed that the needs of the kingdom might be defrayed by a confiscation of Church lands, and though this prayer was fiercely met by Archbishop Arundel it was renewed in 1410. The Commons declared as before that by devoting the revenues of the prelates to the service of the state maintenance could be made for fifteen earls, fifteen hundred knights, and six thousand squires,

while a hundred hospitals might be established for the sick and infirm. Such proposals had been commonly made by the baronial party with which the house of Lancaster had in former days been connected, and hostile as they were to the Church as an establishment they had no necessary connexion with any hostility to its doctrines. But a direct sympathy with Lollardism was seen in the further proposals of the Commons. They prayed for the abolition of episcopal jurisdiction over the clergy and for a mitigation of the Statute of Heresy.

### **Action of Prince Henry**

But formidable as the movement seemed it found a formidable opponent. The steady fighting of Prince Henry had at last met the danger from Wales, and Glyndwr, though still unconquered, saw district after district submit again to English rule. From Wales the Prince returned to bring his will to bear on England itself. It was through his strenuous opposition that the proposals of the Commons in 1410 were rejected by the Lords. He gave at the same moment a more terrible proof of his loyalty to the Church in personally assisting at the burning of a layman, Thomas Badby, for a denial of transubstantiation. The prayers of the sufferer were taken for a recantation, and the Prince ordered the fire to be plucked away. But when the offer of life and a pension failed to break the spirit of the Lollard Henry pitilessly bade him be hurled back to his doom. The Prince was now the virtual ruler of the realm. His father's earlier popularity had disappeared amidst the troubles and heavy taxation of his reign. He was already a victim to the attack of epilepsy which brought him to the grave; and in the opening of 1410 the Parliament called for the appointment of a Continual Council. The Council was appointed, and the Prince placed at its head. His energy was soon seen in a more active interposition in the affairs of France. So bitter had the hatred grown between the Burgundian and Armagnac parties that both in turn appealed again to England for help. The Burgundian alliance found favour with the Council. In August, 1411, the Duke of Burgundy offered his daughter in marriage to the Prince as the price of English aid, and four thousand men with Lord Cobham among their leaders were sent to join his forces at Paris. Their help enabled Duke John to bring his opponents to battle at St. Cloud, and to win a decisive victory in November. But already the king was showing himself impatient of the Council's control; and the Parliament significantly prayed that "as there

had been a great murmur among your people that you have had in your heart a heavy load against some of your lieges come to this present Parliament," they might be formally declared to be "faithful lieges and servants." The prayer was granted, but in spite of the support which the Houses gave to the Prince, Henry the Fourth was resolute to assert his power. At the close of 1411 he declared his will to stand in as great freedom, prerogative, and franchise as any of his predecessors had done, and annulled on that ground the appointment of the Continual Council.

### **Death of Henry the Fourth**

The king's blow had been dealt at the instigation of his queen, and it seems to have been prompted as much by a resolve to change the outer policy which the Prince had adopted as to free himself from the Council. The dismissal of the English troops by John of Burgundy after his victory at St. Cloud had irritated the English Court; and the Duke of Orleans took advantage of this turn of feeling to offer Catharine, the French king's daughter, in marriage to the Prince, and to promise the restoration of all that England claimed in Guienne and Poitou. In spite of the efforts of the Prince and the Duke of Burgundy a treaty of alliance with Orleans was signed on these terms in May, 1412, and a force under the king's second son, the Duke of Clarence, disembarked at La Hogue. But the very profusion of the Orleanist offers threw doubt on their sincerity. The Duke was only using the English aid to put a pressure on his antagonist, and its landing in August at once brought John of Burgundy to a seeming submission. While Clarence penetrated by Normandy and Maine into the Orleanais and a second English force sailed for Calais, both the French parties joined in pledging their services to King Charles "against his adversary of England." Before this union Clarence was forced in November to accept promise of payment for his men from the Duke of Orleans and to fall back on Bordeaux. The failure no doubt gave fresh strength to Prince Henry. In the opening of 1412 he had been discharged from the Council and Clarence set in his place at its head; he had been defeated in his attempts to renew the Burgundian alliance, and had striven in vain to hinder Clarence from sailing. The break grew into an open quarrel. Letters were sent into various counties refuting the charges of the Prince's detractors, and in September Henry himself appeared before his father with a crowd of his friends and supporters demanding the punishment of those who accused him. The charges made against him

were that he sought to bring about the king's removal from the throne; and "the great recourse of people unto him, of which his court was at all times more abundant than his father's," gave colour to the accusation. Henry the Fourth owned his belief in these charges, but promised to call a Parliament for his son's vindication; and the Parliament met in the February of 1413. But a new attack of epilepsy had weakened the king's strength; and though galleys were gathered for a Crusade which he had vowed he was too weak to meet the Houses on their assembly. If we may trust a charge which was afterwards denied, the king's half-brother, Bishop Henry of Winchester, one of the Beaufort children of John of Gaunt, acting in secret co-operation with the Prince, now brought the peers to pray Henry to suffer his son to be crowned in his stead. The king's refusal was the last act of a dying man. Before the end of March he breathed his last in the "Jerusalem Chamber" within the Abbot's house at Westminster; and the Prince obtained the crown which he had sought.

### **Suppression of the Lollards**

The removal of Archbishop Arundel from the Chancellorship, which was given to Henry Beaufort of Winchester, was among the first acts of Henry the Fifth; and it is probable that this blow at the great foe of the Lollards gave encouragement to the hopes of Oldcastle. He seized the opportunity of the coronation in April to press his opinions on the young king, though probably rather with a view to the plunder of the Church than to any directly religious end. From the words of the clerical chroniclers it is plain that Henry had no mind as yet for any open strife with either party, and that he quietly put the matter aside. He was in fact busy with foreign affairs. The Duke of Clarence was recalled from Bordeaux, and a new truce concluded with France. The policy of Henry was clearly to look on for a while at the shifting politics of the distracted kingdom. Soon after his accession another revolution in Paris gave the charge of the mad King Charles, and with it the nominal government of the realm, to the Duke of Orleans; and his cause derived fresh strength from the support of the young Dauphin, who was afterwards to play so great a part in the history of France as Charles the Seventh. John of Burgundy withdrew to Flanders, and both parties again sought Henry's aid. But his hands were tied as yet by trouble at home. Oldcastle was far from having abandoned his projects, discouraged as they had been by his

master; while the suspicions of Henry's favour to the Lollard cause which could hardly fail to be roused by his favour to the Lollard leader only spurred the bold spirit of Arundel to energetic action. A council of bishops gathered in the summer to denounce Lollardry and at once called on Henry to suffer Oldcastle to be brought to justice. The king pleaded for delay in the case of one who was so close a friend, and strove personally to convince Lord Cobham of his errors. All however was in vain, and Oldcastle withdrew to his castle of Cowling, while Arundel summoned him before his court and convicted him as a heretic. His open defiance at last forced the king to act. In September a body of royal troops arrested Lord Cobham and carried him to the Tower; but his life was still spared, and after a month's confinement his imprisonment was relaxed on his promise of recantation. Cobham however had now resolved on open resistance. He broke from the Tower in November, and from his hiding-place organized a vast revolt. At the opening of 1414 a secret order summoned the Lollards to assemble in St. Giles's Fields outside London. We gather, if not the real aims of the rising, at least the terror it caused, from Henry's statement that its purpose was "to destroy himself, his brothers, and several of the spiritual and temporal lords"; from Cobham's later declarations it is probable that the pretext of the rising was to release Richard, whom he asserted to be still alive, and to set him again on the throne. But the vigilance of the young king prevented the junction of the Lollards within the city with their confederates without, and these as they appeared at the place of meeting were dispersed by the royal troops.

### **Renewal of the French War**

The failure of the rising only increased the rigour of the law. Magistrates were directed to arrest all heretics and hand them over to the bishops; a conviction of heresy was made to entail forfeiture of blood and estate; and the execution of thirty-nine prominent Lollards as traitors gave terrible earnest of the king's resolve to suppress their sect. Oldcastle escaped, and for four years longer strove to rouse revolt after revolt. He was at last captured on the Welsh border and burned as a heretic; but from the moment when his attempt at revolt was crushed in St. Giles's Fields the dread of Lollardry was broken and Henry was free to take a more energetic course of policy on the other side the sea. He had already been silently preparing for action by conciliatory measures, by restoring

Henry Percy's son to the Earldom of Northumberland, by the release of the Earl of March, and by the solemn burial of Richard the Second at Westminster. The suppression of the Lollard revolt was followed by a demand for the restoration of the English possessions in France, and by alliances and preparations for war. Burgundy stood aloof in a sullen neutrality, and the Duke of Orleans, who was now virtually ruler of the French kingdom, in vain proposed concession after concession. All negotiation indeed broke down when Henry formally put forward his claim on the crown of France. No claim could have been more utterly baseless, for the Parliamentary title by which the House of Lancaster held England could give it no right over France, and the strict law of hereditary succession which Edward asserted could be pleaded, if pleaded at all, only by the House of Mortimer. Not only the claim indeed, but the very nature of the war itself was wholly different from that of Edward the Third. Edward had been forced into the struggle against his will by the ceaseless attacks of France, and his claim of the crown was little but an afterthought to secure the alliance of Flanders. The war of Henry on the other hand, though in form a mere renewal of the earlier struggle on the close of the truce made by Richard the Second, was in fact an aggression on the part of a nation tempted by the helplessness of its opponent and galled by the memory of former defeat. Its one excuse lay in the attacks which France for the past fifteen years had directed against the Lancastrian throne, its encouragement of every enemy without and of every traitor within. Henry may fairly have regarded such a ceaseless hostility, continued even through years of weakness, as forcing him in sheer self-defence to secure his realm against the weightier attack which might be looked for, should France recover her strength.

### **Agincourt**

In the summer of 1415 the king prepared to sail from Southampton, when a plot reminded him of the insecurity of his throne. The Earl of March was faithful: but he was childless, and his claim would pass at his death through a sister who had wedded the Earl of Cambridge, a son of the Duke of York, to her child Richard, the Duke who was to play so great a part in the War of the Roses. It was to secure his boy's claims that the Earl of Cambridge seized on the king's departure to conspire with Lord Scrope and Sir Thomas Grey to proclaim the Earl of March king.

The plot however was discovered and the plotters beheaded before the king sailed in August for the Norman coast. His first exploit was the capture of Harfleur. Dysentery made havoc in his ranks during the siege, and it was with a mere handful of men that he resolved to insult the enemy by a daring march like that of Edward upon Calais. The discord however on which he probably reckoned for security vanished before the actual appearance of the invaders in the heart of France; and when his weary and half-starved force succeeded in crossing the Somme it found sixty thousand Frenchmen encamped on the field of Agincourt right across its line of march. Their position, flanked on either side by woods, but with a front so narrow that the dense masses were drawn up thirty men deep, though strong for purposes of defence was ill suited for attack; and the French leaders, warned by the experience of Crécy and Poitiers, resolved to await the English advance. Henry on the other hand had no choice between attack and unconditional surrender. His troops were starving, and the way to Calais lay across the French army. But the king's courage rose with the peril. A knight in his train wished that the thousands of stout warriors lying idle that night in England had been standing in his ranks. Henry answered with a burst of scorn. "I would not have a single man more," he replied. "If God give us the victory, it will be plain we owe it to His grace. If not, the fewer we are, the less loss for England." Starving and sick as they were, the handful of men whom he led shared the spirit of their king. As the chill rainy night passed away he drew up his army on the twenty-fifth of October and boldly gave battle. The English archers bared their arms and breasts to give fair play to "the crooked stick and the grey goose wing," but for which—as the rime ran—"England were but a fling," and with a great shout sprang forward to the attack. The sight of their advance roused the fiery pride of the French; the wise resolve of their leaders was forgotten, and the dense mass of men-at-arms plunged heavily forward through miry ground on the English front. But at the first sign of movement Henry had halted his line, and fixing in the ground the sharpened stakes with which each man was furnished his archers poured their fatal arrow-flights into the hostile ranks. The carnage was terrible, for though the desperate charges of the French knighthood at last drove the English archers to the neighbouring woods, from the skirt of these woods they were still able to pour their shot into the enemy's flanks, while Henry with the men-at-arms around him flung himself on the French line. In the terrible struggle which

followed the king bore off the palm of bravery: he was felled once by a blow from a French mace and the crown of his helmet was cleft by the sword of the Duke of Alençon; but the enemy was at last broken, and the defeat of the main body of the French was followed by the rout of their reserve. The triumph was more complete, as the odds were even greater, than at Crécy. Eleven thousand Frenchmen lay dead on the field, and more than a hundred princes and great lords were among the fallen.

### **Conquest of Normandy**

The immediate result of the battle of Agincourt was small, for the English army was too exhausted for pursuit, and it made its way to Calais only to return to England. Through 1416 the war was limited to a contest for the command of the Channel, till the increasing bitterness of the strife between the Burgundians and Armagnacs, and the consent of John of Burgundy to conclude an alliance, encouraged Henry to resume his attempt to recover Normandy. Whatever may have been his aim in this enterprise—whether it were, as has been suggested, to provide a refuge for his house, should its power be broken in England, or simply to acquire a command of the seas—the patience and skill with which his object was accomplished raise him high in the rank of military leaders. Disembarking in July 1417 with an army of forty thousand men near the mouth of the Touque, he stormed Caen, received the surrender of Bayeux, reduced Alençon and Falaise, and detaching his brother the Duke of Gloucester in the spring of 1418 to occupy the Cotentin made himself master of Avranches and Domfront. With Lower Normandy wholly in his hands, he advanced upon Evreux, captured Louviers, and seizing Pont-de-l'Arche, threw his troops across the Seine. The end of these masterly movements was now revealed. Rouen was at this time the largest and wealthiest of the towns of France; its walls were defended by a powerful artillery; Alan Blanchard, a brave and resolute patriot, infused the fire of his own temper into the vast population; and the garrison, already strong, was backed by fifteen thousand citizens in arms. But the genius of Henry was more than equal to the difficulties with which he had to deal. He had secured himself from an attack on his rear by the reduction of Lower Normandy, his earlier occupation of Harfleur severed the town from the sea, and his conquest of Pont-de-l'Arche cut it off from relief on the side of Paris. Slowly but steadily the king drew his lines of investment round the doomed city; a flotilla was brought up from

Harfleur, a bridge of boats thrown over the Seine above the town, the deep trenches of the besiegers protected by posts, and the desperate sallies of the garrison stubbornly beaten back. For six months Rouen held resolutely out, but famine told fast on the vast throng of country folk who had taken refuge within its walls. Twelve thousand of these were at last thrust out of the city gates, but the cold policy of the conqueror refused them passage, and they perished between the trenches and the walls. In the hour of their agony women gave birth to infants, but even the new-born babes which were drawn up in baskets to receive baptism were lowered again to die on their mothers' breasts. It was little better within the town itself. As winter drew on one-half of the population wasted away. "War," said the terrible king, "has three handmaidens ever waiting on her, Fire, Blood, and Famine, and I have chosen the meekest maid of the three." But his demand of unconditional surrender nerved the citizens to a resolve of despair; they determined to fire the city and fling themselves in a mass on the English lines; and Henry, fearful lest his prize should escape him at the last, was driven to offer terms. Those who rejected a foreign yoke were suffered to leave the city, but his vengeance reserved its victim in Alan Blanchard, and the brave patriot was at Henry's orders put to death in cold blood.

### **Death of Henry the Fifth**

A few sieges completed the reduction of Normandy. The king's designs were still limited to the acquisition of that province; and pausing in his career of conquest, he strove to win its loyalty by a remission of taxation and a redress of grievances, and to seal its possession by a formal peace with the French Crown. The conferences however which were held for this purpose at Pontoise in 1419 failed through the temporary reconciliation of the French factions, while the length and expense of the war began to rouse remonstrance and discontent at home. The king's difficulties were at their height when the assassination of John of Burgundy at Montereau in the very presence of the Dauphin with whom he had come to hold conference rekindled the fires of civil strife. The whole Burgundian party with the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, at its head flung itself in a wild thirst for revenge into Henry's hands. The mad king, Charles the Sixth, with his queen and daughters was in Philip's power; and in his resolve to exclude the Dauphin from the throne the Duke stooped to buy English aid by giving Catharine, the

eldest of the French princesses, in marriage to Henry, by conferring on him the Regency during the life of Charles, and recognizing his succession to the crown at that sovereign's death. A treaty which embodied these terms was solemnly ratified by Charles himself in a conference at Troyes in May 1420; and Henry, who in his new capacity of Regent undertook to conquer in the name of his father-in-law the territory held by the Dauphin, reduced the towns of the Upper Seine, and at Christmas entered Paris in triumph side by side with the king. The States-General of the realm were solemnly convened to the capital; and strange as the provisions of the Treaty of Troyes must have seemed they were confirmed without a murmur. Henry was formally recognized as the future sovereign of France. A defeat of his brother Clarence at Baugé in Anjou in the spring of 1421 called him back to the war. His reappearance in the field was marked by the capture of Dreux, and a repulse before Orleans was redeemed in the summer of 1422 by his success in the long and obstinate siege of Meaux. At no time had the fortunes of Henry reached a higher pitch than at the moment when he felt the touch of death. In the month which followed the surrender of Meaux he fell ill at Corbeil; the rapidity of his disease baffled the skill of the physicians; and at the close of August, with a strangely characteristic regret that he had not lived to achieve the conquest of Jerusalem, the great conqueror passed away.

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## **CHAPTER VI**

### **THE WARS OF THE ROSES**

#### **1422-1461**

#### **Plans of Henry V**

At the moment when death so suddenly stayed his course the greatness of Henry the Fifth had reached its highest point. In England his victories had hushed the last murmurs of disaffection. The death of the Earl of Cambridge, the childhood of his son, removed all danger from the claims of the house of York. The ruin of Lord Cobham, the formal condemnation of Wyclif's doctrines in the Council of Constance, broke the political and the religious strength of Lollardy. Henry had won the Church by his orthodoxy, the nobles by his warlike prowess, the whole

people by his revival of the glories of Crécy and Poitiers. In France his cool policy had transformed him from a foreign conqueror into a legal heir to the crown. The King was in his hands, the Queen devoted to his cause, the Duke of Burgundy was his ally, his title of Regent and of successor to the throne rested on the formal recognition of the estates of the realm. Although southern France still clung to the Dauphin, the progress of Henry to the very moment of his death promised a speedy mastery of the whole country. His European position was a commanding one. Lord of the two great western kingdoms, he was linked by close ties of blood with the royal lines of Portugal and Castille; and his restless activity showed itself in his efforts to procure the adoption of his brother John as her successor by the queen of Naples, and in the marriage of a younger brother, Humphrey, with Jacqueline, the Countess of Holland and Hainault. Dreams of a vaster enterprise filled the soul of the great conqueror himself; he loved to read the story of Godfrey of Bouillon and cherished the hope of a crusade which should beat back the Ottoman and again rescue the Holy Land from heathen hands. Such a crusade might still have saved Constantinople, and averted from Europe the danger which threatened it through the century that followed the fall of the imperial city. Nor was the enterprise a dream in the hands of the cool, practical warrior and ruler of whom a contemporary could say, "He transacts all his affairs himself, he considers well before he undertakes them, he never does anything fruitlessly."

### **John of Bedford**

But the hopes of far-off conquests found a sudden close in Henry's death. His son, Henry the Sixth of England, was a child of but nine months old: and though he was peacefully recognized as king in his English realm and as heir to the throne in the realm of France his position was a very different one from his father's. The death of King Charles indeed, two months after that of his son-in-law, did little to weaken it; and at first nothing seemed lost. The Dauphin at once proclaimed himself Charles the Seventh of France: but Henry was owned as Sovereign over the whole of the territory which Charles had actually ruled; and the incursions which the partizans of Charles, now reinforced by Lombard soldiers from the Milanese and by four thousand Scots under the Earl of Douglas, made with fresh vigour across the Loire were easily repulsed by Duke John of Bedford, the late king's brother, who

had been named in his will Regent of France. In genius for war as in political capacity John was hardly inferior to Henry himself. Drawing closer his alliance with the Duke of Burgundy by marriage with that prince's sister, and holding that of Brittany by a patient diplomacy, he completed the conquest of Northern France, secured his communications with Normandy by the capture of Meulan, and made himself master of the line of the Yonne by a victory near Auxerre. In 1424 the Constable of Buchan pushed from the Loire to the very borders of Normandy to arrest his progress, and attacked the English army at Verneuil. But a repulse hardly less disastrous than that of Agincourt left a third of the French knighthood on the field: and the Regent was preparing to cross the Loire for a final struggle with "the King of Bourges" as the English in mockery called Charles the Seventh when his career of victory was broken by troubles at home.

### **Humphrey of Gloucester**

In England the Lancastrian throne was still too newly established to remain unshaken by the succession of a child of nine months old. Nor was the younger brother of Henry the Fifth, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, whom the late king's will named as Regent of the realm, a man of the same noble temper as the Duke of Bedford. Intellectually the figure of Humphrey is one of extreme interest, for he is the first Englishman in whom we can trace the faint influence of that revival of knowledge which was to bring about the coming renaissance of the western world. Humphrey was not merely a patron of poets and men of letters, of Lydgate and William of Worcester and Abbot Whethamstede of St. Albans, as his brother and other princes of the day had been, but his patronage seems to have sprung from a genuine interest in learning itself. He was a zealous collector of books and was able to bequeath to the University of Oxford a library of a hundred and thirty volumes. A gift of books indeed was a passport to his favour, and before the title of each volume he possessed the Duke wrote words which expressed his love of them, "moun bien mondain," "my worldly goods"! Lydgate tells us how "notwithstanding his state and dignyte his corage never doth appalle to studie in books of antiquitie." His studies drew him to the revival of classic learning which was becoming a passion across the Alps. One wandering scholar from Forli, who took the pompous name of Titus Livius and who wrote at his request the biography of Henry the Fifth,

Humphrey made his court poet and orator. The Duke probably aided Poggio Bracciolini in his search for classical manuscripts when he visited England in 1420. Leonardo Aretino, one of the scholars who gathered about Cosmo de Medici, dedicated to him a translation of the *Politics* of Aristotle, and when another Italian scholar sent him a fragment of a translation of Plato's *Republic* the Duke wrote to beg him to send the rest. But with its love of learning Humphrey combined the restlessness, the immorality, the selfish, boundless ambition which characterized the age of the Renaissance. His life was sullied by sensual excesses, his greed of power shook his nephew's throne. So utterly was he already distrusted that the late king's nomination of him as Regent was set aside by the royal Council, and he was suffered only to preside at its deliberations with the nominal title of Protector during Bedford's absence. The real direction of affairs fell into the hands of his uncle, Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, a legitimated son of John of Gaunt by his mistress Catharine Swynford.

### **Jacqueline of Hainault**

Two years of useless opposition disgusted the Duke with this nominal Protectorship, and in 1424 he left the realm to push his fortunes in the Netherlands. Jacqueline, the daughter and heiress of William, Count of Holland and Hainault, had originally wedded John, Duke of Brabant; but after a few years of strife she had procured a divorce from one of the three claimants who now disputed the Papacy, and at the close of Henry the Fifth's reign she had sought shelter in England. At his brother's death the Duke of Gloucester avowed his marriage with her and adopted her claims as his own. To support them in arms however was to alienate Philip of Burgundy, who was already looking forward to the inheritance of his childless nephew, the Duke of Brabant; and as the alliance with Burgundy was the main strength of the English cause in France, neither Bedford, who had shown his sense of its value by a marriage with the Duke's sister, nor the English council were likely to support measures which would imperil or weaken it. Such considerations however had little weight with Humphrey; and in October 1424 he set sail for Calais without their knowledge with a body of five thousand men. In a few months he succeeded in restoring Hainault to Jacqueline, and Philip at once grew lukewarm in his adherence to the English cause. Though Bedford's efforts prevented any final break, the Duke withdrew his

forces from France to aid John of Brabant in the recovery of Hainault and Holland. Gloucester challenged Philip to decide their claims by single combat. But the enterprise was abandoned as hastily as it had been begun. The Duke of Gloucester was already disgusted with Jacqueline and enamoured of a lady in her suite, Eleanor, the daughter of Lord Cobham; and in the summer of 1425 he suddenly returned with her to England and left his wife to defend herself as she might.

### **Henry Beaufort**

What really called him back was more than his passion for Eleanor Cobham or the natural versatility of his temper; it was the advance of a rival in England to further power over the realm. This was his uncle, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester. The bishop had already played a leading political part. He was charged with having spurred Henry the Fifth to the ambitious demands of power which he made during his father's lifetime; he became chancellor on his accession; and at his death the king left him guardian of the person of his boy. He looked on Gloucester's ambition as a danger to his charge, withstood his recognition as Regent, and remained at the head of the Council that reduced his office of Protector to a name. The Duke's absence in Hainault gave fresh strength to his opponent: and the nomination of the Bishop to the Chancellorship marked him out as the virtual ruler of the realm. On the news of this appointment Gloucester hurried back to accept what he looked on as a challenge to open strife. The Londoners rose in his name to attack Beaufort's palace in Southwark, and at the close of 1425 Bedford had to quit his work in France to appease the strife. In the following year Gloucester laid a formal bill of accusation against the bishop before the Parliament, but its rejection forced him to a show of reconciliation, and Bedford was able to return to France. Hardly was he gone however when the quarrel began anew. Humphrey found a fresh weapon against Beaufort in his acceptance of the dignity of a Cardinal and of a Papal Legate in England; and the jealousy which this step aroused drove the Bishop to withdraw for a while from the Council and to give place to his unscrupulous opponent.

### **Siege of Orleans**

Beaufort possessed an administrative ability, the loss of which was a heavy blow to the struggling Regent over sea, where Humphrey's restless

ambition had already paralyzed Bedford's efforts. Much of his strength rested on his Burgundian ally, and the force of Burgundy was drawn to other quarters. Though Hainault had been easily won back on Gloucester's retreat and Jacqueline taken prisoner, her escape from prison enabled her to hold Holland for three years against the forces of the Duke of Brabant and after his death against those of the Duke of Burgundy to whom he bequeathed his dominions. The political strife in England itself was still more fatal in diverting the supplies of men and money which were needful for a vigorous prosecution of the war. To maintain even the handful of forces left to him Bedford was driven to have recourse to mere forays which did little but increase the general misery. The north of France indeed was being fast reduced to a desert by the bands of marauders which traversed it. The husbandmen fled for refuge to the towns till these in fear of famine shut their gates against them. Then in their despair they threw themselves into the woods and became brigands in their turn. So terrible was the devastation that two hostile bodies of troops failed at one time even to find one another in the desolate Beauce. Misery and disease killed a hundred thousand people in Paris alone. At last the cessation of the war in Holland and the temporary lull of strife in England enabled the Regent to take up again his long-interrupted advance upon the South. Orleans was the key to the Loire; and its reduction would throw open Bourges where Charles held his court. Bedford's resources indeed were still inadequate for such a siege; and though the arrival of reinforcements from England under the Earl of Salisbury enabled him to invest it in October 1428 with ten thousand men, the fact that so small a force could undertake the siege of such a town as Orleans shows at once the exhaustion of England and the terror which still hung over France. As the siege went on however even these numbers were reduced. A new fit of jealousy on the part of the Duke of Burgundy brought about a recall of his soldiers from the siege, and after their withdrawal only three thousand Englishmen remained in the trenches. But the long series of English victories had so demoralized the French soldiery, that in February 1429 a mere detachment of archers under Sir John Fastolfe repulsed a whole army in what was called "the Battle of the Herrings" from the convoy of provisions which the victors brought in triumph into the camp before Orleans. Though the town swarmed with men-at-arms not a single sally was ventured on through

the six months' siege, and Charles the Seventh did nothing for its aid but shut himself up in Chinon and weep helplessly.

### **Jeanne Darc**

But the success of this handful of besiegers rested wholly on the spell of terror which had been cast over France, and at this moment the appearance of a peasant maiden broke the spell. Jeanne Darc was the child of a labourer of Domrémy, a little village in the neighbourhood of Vaucouleurs on the borders of Lorraine and Champagne. Just without the cottage where she was born began the great woods of the Vosges where the children of Domrémy drank in poetry and legend from fairy ring and haunted well, hung their flower garlands on the sacred trees, and sang songs to the "good people" who might not drink of the fountain because of their sins. Jeanne loved the forest; its birds and beasts came lovingly to her at her childish call. But at home men saw nothing in her but "a good girl, simple and pleasant in her ways," spinning and sewing by her mother's side while the other girls went to the fields, tender to the poor and sick, fond of church, and listening to the church-bell with a dreamy passion of delight which never left her. This quiet life was broken by the storm of war as it at last came home to Domrémy. As the outcasts and wounded passed by the little village the young peasant girl gave them her bed and nursed them in their sickness. Her whole nature summed itself up in one absorbing passion: she "had pity," to use the phrase for ever on her lip, "on the fair realm of France." As her passion grew she recalled old prophecies that a maid from the Lorraine border should save the land; she saw visions; St. Michael appeared to her in a flood of blinding light, and bade her go to the help of the king and restore to him his realm. "Messire," answered the girl, "I am but a poor maiden; I know not how to ride to the wars, or to lead men-at-arms." The archangel returned to give her courage, and to tell her of "the pity" that there was in heaven for the fair realm of France. The girl wept and longed that the angels who appeared to her would carry her away, but her mission was clear. It was in vain that her father when he heard her purpose swore to drown her ere she should go to the field with men-at-arms. It was in vain that the priest, the wise people of the village, the captain of Vaucouleurs, doubted and refused to aid her. "I must go to the King," persisted the peasant girl, "even if I wear my limbs to the very knees." "I had far rather rest and spin by my mother's side," she pleaded with a touching pathos, "for this

is no work of my choosing, but I must go and do it, for my Lord wills it.” “And who,” they asked, “is your Lord?” “He is God.” Words such as these touched the rough captain at last: he took Jeanne by the hand and swore to lead her to the king. She reached Chinon in the opening of March, but here too she found hesitation and doubt. The theologians proved from their books that they ought not to believe her. “There is more in God’s book than in yours,” Jeanne answered simply. At last Charles himself received her in the midst of a throng of nobles and soldiers. “Gentle Dauphin,” said the girl, “my name is Jeanne the Maid. The Heavenly King sends me to tell you that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Reims, and you shall be lieutenant of the Heavenly King who is the King of France.”

### **Relief of Orleans**

Orleans had already been driven by famine to offers of surrender when Jeanne appeared in the French court, and a force was gathering under the Count of Dunois at Blois for a final effort at its relief. It was at the head of this force that Jeanne placed herself. The girl was in her eighteenth year, tall, finely formed, with all the vigour and activity of her peasant rearing, able to stay from dawn to nightfall on horseback without meat or drink. As she mounted her charger, clad in white armour from head to foot, with a great white banner studded with fleur-de-lys waving over her head, she seemed “a thing wholly divine, whether to see or hear.” The ten thousand men-at-arms who followed her from Blois, rough plunderers whose only prayer was that of La Hire, “Sire Dieu, I pray you to do for La Hire what La Hire would do for you, were you captain-at-arms and he God,” left off their oaths and foul living at her word and gathered round the altars on their march. Her shrewd peasant humour helped her to manage the wild soldiery, and her followers laughed over their camp-fires at an old warrior who had been so puzzled by her prohibition of oaths that she suffered him still to swear by his bâton. For in the midst of her enthusiasm her good sense never left her. The people crowded round her as she rode along, praying her to work miracles, and bringing crosses and chaplets to be blest by her touch. “Touch them yourself,” she said to an old Dame Margaret; “your touch will be just as good as mine.” But her faith in her mission remained as firm as ever. “The Maid prays and requires you,” she wrote to Bedford, “to work no more distraction in France but to come in her company to

rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the Turk.” “I bring you,” she told Dunois when he sallied out of Orleans to meet her after her two days’ march from Blois, “I bring you the best aid ever sent to any one, the aid of the King of Heaven.” The besiegers looked on overawed as she entered Orleans and, riding round the walls, bade the people shake off their fear of the forts which surrounded them. Her enthusiasm drove the hesitating generals to engage the handful of besiegers, and the enormous disproportion of forces at once made itself felt. Fort after fort was taken till only the strongest remained, and then the council of war resolved to adjourn the attack. “You have taken your counsel,” replied Jeanne, “and I take mine.” Placing herself at the head of the men-at-arms, she ordered the gates to be thrown open, and led them against the fort. Few as they were, the English fought desperately, and the Maid, who had fallen wounded while endeavouring to scale its walls, was borne into a vineyard, while Dunois sounded the retreat. “Wait a while!” the girl imperiously pleaded, “eat and drink! so soon as my standard touches the wall you shall enter the fort.” It touched, and the assailants burst in. On the next day the siege was abandoned, and on the eighth of May the force which had conducted it withdrew in good order to the north.

### **Coronation of Charles**

In the midst of her triumph Jeanne still remained the pure, tender-hearted peasant girl of the Vosges. Her first visit as she entered Orleans was to the great church, and there, as she knelt at mass, she wept in such a passion of devotion that “all the people wept with her.” Her tears burst forth afresh at her first sight of bloodshed and of the corpses strewn over the battle-field. She grew frightened at her first wound, and only threw off the touch of womanly fear when she heard the signal for retreat. Yet more womanly was the purity with which she passed through the brutal warriors of a mediæval camp. It was her care for her honour that led her to clothe herself in a soldier’s dress. She wept hot tears when told of the foul taunts of the English, and called passionately on God to witness her chastity. “Yield thee, yield thee, Glasdale,” she cried to the English warrior whose insults had been foulest as he fell wounded at her feet; “you called me harlot! I have great pity on your soul.” But all thought of herself was lost in the thought of her mission. It was in vain that the French generals strove to remain on the Loire. Jeanne was resolute to complete her task, and while the English remained panic-stricken around

Paris she brought Charles to march upon Reims, the old crowning-place of the kings of France. Troyes and Châlons submitted as she reached them, Reims drove out the English garrison and threw open her gates to the king.

### **Capture of Jeanne**

With his coronation the Maid felt her errand to be over. "O gentle King, the pleasure of God is done," she cried, as she flung herself at the feet of Charles and asked leave to go home. "Would it were His good will," she pleaded with the Archbishop as he forced her to remain, "that I might go and keep sheep once more with my sisters and my brothers: they would be so glad to see me again!" But the policy of the French Court detained her while the cities of the North of France opened their gates to the newly-consecrated king. Bedford however, who had been left without money or men, had now received reinforcements. Excluded as Cardinal Beaufort had been from the Council by Gloucester's intrigues, he poured his wealth without stint into the exhausted treasury till his loans to the Crown reached the sum of half-a-million; and at this crisis he unscrupulously diverted an army which he had levied at his own cost for a crusade against the Hussites in Bohemia to his nephew's aid. The tide of success turned again. Charles, after a repulse before the walls of Paris, fell back behind the Loire; while the towns on the Oise submitted anew to the Duke of Burgundy, whose more active aid Bedford had bought by the cession of Champagne. In the struggle against Duke Philip Jeanne fought with her usual bravery but with the fatal consciousness that her mission was at an end, and during the defence of Compiègne in the May of 1430 she fell into the power of the Bastard of Vendôme, to be sold by her captor into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy and by the Duke into the hands of the English. To the English her triumphs were victories of sorcery, and after a year's imprisonment she was brought to trial on a charge of heresy before an ecclesiastical court with the Bishop of Beauvais at its head.

### **Death of Jeanne**

Throughout the long process which followed every art was used to entangle her in her talk. But the simple shrewdness of the peasant girl foiled the efforts of her judges. "Do you believe," they asked, "that you are in a state of grace?" "If I am not," she replied, "God will put me in it.

If I am, God will keep me in it.” Her capture, they argued, showed that God had forsaken her. “Since it has pleased God that I should be taken,” she answered meekly, “it is for the best.” “Will you submit,” they demanded at last, “to the judgement of the Church Militant?” “I have come to the King of France,” Jeanne replied, “by commission from God and from the Church Triumphant above: to that Church I submit.” “I had far rather die,” she ended passionately, “than renounce what I have done by my Lord’s command.” They deprived her of mass. “Our Lord can make me hear it without your aid,” she said, weeping. “Do your voices,” asked the judges, “forbid you to submit to the Church and the Pope?” “Ah, no! our Lord first served.” Sick, and deprived of all religious aid, it was no wonder that as the long trial dragged on and question followed question Jeanne’s firmness wavered. On the charge of sorcery and diabolical possession she still appealed firmly to God. “I hold to my Judge,” she said, as her earthly judges gave sentence against her, “to the King of Heaven and Earth. God has always been my Lord in all that I have done. The devil has never had power over me.” It was only with a view to be delivered from the military prison and transferred to the prisons of the Church that she consented to a formal abjuration of heresy. She feared in fact among the soldiery those outrages to her honour, to guard against which she had from the first assumed the dress of a man. In the eyes of the Church her dress was a crime and she abandoned it; but a renewed affront forced her to resume the one safeguard left her, and the return to it was treated as a relapse into heresy which doomed her to death. At the close of May, 1431, a great pile was raised in the market-place of Rouen where her statue stands now. Even the brutal soldiers who snatched the hated “witch” from the hands of the clergy and hurried her to her doom were hushed as she reached the stake. One indeed passed to her a rough cross he had made from a stick he held, and she clasped it to her bosom. As her eyes ranged over the city from the lofty scaffold she was heard to murmur, “O Rouen, Rouen, I have great fear lest you suffer for my death.” “Yes! my voices were of God!” she suddenly cried as the last moment came; “they have never deceived me!” Soon the flames reached her, the girl’s head sank on her breast, there was one cry of “Jesus!”—“We are lost,” an English soldier muttered as the crowd broke up; “we have burned a Saint.”

### **Death of Bedford**

The English cause was indeed irretrievably lost. In spite of a pompous coronation of the boy-king Henry at Paris at the close of 1431, Bedford with the cool wisdom of his temper seems to have abandoned from this time all hope of permanently retaining France and to have fallen back on his brother's original plan of securing Normandy. Henry's Court was established for a year at Rouen, a university founded at Caen, and whatever rapine and disorder might be permitted elsewhere, justice, good government, and security for trade were steadily maintained through the favoured provinces. At home Bedford was resolutely backed by Cardinal Beaufort, whose services to the state as well as his real powers had at last succeeded in outweighing Duke Humphrey's opposition and in restoring him to the head of the royal Council. Beaufort's diplomatic ability was seen in the truces he wrung from Scotland, and in his personal efforts to prevent the impending reconciliation of the Duke of Burgundy with the French king. But the death of the duke's sister, who was the wife of Bedford, severed the last link which bound Philip to the English cause. He pressed for peace: and conferences for this purpose were held at Arras in 1435. Their failure only served him as a pretext for concluding a formal treaty with Charles; and his desertion was followed by a yet more fatal blow to the English cause in the death of Bedford. The loss of the Regent was the signal for the loss of Paris. In the spring of 1436 the city rose suddenly against its English garrison and declared for King Charles. Henry's dominion shrank at once to Normandy and the outlying fortresses of Picardy and Maine. But reduced as they were to a mere handful, and fronted by a whole nation in arms, the English soldiers struggled on with as desperate a bravery as in their days of triumph. Lord Talbot, the most daring of their leaders, forded the Somme with the water up to his chin to relieve Crotoy, and threw his men across the Oise in the face of a French army to relieve Pontoise.

### **Richard of York**

Bedford found for the moment an able and vigorous successor in the Duke of York. Richard of York was the son of the Earl of Cambridge who had been beheaded by Henry the Fifth; his mother was Anne, the heiress of the Mortimers and of their claim to the English crown as representatives of the third son of Edward the Third, Lionel of Clarence. It was to assert this claim on his son's behalf that the Earl embarked in

the fatal plot which cost him his head. But his death left Richard a mere boy in the wardship of the Crown, and for years to come all danger from his pretensions was at an end. Nor did the young Duke give any sign of a desire to assert them as he grew to manhood. He appeared content with a lineage and wealth which placed him at the head of the English baronage; for he had inherited from his uncle the Dukedom of York, his wide possessions embraced the estates of the families which united in him, the houses of York, of Clarence, and of Mortimer, and his double descent from Edward the Third, if it did no more, set him near to the Crown. The nobles looked up to him as the head of their order, and his political position recalled that of the Lancastrian Earls at an earlier time. But the position of Richard was as yet that of a faithful servant of the Crown; and as Regent of France he displayed the abilities both of a statesman and of a general. During the brief space of his regency the tide of ill fortune was stemmed; and towns and castles were recovered along the border.

### **Eleanor Cobham**

His recall after a twelvemonth's success is the first indication of the jealousy which the ruling house felt of triumphs gained by one who might some day assert his claim to the throne. Two years later, in 1440, the Duke was restored to his post, but it was now too late to do more than stand on the defensive, and all York's ability was required to preserve Normandy and Maine. Men and money alike came scantily from England—where the Duke of Gloucester, freed from the check which Bedford had laid on him while he lived, was again stirring against Beaufort and the Council. But his influence had been weakened by a marriage with his mistress, Eleanor Cobham, and in 1441 it was all but destroyed by an incident which paints the temper of the time. The restless love of knowledge which was the one redeeming feature in Duke Humphrey's character drew to him not only scholars but a horde of the astrologers and claimants of magical powers, who were the natural product of an age in which the faith of the Middle Ages was dying out before the double attack of scepticism and heresy. Amongst these was a priest named Roger Bolinbroke. Bolinbroke was seized on a charge of compassing the king's death by sorcery; and the sudden flight of Eleanor Cobham to the sanctuary at Westminster was soon explained by a like accusation. Her judges found that she had made a waxen image of the

king and slowly melted it at a fire, a process which was held to account for Henry's growing weakness both of body and mind. The Duchess was doomed to penance for her crime; she was led bareheaded and barefooted in a white penance-sheet through the streets of London, and then thrown into prison for life. Humphrey never rallied from the blow. But his retirement from public affairs was soon followed by that of his rival, Cardinal Beaufort. Age forced Beaufort to withdraw to Winchester; and the Council was from that time swayed mainly by the Earl of Suffolk, William de la Pole, a grandson of the minister of Richard the Second.

### **The Beauforts**

Few houses had served the Crown more faithfully than that of De la Pole. His father fell at the siege of Harfleur; his brother had been slain at Agincourt; William himself had served and been taken prisoner in the war with France. But as a statesman he was powerless in the hands of the Beauforts, and from this moment the policy of the Beauforts drew England nearer and nearer to the chaos of civil war. John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and his brother, Edmund, Earl of Dorset, were now the representatives of this house. They were grandsons of John of Gaunt by his mistress, Catharine Swynford. In later days Catharine became John's wife, and his uncle's influence over Richard at the close of that king's reign was shown in a royal ordinance which legitimated those of his children by her who had been born before marriage. The ordinance was confirmed by an Act of Parliament, which as it passed the Houses was expressed in the widest and most general terms; but before issuing this as a statute Henry the Fourth inserted provisions which left the Beauforts illegitimate in blood so far as regarded the inheritance of the crown. Such royal alterations of statutes however had been illegal since the time of Edward the Third; and the Beauforts never recognized the force of this provision. But whether they stood in the line of succession or no, the favour which was shown them alike by Henry the Fifth and his son drew them close to the throne, and the weakness of Henry the Sixth left them at this moment the mainstay of the House of Lancaster. Edmund Beaufort had taken an active part in the French wars, and had distinguished himself by the capture of Harfleur and the relief of Calais. But he was hated for his pride and avarice, and the popular hate grew as he showed his jealousy of the Duke of York. Loyal indeed as Richard had proved himself as yet, the pretensions of his house were the most

formidable danger which fronted the throne; and with a weak and imbecile king we can hardly wonder that the Beauforts deemed it madness to leave in the Duke's hands the wide power of a Regent in France and the command of the armies across the sea. In 1444 York was recalled, and his post was taken by Edmund Beaufort himself.

### **Loss of Normandy**

But the claim which York drew from the house of Mortimer was not his only claim to the crown; as the descendant of Edward the Third's fifth son the crown would naturally devolve upon him on the extinction of the House of Lancaster, and of the direct line of that house Henry the Sixth was the one survivor. It was to check these hopes by continuing the Lancastrian succession that Suffolk in 1445 brought about the marriage of the young king with Margaret, the daughter of Duke René of Anjou. But the marriage had another end. The English ministers were anxious for the close of the war; and in the kinship between Margaret and King Charles of France they saw a chance of bringing it about. A truce was concluded as a prelude to a future peace, and the marriage-treaty paved the way for it by ceding not only Anjou, of which England possessed nothing, but Maine, the bulwark of Normandy, to Duke René. For his part in this negotiation Suffolk was raised to the rank of marquis; but the terms of the treaty and the delays which still averted a final peace gave new strength to the war-party with Gloucester at its head, and troubles were looked for in the Parliament which met at the opening of 1447. The danger was roughly met. Gloucester was arrested as he rode to Parliament on a charge of secret conspiracy; and a few days later he was found dead in his lodging. Suspicions of murder were added to the hatred against Suffolk; and his voluntary submission to an enquiry by the Council into his conduct in the marriage-treaty, which was followed by his acquittal of all blame, did little to counteract this. What was yet more fatal to Suffolk was the renewal of the war. In the face of the agitation against it the English ministers had never dared to execute the provisions of the marriage-treaty; and in 1448 Charles the Seventh sent an army to enforce the cession of Le Mans. Its surrender averted the struggle for a moment. But in the spring of 1449 a body of English soldiers from Normandy, mutinous at their want of pay, crossed the border and sacked the rich town of Fougères in Brittany. Edmund Beaufort, who had now succeeded to the dukedom of Somerset, protested his innocence of this

breach of truce, but he either could not or would not make restitution, and the war was renewed. From this moment it was a mere series of French successes. In two months half Normandy was in the hands of Dunois; Rouen rose against her feeble garrison and threw open her gates to Charles; and the defeat at Fourmigny of an English force which was sent to Somerset's aid was a signal for revolt throughout the rest of the provinces. The surrender of Cherbourg in August, 1450, left Henry not a foot of Norman ground.

### **National discontent**

The loss of Normandy was generally laid to the charge of Somerset. He was charged with a miserly hoarding of supplies as well as planning in conjunction with Suffolk the fatal sack of Fougères. His incapacity as a general added to the resentment at his recall of the Duke of York, a recall which had been marked as a disgrace by the despatch of Richard into an honourable banishment as lieutenant of Ireland. But it was this very recall which proved most helpful to York. Had he remained in France he could hardly have averted the loss of Normandy, though he might have delayed it. As it was the shame of its loss fell upon Somerset, while the general hatred of the Beauforts and the growing contempt of the king whom they ruled expressed itself in a sudden rush of popular favour towards the man whom his disgrace had marked out as the object of their ill-will. From this moment the hopes of a better and a stronger government centred themselves in the Duke of York. The news of the French successes was at once followed by an outbreak of national wrath. Political ballads denounced Suffolk as the ape with his clog that had tied Talbot, the good "dog" who was longing to grip the Frenchmen. When the Bishop of Chichester, who had been sent to pay the sailors at Portsmouth, strove to put off the men with less than their due, they fell on him and slew him. Suffolk was impeached, and only saved from condemnation by submitting himself to the king's mercy. He was sent into exile, but as he crossed the sea he was intercepted by a ship of Kentishmen, beheaded, and his body thrown on the sands at Dover.

### **Revolt of Kent**

Kent was the centre of the national resentment. It was the great manufacturing district of the day, seething with a busy population, and especially concerned with the French contest through the piracy of the

Cinque Ports. Every house along its coast showed some spoil from the wars. Here more than anywhere the loss of the great province whose cliffs could be seen from its shores was felt as a crowning disgrace, and as we shall see from the after complaints of its insurgents, political wrongs added their fire to the national shame. Justice was ill administered; taxation was unequal and extortionate. Redress for such evils would now naturally have been sought from Parliament; but the weakness of the Crown gave the great nobles power to rob the freeholders of their franchise and return the knights of the shire. Nor could redress be looked for from the Court. The murder of Suffolk was the act of Kentishmen, and Suffolk's friends still held control over the royal councils. The one hope of reform lay in arms; and in the summer of 1450, while the last of the Norman fortresses were throwing open their gates, the discontent broke into open revolt. The rising spread from Kent over Surrey and Sussex. Everywhere it was general and organized—a military levy of the yeomen of the three shires. The parishes sent their due contingent of armed men; we know that in many hundreds the constables formally summoned their legal force to war. The insurgents were joined by more than a hundred esquires and gentlemen; and two great landholders of Sussex, the Abbot of Battle and the Prior of Lewes, openly favoured their cause. John Cade, a soldier of some experience in the French wars, took at this crisis the significant name of Mortimer and placed himself at their head. The army, now twenty thousand men strong, marched in the beginning of June on Blackheath. On the advance of the king with an equal force however they determined to lay their complaint before the royal Council and withdraw to their homes. The "Complaint of the Commons of Kent" is of high value in the light which it throws on the condition of the people. Not one of the demands touches on religious reform. The question of villeinage and serfage finds no place in it. In the seventy years which had intervened since the last peasant rising, villeinage had died naturally away before the progress of social change. The Statutes of Apparel, which from this time encumber the Statute-book, show in their anxiety to curtail the dress of the labourer and the farmer the progress of these classes in comfort and wealth; and from the language of the statutes themselves it is plain that as wages rose both farmer and labourer went on clothing themselves better in spite of sumptuary provisions. With the exception of a demand for the repeal of the Statute of Labourers, the programme of the Commons was not social

but political. The “Complaint” calls for administrative and economical reforms; it denounces the exclusion of the Duke of York and other nobles from the royal councils; it calls for a change of ministry, a more careful expenditure of the royal revenue, and for the restoration of freedom of election which had been broken in upon by the interference both of the Crown and the great landowners.

### **Suppression of the revolt**

The Council refused to receive the “Complaint,” and a body of troops under Sir Humphrey Stafford fell on the Kentishmen as they reached Sevenoaks. This attack however was roughly beaten off, and Cade’s host turned back to encounter the royal army. But the royal army itself was already calling for justice on the traitors who misled the king; and at the approach of the Kentishmen it broke up in disorder. Its dispersion was followed by Henry’s flight to Kenilworth and the entry of the Kentishmen into London, where the execution of Lord Say, the most unpopular of the royal ministers, broke the obstinacy of his colleagues. For three days the peasants entered the city freely, retiring at nightfall to their camp across the river: but on the fifth of July the men of London, goaded by the outrages of the rabble whom their presence roused to plunder, closed the bridge against them, and beat back an attack with great slaughter. The Kentishmen still however lay unbroken in Southwark, while Bishop Waynflete conferred with Cade on behalf of the Council. Their “Complaint” was received, pardons were granted to all who had joined in the rising, and the insurgents dispersed quietly to their homes. Cade had striven in vain to retain them in arms; on their dispersion he formed a new force by throwing open the gaols, and carried off the booty he had won to Rochester. Here however his men quarrelled over the plunder; his force broke up, and Cade himself was slain by Iden, the Sheriff of Kent, as he fled into Sussex.

### **York and the Beauforts**

Kent remained restless through the year, and a rising in Wiltshire showed the growing and widespread trouble of the time. The “Complaint” indeed had only been received to be laid aside. No attempt was made to redress the grievances which it stated or to reform the government. On the contrary the main object of popular hate, the Duke of Somerset, was at once recalled from Normandy to take his place at the

head of the royal Council. York on the other hand, whose recall had been pressed in the "Complaint," was looked upon as an open foe. "Strange language," indeed, had long before the Kentish rising been uttered about the Duke. Men had threatened that he "should be fetched with many thousands," and the expectation of his coming to reform the government became so general that orders were given to close the western ports against his landing. If we believe the Duke himself, he was forced to move at last by efforts to indict him as a traitor in Ireland itself. Crossing at Michaelmas to Wales in spite of the efforts to arrest him, he gathered four thousand men on his estates and marched upon London. No serious effort was made to prevent his approach to the king; and Henry found himself helpless to resist his demand of a Parliament and of the admission of new councillors to the royal council-board. Parliament met in November, and a bitter strife between York and Somerset ended in the arrest of the latter. A demand which at once followed shows the importance of his fall. Henry the Sixth still remained childless; and Young, a member for Bristol, proposed in the Commons that the Duke of York should be declared heir to the throne. But the blow was averted by repeated prorogations, and Henry's sympathies were shown by the committal of Young to the Tower, by the release of Somerset, and by his promotion to the captaincy of Calais, the most important military post under the Crown. The Commons indeed still remained resolute. When they again met in the summer of 1451 they called for the removal of Somerset and his creatures from the king's presence. But Henry evaded the demand, and the dissolution of the Houses announced the royal resolve to govern in defiance of the national will.

### **Failure of York**

The contest between the Houses and the Crown had cost England her last possessions across the Channel. As York marched upon London Charles closed on the fragment of the duchy of Guienne which still remained to the descendants of Eleanor. In a few months all was won. Bourg and Blaye surrendered in the spring of 1451, Bordeaux in the summer; two months later the loss of Bayonne ended the war in the south. Of all the English possessions in France only Calais remained; and in 1452 Calais was threatened with attack. The news of this crowning danger again called York to the front. On the declaration of Henry's will to resist all change in the government the Duke had retired to his castle

of Ludlow, arresting the whispers of his enemies with a solemn protest that he was true liegeman to the king. But after events show that he was planning a more decisive course of action than that which had broken down with the dissolution of the Parliament, and the news of the approaching siege gave ground for taking such a course at once. Somerset had been appointed Captain of Calais, and as his incapacity had lost England Normandy, it would cost her—so England believed—her last fortress in France. It was said indeed that the Duke was negotiating with Burgundy for its surrender. In the spring of 1452 therefore York again marched on London, but this time with a large body of ordnance and an army which the arrival of reinforcements under Lord Cobham and the Earl of Devonshire raised to over twenty thousand men. Eluding the host which gathered round the king and Somerset he passed by the capital, whose gates had been closed by Henry's orders, and entering Kent took post at Dartford. His army was soon fronted by the superior force of the king, but the interposition of the more moderate lords of the Council averted open conflict. Henry promised that Somerset should be put on his trial on the charges advanced by the Duke, and York on this pledge disbanded his men. But the pledge was at once broken. Somerset remained in power. York found himself practically a prisoner, and only won his release by an oath to refrain from further "routs" or assemblies.

### **Loss of Guienne**

Two such decisive failures seemed for the time to have utterly broken Richard's power. Weakened as the crown had been by losses abroad, it was clearly strong enough as yet to hold its own against the chief of the baronage. A general amnesty indeed sheltered York's adherents and enabled the Duke himself to retire safely to Ludlow, but for more than a year his rival Somerset wielded without opposition the power Richard had striven to wrest from him. A favourable turn in the progress of the war gave fresh vigour to the Government. The French forces were abruptly called from their march against Calais to the recovery of the south. The towns of Guienne had opened their gates to Charles on his pledge to respect their franchises, but the need of the French treasury was too great to respect the royal word, and heavy taxation turned the hopes of Gascony to its old masters. On the landing of an English force under Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, a general revolt restored to the English their

possessions on the Garonne. Somerset used this break of better fortune to obtain heavy subsidies from Parliament in 1453; but ere the twenty thousand men whose levy was voted could cross the Channel a terrible blow had again ruined the English cause. In a march to relieve Castillon on the Dordogne Shrewsbury suddenly found himself face to face with the whole French army. His men were mown down by its guns, and the Earl himself left dead on the field. His fall was the signal for a general submission. Town after town again threw open its gates to Charles, and Bordeaux capitulated in October.

### **Madness of the King**

The final loss of Gascony fell upon England at a moment when two events at home changed the whole face of affairs. After eight years of childlessness the king became in October the father of a son. With the birth of this boy the rivalry of York and the Beauforts for the right of succession ceased to be the mainspring of English politics; and the crown seemed again to rise out of the turmoil of warring factions. But with the birth of the son came the madness of the father. Henry the Sixth sank into a state of idiotcy which made his rule impossible, and his ministers were forced to call a great Council of peers to devise means for the government of the realm. York took his seat at this council, and the mood of the nobles was seen in the charges of misgovernment which were at once made against Somerset, and in his committal to the Tower. But Somerset was no longer at the head of the royal party. With the birth of her son the queen, Margaret of Anjou, came to the front. Her restless despotic temper was quickened to action by the dangers which she saw threatening her boy's heritage of the crown; and the demand to be invested with the full royal power which she made after a vain effort to rouse her husband from his lethargy aimed directly at the exclusion of the Duke of York. The demand however was roughly set aside; the Lords gave permission to York to summon a Parliament as the king's lieutenant; and on the assembly of the Houses in the spring of 1454, as the mental alienation of the king continued, the Lords chose Richard Protector of the Realm. With Somerset in prison little opposition could be made to the Protectorate, and that little was soon put down. But the nation had hardly time to feel the guidance of Richard's steady hand when it was removed. At the opening of 1455 the king recovered his senses, and York's Protectorate came at once to an end.

## **York's revolt**

Henry had no sooner grasped power again than he fell back on his old policy. The queen became his chief adviser. The Duke of Somerset was released from the Tower and owned by Henry in formal court as his true and faithful liegeman. York on the other hand was deprived of the government of Calais, and summoned with his friends to a council at Leicester, whose object was to provide for the surety of the king's person. Prominent among these friends were two Earls of the house of Neville. We have seen how great a part the Nevilles played after the accession of the house of Lancaster; it was mainly to their efforts that Henry the Fourth owed the overthrow of the Percies, their rivals in the mastery of the north; and from that moment their wealth and power had been steadily growing. Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, was one of the mightiest barons of the realm; but his power was all but equalled by that of his son, a second Richard, who had won the Earldom of Warwick by his marriage with the heiress of the Beauchamps. The marriage of York to Salisbury's sister, Cecily Neville, had bound both the earls to his cause, and under his Protectorate Salisbury had been created Chancellor. But he was stripped of this office on the Duke's fall; and their summons to the council of Leicester was held by the Nevilles to threaten ruin to themselves as to York. The three nobles at once took arms to secure, as they alleged, safe access to the king's person. Henry at the news of their approach mustered two thousand men, and with Somerset, the Earl of Northumberland, and other nobles in his train, advanced to St. Albans.

## **The civil war**

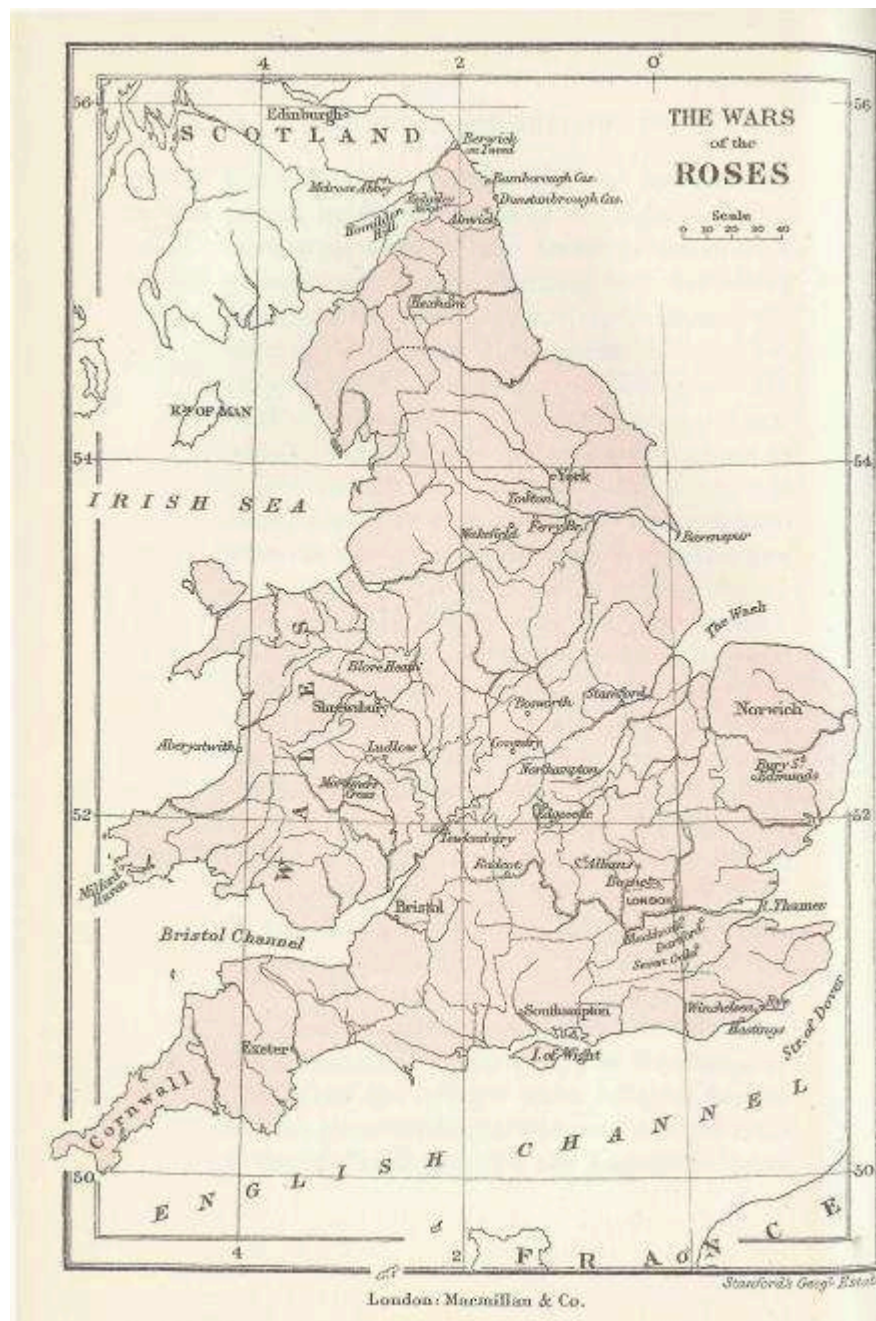
On the 23rd of May York and the two Earls encamped without the town, and called on Henry "to deliver such as we will accuse, and they to have like as they have deserved and done." The king's reply was as bold as the demand. "Rather than they shall have any lord here with me at this time," he replied, "I shall this day for their sake and in this quarrel myself live and die." A summons to disperse as traitors left York and his fellow-nobles no hope but in an attack. At eventide three assaults were made on the town. Warwick was the first to break in, and the sound of his trumpets in the streets turned the fight into a rout. Death had answered the prayer which Henry rejected, for the Duke of Somerset with Lord Clifford and the Earl of Northumberland was among the fallen. The king himself fell into the victors' hands. The three lords kneeling before him

prayed him to take them for his true liegemen, and then rode by his side in triumph into London, where a parliament was at once summoned which confirmed the acts of the Duke; and on a return of the king's malady again nominated York as Protector. But in the spring of 1456 Henry's recovery again ended the Duke's rule; and for two years the warring parties sullenly watched one another. A temporary reconciliation between them was brought about by the misery of the realm, but an attempt of the queen to arrest the Nevilles in 1458 caused a fresh outbreak of war. Salisbury defeated Lord Audley in a fight at Bloreheath in Staffordshire, and York with the two Earls raised his standard at Ludlow. But the crown was still stronger than any force of the baronage. The king marched rapidly on the insurgents, and a decisive battle was only averted by the desertion of a part of the Yorkist army and the disbanding of the rest. The Duke himself fled to Ireland, the Earls to Calais, while the queen, summoning a Parliament at Coventry in November, pressed on their attainder. But the check, whatever its cause, had been merely a temporary one. York and Warwick planned a fresh attempt from their secure retreats in Ireland and Calais; and in the midsummer of 1460 the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, with Richard's son Edward, the young Earl of March, again landed in Kent. Backed by a general rising of the county they entered London amidst the acclamations of its citizens. The royal army was defeated in a hard-fought action at Northampton in July. Margaret fled to Scotland, and Henry was left a prisoner in the hands of the Duke of York.

### **Richard claims the crown**

The position of York as heir-presumptive to the crown by his descent from Edmund of Langley had ceased with the birth of a son to Henry the Sixth: but the victory of Northampton no sooner raised him to the supreme control of affairs than he ventured to assert the far more dangerous claims which he had secretly cherished as the representative of Lionel of Clarence, and to their consciousness of which was owing the hostility of Henry and his queen. Such a claim was in direct opposition to that power of the two Houses whose growth had been the work of the past hundred years. There was no constitutional ground for any limitation of the right of Parliament to set aside an elder branch in favour of a younger, and in the Parliamentary Act which placed the House of Lancaster on the throne the claim of the House of Mortimer had been

deliberately set aside. Possession, too, told against the Yorkist pretensions. To modern minds the best reply to Richard's claim lay in the words used at a later time by Henry himself. "My father was King; his father also was King; I myself have worn the crown forty years from my cradle: you have all sworn fealty to me as your sovereign, and your fathers have done the like to mine. How then can my right be disputed?" Long and undisturbed possession as well as a distinctly legal title by free vote of Parliament was in favour of the House of Lancaster. But the persecution of the Lollards, the interference with elections, the odium of the war, the shame of the long misgovernment, told fatally against the weak and imbecile king whose reign had been a long battle of contending factions. That the misrule had been serious was shown by the attitude of the commercial class. It was the rising of Kent, the great manufacturing district of the realm, which brought about the victory of Northampton. Throughout the struggle which followed London and the great merchant towns were steady for the House of York. Zeal for the Lancastrian cause was found only in Wales, in northern England, and in the south-western shires. It is absurd to suppose that the shrewd traders of Cheapside were moved by an abstract question of hereditary right, or that the wild Welshmen believed themselves to be supporting the right of Parliament to regulate the succession. But it marks the power which Parliament had gained that, directly as his claims ran in the teeth of a succession established by it, the Duke of York felt himself compelled to convene the two Houses in October and to lay his claim before the Lords as a petition of right. Neither oaths nor the numerous Acts which had settled and confirmed the right to the crown in the House of Lancaster could destroy, he pleaded, his hereditary claim. The bulk of the Lords refrained from attendance, and those who were present received the petition with hardly concealed reluctance. They solved the question, as they hoped, by a compromise. They refused to dethrone the king, but they had sworn no fealty to his child, and at Henry's death they agreed to receive the Duke as successor to the crown.



## Wars of the Roses

But the open display of York's pretensions at once united the partisans of the royal House in a vigorous resistance; and the deadly struggle which received the name of the Wars of the Roses from the white rose which formed the badge of the House of York and the red rose which was the cognizance of the House of Lancaster began in a gathering of the North round Lord Clifford and of the West round Henry, Duke of Somerset, the son of the Duke who had fallen at St. Albans. York, who hurried in December to meet the first with a far inferior force, was defeated and slain at Wakefield. The passion of civil war broke fiercely out on the field. The Earl of Salisbury who had been taken prisoner was

hurried to the block. The head of Duke Richard, crowned in mockery with a diadem of paper, is said to have been impaled on the walls of York. His second son, Lord Rutland, fell crying for mercy on his knees before Clifford. But Clifford's father had been the first to fall in the battle of St. Albans which opened the struggle. "As your father killed mine," cried the savage baron, while he plunged his dagger in the young noble's breast, "I will kill you!" The brutal deed was soon to be avenged. Richard's eldest son, Edward, the Earl of March, was busy gathering a force on the Welsh border in support of his father at the moment when the Duke was defeated and slain. Young as he was Edward showed in this hour of apparent ruin the quickness and vigour of his temper, and routing on his march a body of Lancastrians at Mortimer's Cross struck boldly upon London. It was on London that the Lancastrian army had moved after its victory at Wakefield. A desperate struggle took place at St. Albans where a force of Kentish men with the Earl of Warwick strove to bar its march on the capital, but Warwick's force broke under cover of night and an immediate advance of the conquerors might have decided the contest. Margaret however paused to sully her victory by a series of bloody executions, and the rough northerners who formed the bulk of her army scattered to pillage while Edward, hurrying from the west, appeared before the capital. The citizens rallied at his call, and cries of "Long live King Edward!" rang round the handsome young leader as he rode through the streets. A council of Yorkist lords, hastily summoned, resolved that the compromise agreed on in Parliament was at an end and that Henry of Lancaster had forfeited the throne. The final issue however now lay not with Parliament, but with the sword. Disappointed of London, the Lancastrian army fell rapidly back on the North, and Edward hurried as rapidly in pursuit. On the 29th of March, 1461, the two armies encountered one another at Towton Field, near Tadcaster. In the numbers engaged, as well as in the terrible obstinacy of the struggle, no such battle had been seen in England since the fight of Senlac. The two armies together numbered nearly 120,000 men. The day had just broken when the Yorkists advanced through a thick snowfall, and for six hours the battle raged with desperate bravery on either side. At one critical moment Warwick saw his men falter, and stabbing his horse before them, swore on the cross of his sword to win or die on the field. The battle was turned at last by the arrival of the Duke of Norfolk with a fresh force from the Eastern Counties, and at noon the Lancastrians gave

way. A river in their rear turned the retreat into a rout, and the flight and carnage, for no quarter was given on either side, went on through the night and the morrow. Edward's herald counted more than 20,000 Lancastrian corpses on the field. The losses of the conquerors were hardly less heavy than those of the conquered. But their triumph was complete. The Earl of Northumberland was slain; the Earls of Devonshire and Wiltshire were taken and beheaded; the Duke of Somerset fled into exile. Henry himself with his queen was forced to fly over the border and to find a refuge in Scotland. The cause of the House of Lancaster was lost; and with the victory of Towton the crown of England passed to Edward of York.

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**BOOK V**  
**THE MONARCHY**  
**1461-1540**

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## AUTHORITIES FOR BOOK V 1461-1540

Edward the Fifth is the subject of a work attributed to Sir Thomas More, and which almost certainly derives much of its information from Archbishop Morton. Whatever its historical worth may be, it is remarkable in its English form as the first historical work of any literary value which we possess written in our modern prose. The "Letters and Papers of Richard the Third and Henry the Seventh," some "Memorials of Henry the Seventh," including his life by Bernard André of Toulouse, and a volume of "Materials" for a history of his reign have been edited for the Rolls Series. A biography of Henry is among the works of Lord Bacon. The history of Erasmus in England must be followed in his own interesting letters; the most accessible edition of the typical book of the revival, the "Utopia," is the Elizabethan translation, published by Mr. Arber. Mr. Lupton has done much to increase our scanty knowledge of Colet by his recent editions of several of his works. Halle's Chronicle extends from the reign of Edward the Fourth to that of Henry the Eighth; for the latter he is copied by Grafton and followed by Holinshed. Cavendish has given a faithful and touching account of Wolsey in his later days, but for any real knowledge of his administration or the foreign policy of Henry the Eighth we must turn from these to the invaluable Calendars of State Papers for this period from the English, Spanish, and Austrian archives, with the prefaces of Professor Brewer and Mr. Bergenroth. Cromwell's early life as told by Foxe is a mass of fable, and the State Papers afford the only real information as to his ministry. For Sir Thomas More we have a touching life by his son-in-law, Roper. The more important documents for the religious history of the time will be found in Mr. Pocock's edition of Burnet's "History of the Reformation"; those relating to the dissolution of the monasteries in the collection of letters on that subject published by the Camden Society, and in the "Original Letters" of Sir Henry Ellis. A mass of materials of very various value has been accumulated by Strype in his collections, which commence at this period.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE HOUSE OF YORK**

#### **1461-1485**

#### **English freedom**

With the victory of Towton the war of the succession came practically to an end. Though Margaret still struggled on the northern border and the treachery of Warwick for a while drove the new king from his realm, this gleam of returning fortune only brought a more fatal ruin on the House of Lancaster and seated the House of York more firmly on the throne. But the Wars of the Roses did far more than ruin one royal house or set up another. They found England, in the words of Commynes, “among all the world’s lordships of which I have knowledge, that where the public weal is best ordered, and where least violence reigns over the people.” An English king—the shrewd observer noticed—“can undertake no enterprise of account without assembling his Parliament, which is a thing most wise and holy, and therefore are these kings stronger and better served” than the despotic sovereigns of the Continent. The English kingship, as a judge, Sir John Fortescue, could boast when writing at this time, was not an absolute but a limited monarchy; the land was not a land where the will of the prince was itself the law, but where the prince could neither make laws nor impose taxes save by his subjects’ consent. At no time had Parliament played so constant and prominent a part in the government of the realm. At no time had the principles of constitutional liberty seemed so thoroughly understood and so dear to the people at large. The long Parliamentary contest between the Crown and the two Houses since the days of Edward the First had firmly established the great securities of national liberty—the right of freedom from arbitrary taxation, from arbitrary legislation, from arbitrary imprisonment, and the responsibility of even the highest servants of the Crown to Parliament and to the law.

#### **Results of the Wars of the Roses**

But with the close of the struggle for the succession this liberty wholly disappeared. If the Wars of the Roses failed in utterly destroying English freedom, they succeeded in arresting its progress for more than a

hundred years. With them we enter on an epoch of constitutional retrogression in which the slow work of the age that went before it was rapidly undone. From the accession of Edward the Fourth Parliamentary life was almost suspended, or was turned into a mere form by the overpowering influence of the Crown. The legislative powers of the two Houses were usurped by the royal Council. Arbitrary taxation reappeared in benevolences and forced loans. Personal liberty was almost extinguished by a formidable spy-system and by the constant practice of arbitrary imprisonment. Justice was degraded by the prodigal use of bills of attainder, by a wide extension of the judicial power of the royal Council, by the servility of judges, by the coercion of juries. So vast and sweeping was the change that to careless observers of a later day the constitutional monarchy of the Edwards and the Henries seemed suddenly to have transformed itself under the Tudors into a despotism as complete as the despotism of the Turk. Such a view is no doubt exaggerated and unjust. Bend and strain the law as he might, there never was a time when the most wilful of English rulers failed to own the restraints of law; and the obedience of the most servile among English subjects lay within bounds, at once political and religious, which no theory of king-worship could bring them to overpass. But even if we make these reserves, the character of the monarchy from the days of Edward the Fourth to the days of Elizabeth remains something strange and isolated in our history. It is hard to connect the kingship of the old English, the Norman, the Angevin, or the Plantagenet kings with the kingship of the House of York or of the House of Tudor.

### **New strength of the Crown**

The primary cause of this great change lay in the recovery of its older strength by the Crown. Through the last hundred and fifty years the monarchy had been hampered by the pressure of the war. Through the last fifty it had been weakened by the insecurity of a disputed succession. It was to obtain supplies for the strife with Scotland and the strife with France that the earlier Plantagenets had been forced to yield to the ever-growing claims which were advanced by the Parliament. It was to win the consent of Parliament to its occupation of the throne and its support against every rival that the House of Lancaster bent yet more humbly to its demands. But with the loss of Guienne the war with France came virtually to an end. The war with Scotland died down into a series of

border forays. The Wars of the Roses settled the question of the succession, first by the seeming extinction of the House of Lancaster, and then by the utter ruin of the House of York. The royal treasury was not only relieved from the drain which had left the crown at the mercy of the Third Estate; it was filled as it had never been filled before by the forfeitures and confiscations of the civil war. In the one bill of attainder which followed Towton twelve great nobles and more than a hundred knights and squires were stripped of their estates to the king's profit. Nearly a fifth of the land is said to have passed into the royal possession at one period or other of the civil strife. Edward the Fourth and Henry the Seventh not only possessed a power untrammelled by the difficulties which had beset the Crown since the days of Edward the First, but they were masters of a wealth such as the Crown had never known since the days of Henry the Second.

### **Its New Policy**

Throughout their reigns these kings showed a firm resolve to shun the two rocks on which the monarchy had been so nearly wrecked. No policy was too inglorious that enabled them to avoid the need of war. The inheritance of a warlike policy, the consciousness of great military abilities, the cry of his own people for a renewal of the struggle, failed to lure Edward from his system of peace. Henry clung to peace in spite of the threatening growth of the French monarchy: he refused to be drawn into any serious war even by its acquisition of Brittany and of a coast-line that ran unbroken along the Channel. Nor was any expedient too degrading if it swelled the royal hoard. Edward by a single stroke, the grant of the customs to the king for life, secured a source of revenue which went far to relieve the Crown from its dependence on Parliament. He stooped to add to the gold which his confiscations amassed by trading on a vast scale; his ships, freighted with tin, wool, and cloth, made the name of the merchant-king famous in the ports of Italy and Greece. Henry was as adroit and as shameless a financier as his predecessor. He was his own treasurer, he kept his own accounts, he ticked off with his own hand the compositions he levied on the western shires for their abortive revolts.

### **Suspension of Parliamentary life**

With peace and a full treasury the need for calling Parliament together was removed. The collapse of the Houses was in itself a revolution. Up to this moment they had played a more and more prominent part in the government of the realm. The progress made under the earlier Plantagenets had gone as steadily on under Henry the Fourth and his successors. The Commons had continued their advance. Not only had the right of self-taxation and of the initiation of laws been explicitly yielded to them, but they had interfered with the administration of the state, had directed the application of subsidies, and called royal ministers to account by repeated instances of impeachment. Under the first two kings of the House of Lancaster Parliament had been summoned almost every year. Under Henry the Sixth an important step was made in constitutional progress by abandoning the old custom of presenting the requests of Parliament in the form of petitions which were subsequently moulded into statutes by the royal Council. The statute itself in its final shape was now presented for the royal assent and the Crown deprived of all opportunity of modifying it. But with the reign of Edward the Fourth not only this progress but the very action of Parliament comes almost to an end. For the first time since the days of John not a single law which promoted freedom or remedied the abuses of power was even proposed. The Houses indeed were only rarely called together by Edward; they were only twice summoned during the last thirteen years of Henry the Seventh.

### **Parliament and the Civil War**

But this discontinuance of Parliamentary life was not due merely to the new financial system of the Crown. The policy of the kings was aided by the internal weakness of Parliament itself. No institution suffered more from the civil war. During its progress the Houses had become mere gatherings of nobles with their retainers and partizans. They were like armed camps to which the great lords came with small armies at their backs. When arms were prohibited the retainers of the warring barons appeared, as in the Club Parliament of 1426, with clubs on their shoulders. When clubs were forbidden they hid stones and balls of lead in their clothes. Amidst scenes such as these the faith in and reverence for Parliaments could hardly fail to die away. But the very success of the House of York was a more fatal blow to the trust in them. It was by the act of the Houses that the Lancastrian line had been raised to the throne.

Its title was a Parliamentary title. Its existence was in fact a contention that the will of Parliament could override the claims of blood in the succession to the throne. With all this the civil war dealt roughly and decisively. The Parliamentary line was driven from the throne. The Parliamentary title was set aside as usurpation. The House of York based its claim to the throne on the incapacity of Parliament to set aside pretensions which were based on sheer nearness of blood. The fall of the House of Lancaster, the accession of the Yorkist kings, must have seemed to the men who had witnessed the struggle a crushing defeat of the Parliament.

### **Ruin of Feudal Organization**

Weakened by failure, discredited by faction, no longer needful as a source of supplies, it was easy for the Monarchy to rid itself of the check of the two Houses, and their riddance at once restored the Crown to the power it had held under the earlier kings. But in actual fact Edward the Fourth found himself the possessor of a far greater authority than this. The structure of feudal society fronted a feudal king with two great rival powers in the Baronage and the Church. Even in England, though feudalism had far less hold than elsewhere, the noble and the priest formed effective checks on the monarchy. But at the close of the Wars of the Roses these older checks no longer served as restraints upon the action of the Crown. With the growth of Parliament the weight of the Baronage as a separate constitutional element in the realm, even the separate influence of the Church, had fallen more and more into decay. For their irregular and individual action was gradually substituted the legal and continuous action of the three Estates; and now that the assembly of the estates practically ceased it was too late to revive the older checks which in earlier days had fettered the action of the Crown. Nor was the growth of Parliament the only cause for the weakness of these feudal restraints. The older social order which had prevailed throughout Western Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire was now passing away. The speculation of the twelfth century, the scholastic criticism of the thirteenth, the Lollardry and socialism of the fourteenth century, had at last done their work. The spell of the past, the spell of custom and tradition, which had enchained the minds of men was roughly broken. The supremacy of the warrior in a world of war, the severance of privileged from unprivileged classes, no longer seemed the

one natural structure of society. The belief in its possession of supernatural truths and supernatural powers no longer held man in unquestioning awe of the priesthood. The strength of the Church was sapped alike by theological and moral revolt, while the growth of new classes, the new greed of peace and of the wealth that comes of peace, the advance of industry, the division of property, the progress of centralized government, dealt fatal blows at the feudal organization of the state.

### **Weakness of the Baronage**

Nor was the danger merely an external one. Noble and priest alike were beginning to disbelieve in themselves. The new knowledge which was now dawning on the world, the direct contact with the Greek and Roman literatures which was just beginning to exert its influence on Western Europe, told above all on these wealthier and more refined classes. The young scholar or noble who crossed the Alps brought from the schools of Florence the dim impression of a republican liberty or an imperial order which disenchanting him of the world in which he found himself. He looked on the feudalism about him as a brutal anarchy, he looked on the Church itself as the supplanter of a nobler and more philosophic morality. Besides this moral change, the barons had suffered politically from the decrease of their numbers in the House of Lords. The statement which attributes the lessening of the baronage to the Wars of the Roses seems indeed to be an error. Although Henry the Seventh, in dread of opposition to his throne, summoned only a portion of the temporal peers to his first Parliament, there were as many barons at his accession as at the accession of Henry the Sixth. Of the greater houses only those of Beaufort and Tiptoft were extinguished by the civil war. The decline of the baronage, the extinction of the greater families, the break-up of the great estates, had in fact been going on throughout the reign of the Edwards; and it was after Agincourt that the number of temporal peers sank to its lowest ebb. From that time till the time of the Tudors they numbered but fifty-two. A reduction in the numbers of the baronage however might have been more than compensated by the concentration of great estates in the hands of the houses that survived. What wrecked it as a military force was the revolution which was taking place in the art of war. The introduction of gunpowder ruined feudalism. The mounted and heavily-armed knight gave way to the meaner footman.

Fortresses which had been impregnable against the attacks of the Middle Ages crumbled before the new artillery. Although gunpowder had been in use as early as Crécy, it was not till the accession of the House of Lancaster that it was really brought into effective employment as a military resource. But the revolution in warfare was immediate. The wars of Henry the Fifth were wars of sieges. The "Last of the Barons," as Warwick has picturesquely been styled, relied mainly on his train of artillery. It was artillery that turned the day at Barnet and Tewkesbury, and that gave Henry the Seventh his victory over the formidable dangers which assailed him. The strength which the change gave to the Crown was in fact almost irresistible. Throughout the Middle Ages the call of a great baron had been enough to raise a formidable revolt. Yeomen and retainers took down the bow from their chimney corner, knights buckled on their armour, and in a few days a host threatened the throne. Without artillery however such a force was now helpless, and the one train of artillery in the kingdom lay at the disposal of the king.

### **Weakness of the Church**

The Church too was in no less peril than the baronage. In England as elsewhere the great ecclesiastical body still seemed imposing from the memories of its past, its immense wealth, its tradition of statesmanship, its long association with the intellectual and religious aspirations of men, its hold on social life. But its real power was small. Its moral inertness, its lack of spiritual enthusiasm, gave it less and less hold on the religious minds of the day. Its energies indeed seemed absorbed in a mere clinging to existence. For in spite of steady repression Lollardry still lived on, no longer indeed as an organized movement, but in scattered and secret groups whose sole bond was a common loyalty to the Bible and a common spirit of revolt against the religion of their day. Nine years after the accession of Henry the Sixth the Duke of Gloucester was traversing England with men-at-arms to repress the risings of the Lollards and hinder the circulation of their invectives against the clergy. In 1449 "Bible men" were still formidable enough to call a prelate to the front as a controversialist: and the very title of Bishop Pecock's work, "A Repressor of overmuch blaming of the clergy," shows the damage done by their virulent criticism. Its most fatal effect was to rob the priesthood of moral power. Taunted with a love of wealth, with a lower standard of life than that of the ploughman and weaver who gathered to read the

Bible by night, dreading in themselves any burst of emotion or enthusiasm as a possible prelude to heresy, the clergy ceased to be the moral leaders of the nation. They plunged as deeply as the men about them into the darkest superstition, and above all into the belief in sorcery and magic which formed so remarkable a feature of the time. It was for conspiracy with a priest to waste the king's life by sorcery that Eleanor Cobham did penance through the streets of London. The mist which wrapped the battle-field of Barnet was attributed to the incantations of Friar Bungay. The one pure figure which rises out of the greed, the selfishness, the scepticism of the time, the figure of Joan of Arc, was looked on by the doctors and priests who judged her as that of a sorceress.

The prevalence of such beliefs tells its own tale of the intellectual state of the clergy. They were ceasing in fact to be an intellectual class at all. The monasteries were no longer seats of learning. "I find in them," says Poggio, an Italian scholar who visited England some twenty years after Chaucer's death, "men given up to sensuality in abundance but very few lovers of learning and those of a barbarous sort, skilled more in quibbles and sophisms than in literature." The statement is no doubt coloured by the contempt of the new scholars for the scholastic philosophy which had taken the place of letters in England as elsewhere, but even scholasticism was now at its lowest ebb. The erection of colleges, which began in the thirteenth century but made little progress till the time we have reached, failed to arrest the quick decline of the universities both in the numbers and learning of their students. Those at Oxford amounted to only a fifth of the scholars who had attended its lectures a century before, and Oxford Latin became proverbial for a jargon in which the very tradition of grammar had been lost. Literature, which had till now rested mainly in the hands of the clergy, came almost to an end. Of all its nobler forms history alone lingered on; but it lingered in compilations or extracts from past writers, such as make up the so-called works of Walsingham, in jejune monastic annals, or worthless popular compendiums. The only real trace of mental activity was seen in the numerous treatises which dealt with alchemy or magic, the elixir of life, or the philosopher's stone; a fungous growth which even more clearly than the absence of healthier letters witnessed to the progress of intellectual decay.

Somewhat of their old independence lingered indeed among the lower clergy and the monastic orders; it was in fact the successful resistance of the last to an effort made to establish arbitrary taxation which brought about their ruin. Up to the terrible statutes of Thomas Cromwell the clergy in convocation still asserted boldly their older rights against the Crown. But it was through its prelates that the Church exercised a directly political influence, and these showed a different temper from the clergy. Their weakness told directly on the constitutional progress of the realm, for through the diminution in the number of the peers temporal the greater part of the House of Lords was now composed of spiritual peers, of bishops and the greater abbots. Driven by sheer need, by the attack of the barons on their temporal possessions and of the Lollard on their spiritual authority, into dependence on the Crown, their weight was thrown into the scale of the monarchy.

### **Change in the Lower House**

And while the ruin of the baronage, and the weakness of the prelacy, broke the power of the House of Lords, the restriction of the suffrage broke the growing strength of the House of Commons. Even before the outbreak of the civil war the striving of the proprietary classes, landowners and merchants, after special privileges which the Crown alone could bestow, had produced important constitutional results. The character of the House of Commons had been changed by the restriction of both the borough and the county franchise. Up to this time all freemen settling in a borough, and paying their dues to it became by the mere fact of settlement its burgesses. **Restriction of Borough Freedom** But during the reign of Henry the Sixth and still more under Edward the Fourth this largeness of borough life was roughly curtailed. The trade companies which vindicated civic freedom from the tyranny of the older merchant guilds themselves tended to become a narrow and exclusive oligarchy. Most of the boroughs had by this time acquired civic property, and it was with the aim of securing their own enjoyment of this against any share of it by "strangers" that the existing burgesses for the most part procured charters of incorporation from the Crown, which turned them into a close body and excluded from their number all who were not burgesses by birth or who failed henceforth to purchase their right of entrance by a long apprenticeship. In addition to this narrowing of the burgess-body the internal government of the boroughs had almost universally passed

since the failure of the Communal movement in the thirteenth century from the free gathering of the citizens in borough-mote into the hands of Common Councils, either self-elected or elected by the wealthier burgesses; and to these councils, or to a yet more restricted number of “select men” belonging to them, clauses in the new charters generally confined the right of choosing their representatives in Parliament. It was with this restriction that the long process of degradation began which ended in reducing the representation of our boroughs to a mere mockery. Influences which would have had small weight over the town at large proved irresistible by the small body of corporators or “select men.” Great nobles, neighbouring landowners, the Crown itself, seized on the boroughs as their prey, and dictated the choice of their representatives. Corruption did whatever force failed to do: and from the Wars of the Roses to the days of Pitt the voice of the people had to be looked for not in the members for the towns but in the knights for the counties.

### **Restriction of County Franchise**

The restriction of the county franchise on the other hand was the direct work of the Parliament itself. Economic changes were fast widening the franchise in the shires. The number of freeholders increased with the subdivision of estates and the social changes which we have already noticed. But this increase of independence was marked by “riots and divisions between the gentlemen and other people” which the statesmen of the day attributed to the excessive number of voters. In many counties the power of the great lords undoubtedly enabled them to control elections through the number of their retainers. In Cade’s revolt the Kentishmen complained that “the people of the shire are not allowed to have their free elections in the choosing of knights for the shire, but letters have been sent from divers estates to the great nobles of the county, the which enforceth their tenants and other people by force to choose other persons than the common will is.” It was primarily to check this abuse that a statute of the reign of Henry the Sixth restricted in 1430 the right of voting in shires to freeholders holding land worth forty shillings, a sum equal in our money to at least twenty pounds a year and representing a far higher proportional income at the present time. Whatever its original purpose may have been, the result of the statute was a wide disfranchisement. It was aimed, in its own words, against voters “of no value, whereof every of them pretended to have a voice

equivalent with the more worthy knights and esquires dwelling in the same counties.” But in actual working the statute was interpreted in a more destructive fashion than its words were intended to convey. Up to this time all suitors who attended at the Sheriff’s Court had voted without question for the Knight of the Shire, but by the new statute the great bulk of the existing voters, every leaseholder and every copyholder, found themselves implicitly deprived of their franchise.

### **The French War and the Baronage**

The kingship of Edward and his successors therefore was not a mere restoration of the kingship of John or of Henry the Second. It was the kingship of those kings apart from the constitutional forces which in their case stood side by side with kingship, controlling and regulating its action, apart from the force of custom, from the strong arm of the baron, from the religious sanctions which formed so effective a weapon in the hands of the priest, in a word, apart from that social organization from which our political constitution had sprung; even the power of Parliament itself died down at the very moment when the cessation of war, the opening of new sources of revenue, the cry for protection against social anarchy, doubled the strength of the Crown. The force of the monarchy however lay above all in its position as the one representative of national order and in its policy of peace. For two hundred years England had been almost constantly at war, and to war without had been added discord and misrule within. The violence and anarchy which had always clung like a taint to the baronage grew more and more unbearable as the nation moved forward to a more settled peacefulness and industry. At the very time however when this movement became most pronounced under Edward the Third, the tendency of the nobles to violence received a new impulse from the war with France. Long before the struggle was over it had done its fatal work on the mood of the English noble. His aim had become little more than a lust for gold, a longing after plunder, after the pillage of farms, the sack of cities, the ransom of captives. So intense was the greed of gain that in the later years of the war only a threat of death could keep the fighting-men in their ranks, and the results of victory after victory were lost through the anxiety of the conquerors to deposit their booty and captives safely at home. The moment the hand of such leaders as Henry the Fifth or Bedford was removed the war died down into mere massacre and

brigandage. "If God had been a captain now-a-days," exclaimed a French general, "he would have turned marauder."

### **Grant of Liveries**

The temper thus nursed on the fields of France found at last scope for action in England itself. Even before the outbreak of the War of the Roses the nobles had become as lawless and dissolute at home as they were greedy and cruel abroad. But with the struggle of York and Lancaster and the paralysis of government which it brought with it, all hold over the baronage was gone; and the lawlessness and brutality of their temper showed itself without a check. The disorder which their violence wrought in a single district of the country is brought home by the Paston Letters, an invaluable series of domestic correspondence which lifts for us a corner of the veil that hides the social state of England in the fifteenth century. We see houses sacked, judges overawed or driven from the bench, peaceful men hewn down by assassins or plundered by armed bands, women carried off to forced marriages, elections controlled by brute force, parliaments degraded into camps of armed retainers. As the number of their actual vassals declined with the progress of enfranchisement and the upgrowth of the freeholder, the nobles had found a substitute for them in the grant of their "liveries," the badges of their households, to the smaller gentry and farmers of their neighbourhood, and this artificial revival of the dying feudalism became one of the curses of the day. The outlaw, the broken soldier returning penniless from the wars, found shelter and wages in the train of the greater barons, and furnished them with a force ready at any moment for violence or civil strife. The same motives which brought the freeman of the tenth century to commend himself to thegn or baron forced the yeoman or smaller gentleman of the fifteenth to don the cognizance of his powerful neighbour, and ask for a grant of "livery," or to seek at his hand "maintenance" in the law-courts, and thus secure his aid and patronage in fray or suit. For to meddle with such a retainer was perilous even for sheriff or judge; and the force which a noble could summon at his call sufficed to overawe a law-court or to drag a culprit from prison or dock. The evils of the system of "maintenance" had been felt long before the Wars of the Roses; and statutes both of Edward the First and of Richard the Second had been aimed against it. But it was in the civil war that it showed itself in its full force. The weakness of the Crown and

the strife of political factions for supremacy left the nobles masters of the field; and the white rose of the House of York, the red rose of the House of Lancaster, the portcullis of the Beauforts, the pied bull of the Nevilles, the bear and ragged staff which Warwick borrowed from the Beauchamps, were seen on hundreds of breasts in Parliament or on the battle-field.

### **The Social Revolution**

The lawlessness of the baronage tended as it had always tended to the profit of the crown by driving the people at large to seek for order and protection at the hands of the monarchy. And at this moment the craving for such a protection was strengthened by the general growth of wealth and industry. The smaller proprietors of the counties were growing fast both in wealth and numbers, while the burgess class in the cities were drawing fresh riches from the development of trade which characterized this period. The noble himself owed his importance to his wealth. Poggio, as he wandered through the island, noted that "the noble who has the greatest revenue is most respected; and that even men of gentle blood attend to country business and sell their wool and cattle, not thinking it any disparagement to engage in rural industry." Slowly but surely the foreign commerce of the country, hitherto conducted by the Italian, the Hanse merchant, or the trader of Catalonia or southern Gaul, was passing into English hands. English merchants were settled at Florence and at Venice. English merchant ships appeared in the Baltic. The first faint upgrowth of manufactures was seen in a crowd of protective statutes which formed a marked feature in the legislation of Edward the Fourth. The weight which the industrial classes had acquired was seen in the bounds which their opinion set to the Wars of the Roses. England presented to Philippe de Commines the rare spectacle of a land where, brutal as was its civil strife, "there are no buildings destroyed or demolished by war, and where the mischief of it falls on those who make the war." The ruin and bloodshed were limited in fact to the great lords and their feudal retainers. If the towns once or twice threw themselves, as at Towton, into the struggle, the trading and agricultural classes for the most part stood wholly apart from it. While the baronage was dashing itself to pieces in battle after battle justice went on undisturbed. The law-courts sat at Westminster. The judges rode on circuit as of old. The

system of jury trial took more and more its modern form by the separation of the jurors from the witnesses.

But beneath this outer order and prosperity the growth of wealth in the trading classes was fast bringing about a social revolution which tended as strongly as the outrages of the baronage to the profit of the crown. The rise in the price of wool was giving a fresh impulse to the changes in agriculture which had begun with the Black Death and were to go steadily on for a hundred years to come. These changes were the throwing together of the smaller holdings, and the introduction of sheep-farming on an enormous scale. The new wealth of the merchant classes helped on the change. They began to invest largely in land, and these "farming gentlemen and clerking knights," as Latimer bitterly styled them, were restrained by few traditions or associations in their eviction of the smaller tenants. The land indeed had been greatly underlet, and as its value rose with the peace and firm government of the early Tudors the temptation to raise the customary rents became irresistible. "That which went heretofore for twenty or forty pounds a year," we learn in Henry the Eighth's day, "now is let for fifty or a hundred." But it had been only by this low scale of rent that the small yeomanry class had been enabled to exist. "My father," says Latimer, "was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own; only he had a farm of three or four pounds by the year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half-a-dozen men. He had walk for a hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine; he was able and did find the king a harness with himself and his horse while he came to the place that he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went to Blackheath Field. He kept me to school: he married my sisters with five pounds apiece, so that he brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor, and all this he did of the same farm, where he that now hath it payeth sixteen pounds by year or more, and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, or give a cup of drink to the poor."

### **Evictions and Enclosures**

Increase of rent ended with such tenants in the relinquishment of their holdings, but the bitterness of the ejections which the new system of cultivation necessitated was increased by the iniquitous means that were often employed to bring them about. The farmers, if we believe More in

1515, were “got rid of either by fraud or force, or tired out with repeated wrongs into parting with their property.” “In this way it comes to pass that these poor wretches, men, women, husbands, orphans, widows, parents with little children, households greater in number than in wealth (for arable farming requires many hands, while one shepherd and herdsman will suffice for a pasture farm), all these emigrate from their native fields without knowing where to go.” The sale of their scanty household stuff drove them to wander homeless abroad, to be thrown into prison as vagabonds, to beg and to steal. Yet in the face of such a spectacle as this we still find the old complaint of scarcity of labour, and the old legal remedy for it in a fixed scale of wages. The social disorder, in fact, baffled the sagacity of English statesmen, and they could find no better remedy for it than laws against the further extension of sheep-farms, and a formidable increase of public executions. Both were alike fruitless. Enclosures and evictions went on as before and swelled the numbers and the turbulence of the floating labour class. The riots against “enclosures,” of which we first hear in the time of Henry the Sixth and which became a constant feature of the Tudor period, are indications not only of a perpetual strife going on in every quarter between the landowners and the smaller peasant class, but of a mass of social discontent which was to seek constant outlets in violence and revolution.

And into this mass of disorder the break-up of the military households and the return of wounded and disabled soldiers from the wars introduced a dangerous leaven of outrage and crime. England for the first time saw a distinct criminal class in the organized gangs of robbers which began to infest the roads and were always ready to gather round the standard of revolt. The gallows did its work in vain. “If you do not remedy the evils which produce thieves,” More urged with bitter truth, “the rigorous execution of justice in punishing thieves will be vain.” But even More could only suggest a remedy which, efficacious as it was subsequently to prove, had yet to wait a century for its realization. “Let the woollen manufacture be introduced, so that honest employment may be found for those whom want has made thieves or will make thieves ere long.” The extension of industry at last succeeded in absorbing this mass of surplus labour, but the process was not complete till the close of Elizabeth’s day, and throughout the time of the Tudors the discontent of the labour class bound the wealthier classes to the crown. It was in truth this social danger which lay at the root of the Tudor

despotism. For the proprietary classes the repression of the poor was a question of life and death. Employer and proprietor were ready to surrender freedom into the hands of the one power which could preserve them from social anarchy. It was to the selfish panic of the landowners that England owed the Statute of Labourers and its terrible heritage of pauperism. It was to the selfish panic of both landowner and merchant that she owed the despotism of the Monarchy.

### **The Nevilles**

Thus we find that in the years which followed the Wars of the Roses a change passed over the spirit of English government which was little short of a revolution. As the country tasted the sweets of rest and firm government that reaction of feeling, that horror of fresh civil wars, that content with its own internal growth and indifference to foreign aggrandizement, which distinguished the epoch of the Tudors, began to assert its power. The Crown became identified with the thought of national prosperity, almost with the thought of national existence. Loyalty drew to itself the force of patriotism. Devotion to the crown became one in men's minds with devotion to their country. For almost a hundred years England lost all sense of a national individuality; it saw itself only in the Crown. The tendency became irresistible as the nation owned in the power of its kings its one security for social order, its one bulwark against feudal outrage and popular anarchy. The change however was a slow and gradual one. It is with the victory of Towton that the new power of the Monarchy begins, but in the years that immediately followed this victory there was little to promise the triumph of the Crown. The king, Edward the Fourth, was but a boy of nineteen; and decisive as his march upon London proved, he had as yet given few signs of political ability. His luxurious temper showed itself in the pomp and gaiety of his court, in feast and tourney, or in love-passages with city wives and noble ladies. The work of government, the defence of the new throne against its restless foes, he left as yet to sterner hands. Among the few great houses who recalled the might of the older baronage two families of the northern border stood first in power and repute. The Percies had played the chief part in the revolution which gave the crown to the House of Lancaster. Their rivals, the Nevilles, had set the line of York on the throne. Fortune seemed to delight in adding lands and wealth to the last powerful family. The heiress of the Montacutes brought the

Earldom of Salisbury and the barony of Monthermer to a second son of their chief, the Earl of Westmoreland; and Salisbury's son, Richard Neville, won the Earldom of Warwick with the hand of the heiress of the Beauchamps. The ruin of the Percies, whose lands and Earldom of Northumberland were granted to Warwick's brother, Lord Montagu, raised the Nevilles to unrivalled greatness in the land. Warwick, who on his father's death added the Earldom of Salisbury to his earlier titles, had like his father warmly espoused the cause of Richard of York, and it was to his counsels that men ascribed the decisive step by which his cousin Edward of March assumed the crown. From St. Albans to Towton he had been the foremost among the assailants of the Lancastrian line; and the death of his uncle and father, the youth of the king, and the glory of the great victory which confirmed his throne, placed the Earl at the head of the Yorkist party.

### **Warwick**

Warwick's services were munificently rewarded by a grant of vast estates from the confiscated lands of the Lancastrian baronage, and by his elevation to the highest posts in the service of the State. He was Captain of Calais, Admiral of the fleet in the Channel, and Warden of the Western Marches. The command of the northern border lay in the hands of his brother, Lord Montagu. A younger brother, George Neville, already raised to the post of Lord Chancellor, was soon to receive the See of York. Lesser rewards fell to Warwick's uncles, the minor chiefs of the House of Neville, Lords Falconberg, Abergavenny, and Latimer. The vast power which such an accumulation of wealth and honours placed at the Earl's disposal was wielded with consummate ability. In outer seeming Warwick was the very type of the feudal baron. He could raise armies at his call from his own earldoms. Six hundred liveried retainers followed him to Parliament. Thousands of dependants feasted in his courtyard. But few men were really further from the feudal ideal. Active and ruthless warrior as he was, his enemies denied to the Earl the gift of personal daring. In war he showed himself more general than soldier, and in spite of a series of victories his genius was not so much military as diplomatic. A Burgundian chronicler who knew him well describes him as the craftiest man of his day, "le plus subtil homme de son vivant." Secret, patient, without faith or loyalty, ruthless, unscrupulous, what Warwick

excelled in was intrigue, treachery, the contrivance of plots, and sudden desertions.

His temper brought out in terrible relief the moral disorganization of the time. The old order of the world was passing away. Since the fall of the Roman Empire civil society had been held together by the power of the given word, by the "fealty" and "loyalty" that bound vassal to lord and lord to king. A common faith in its possession of supernatural truths and supernatural powers had bound men together in the religious society which knew itself as the Church. But the spell of religious belief was now broken and the feudal conception of society was passing away. On the other hand the individual sense of personal duty, the political consciousness of each citizen that national order and national welfare are essential to his own well-being, had not yet come. The bonds which had held the world together through so many ages loosened and broke only to leave man face to face with his own selfishness. The motives that sway and ennoble the common conduct of men were powerless over the ruling classes. Pope and king, bishop and noble, vied with each other in greed, in self-seeking, in lust, in faithlessness, in a pitiless cruelty. It is this moral degradation that flings so dark a shade over the Wars of the Roses. From no period in our annals do we turn with such weariness and disgust. Their savage battles, their ruthless executions, their shameless treasons, seem all the more terrible from the pure selfishness of the ends for which men fought, for the utter want of all nobleness and chivalry in the contest itself, of all great result in its close. And it is this moral disorganization that expresses itself in the men whom the civil war left behind it. Of honour, of loyalty, of good faith, Warwick knew nothing. He had fought for the House of Neville rather than for the House of York, had set Edward on the throne as a puppet whom he could rule at his will, and his policy seemed to have gained its end in leaving the Earl master of the realm.

### **Edward the Fourth**

In the three years which followed Towton the power of the Nevilles overshadowed that of the king. Warwick was now all-powerful in the state, but the cessation of the war was the signal for a silent strife between the Earl and his young sovereign. In Edward indeed Warwick was to meet not only a consummate general but a politician whose subtlety and rapidity of conception were far above his own. As a mere

boy Edward had shown himself among the ablest and the most pitiless of the warriors of the civil war. He had looked on with cool ruthlessness while grey-haired nobles were hurried to the block. The terrible bloodshed of Towton woke no pity in his heart; he turned from it only to frame a vast bill of attainder which drove twelve great nobles and a hundred knights to beggary and exile. When treachery placed his harmless rival in his power he visited him with cruel insult. His military ability had been displayed in his rapid march upon London, the fierce blow which freed him from his enemy in the rear, the decisive victory at Towton. But his political ability was slower in developing itself. In his earliest years he showed little taste for the work of rule. While Warwick was winning triumphs on battle-field after battle-field, the young king seemed to abandon himself to a voluptuous indolence, to revels with the city wives of London, and to the caresses of mistresses like Jane Shore. Tall in stature and of singular beauty, his winning manners and gay carelessness of bearing secured Edward a popularity which had been denied to nobler kings. When he asked a rich old lady for ten pounds towards a war with France, she answered, "For thy comely face thou shalt have twenty." The king thanked and kissed her, and the old woman made her twenty forty. In outer appearance indeed no one could contrast more utterly with the subtle sovereigns of his time, with the mean-visaged Lewis of France or the meanly-clad Ferdinand of Aragon. But Edward's work was the same as theirs and it was done as completely. While jesting with aldermen, or dallying with mistresses, or idling over new pages from the printing press at Westminster, Edward was silently laying the foundations of an absolute rule.

The very faults of his nature helped him to success. His pleasure-loving and self-indulgent temper needed the pressure of emergency, of actual danger, to flash out into action. Men like Commines who saw him only in moments of security and indolence scorned Edward as dull, sensual, easy to be led and gulled by keener wits. It was in the hour of need and despair that his genius showed itself, cool, rapid, subtle, utterly fearless, moving straight to its aim through clouds of treachery and intrigue, and striking hard when its aim was reached. But even in his idler hours his purpose never wavered. His indolence and gaiety were in fact mere veils thrown over a will of steel. From the first his aim was to free the Crown from the control of the baronage. He made no secret of his hostility to the nobles. At Towton as in all his after battles he bade his

followers slay knight and baron, but spare the commons. In his earliest Parliament, that of 1461, he renewed the statutes against giving of liveries, and though this enactment proved as fruitless as its predecessors to reduce the households of the baronage it marked Edward's resolve to adhere to the invariable policy of the Crown in striving for their reduction. But efforts like these, though they indicated the young king's policy, could produce little effect so long as the mightiest of the barons overawed the throne. Yet even a king as bold as Edward might well have shrunk from a struggle with Warwick. The Earl was all-powerful in the state; the military resources of the realm were in his hands. As Captain of Calais he was master of the one disciplined force at the disposal of the Crown, and as admiral he controlled the royal fleet. The strength he drew from his wide possessions, from his vast wealth (for his official revenues alone were estimated at eighty thousand crowns a year), from his warlike renown and his wide kinship, was backed by his personal popularity. Above all the Yorkist party, bound to Warwick by a long series of victories, looked on him rather than on the young and untried king as its head.

### **Lewis the Eleventh**

The policy of Warwick pointed to a close alliance with France. The Hundred Years War, though it had driven the English from Guienne and the south, had left the French Monarchy hemmed in by great feudatories on every other border. Brittany was almost independent in the west. On the east the house of Anjou lay, restless and ambitious, in Lorraine and Provence, while the house of Burgundy occupied its hereditary duchy and Franche Comté. On the northern frontier the same Burgundian house was massing together into a single state nearly all the crowd of counties, marquisates, and dukedoms which now make up Holland and Belgium. Nobles hardly less powerful or more dependent on the Crown held the central provinces of the kingdom when Lewis the Eleventh mounted its throne but a few months after Edward's accession. The temper of the new king drove him to a strife for the mastery of his realm, and his efforts after centralization and a more effective rule soon goaded the baronage into a mood of revolt. But Lewis saw well that a struggle with it was only possible if England stood aloof. His father's cool sagacity had planned the securing of his conquests by the marriage of Lewis himself to an English wife, and though this project had fallen through,

and the civil wars had given safety to France to the end of Charles's reign, the ruin of the Lancastrian cause at Towton again roused the danger of attack from England at the moment when Lewis mounted the throne. Its young and warlike king, the great baron who was still fresh from the glory of Towton, might well resolve to win back the heritage of Eleanor, that Duchy of Guienne which had been lost but some ten years before. Even if such an effort proved fruitless, Lewis saw that an English war would not only ruin his plans for the overthrow of the nobles, but would leave him more than ever at their mercy. Above all it would throw him helplessly into the hands of the Burgundian Duke. In the new struggle as in the old the friendship of Burgundy could alone bring a favourable issue, and such a friendship would have to be paid for by sacrifices even more terrible than those which had been wrenched from the need of Charles the Seventh. The passing of Burgundy from the side of England to the side of France after the Treaty of Arras had been bought by the cession to its Duke of the towns along the Somme, of that Picardy which brought the Burgundian frontier to some fifty miles from Paris. Sacrifices even more costly would have to buy the aid of Burgundy in a struggle with Edward the Fourth.

### **The Triple Alliance**

How vivid was his sense of these dangers was seen in the eagerness of Lewis to get the truce with England renewed and extended. But his efforts for a general peace broke down before the demands of the English council for the restoration of Normandy and Guienne. Nor were his difficulties from England alone. An English alliance was unpopular in France itself. "Seek no friendship from the English, Sire!" said Pierre de Brézé, the Seneschal of Normandy, "for the more they love you, the more all Frenchmen will hate you!" All Lewis could do was to fetter Edward's action by giving him work at home. When Margaret appealed to him for aid after Towton he refused any formal help, but her pledge to surrender Calais in case of success drew from him some succour in money and men which enabled the queen to renew the struggle in the north. Though her effort failed, the hint so roughly given had been enough to change the mood of the English statesmen; the truce with France was renewed, and a different reception met the new proposals of alliance which followed it. Lewis indeed was now busy with an even more pressing danger. In any struggle of the king with England or the

nobles what gave Burgundy its chief weight was the possession of the towns on the Somme, and it was his consciousness of the vital importance of these to his throne that spurred Lewis to a bold and dexterous diplomacy by which Duke Philip the Good, under the influence of counsellors who looked to the French king for protection against the Duke's son, Charles of Charolais, was brought to surrender Picardy on payment of the sum stipulated for its ransom in the Treaty of Arras. The formal surrender of the towns on the Somme took place in October 1463, but they were hardly his own when Lewis turned to press his alliance upon England. From Picardy, where he was busy in securing his newly-won possessions, he sought an interview with Warwick. His danger indeed was still great; for the irritated nobles were already drawing together into a League of the Public Weal, and Charles of Charolais, indignant at the counsellors who severed him from his father and at the king who traded through them on the Duke's dotage, was eager to place himself at its head. But these counsellors, the Croys, saw their own ruin as well as the ruin of Lewis in the success of a league of which Charles was the head; and at their instigation Duke Philip busied himself at the opening of 1464 as the mediator of an alliance which would secure Lewis against it, a triple alliance between Burgundy and the French and English kings.

### **Warwick's Policy**

Such an alliance had now become Warwick's settled policy. In it lay the certainty of peace at home as abroad, the assurance of security to the throne which he had built up. While Henry was sheltered in Scotland where French influence was supreme, and while Margaret of Anjou could look for aid from France, the house of York could hope for no cessation of the civil war. A union between France, Burgundy, and England left the partizans of Lancaster without hope. When Lewis therefore summoned him to an interview on the Somme, Warwick, though unable to quit England in face of the dangers which still threatened from the north, promised to send his brother the Chancellor to conduct a negotiation. Whether the mission took place or no, the questions not only of peace with France but of a marriage between Edward and one of the French king's kinswomen were discussed in the English Council as early as the spring of 1464, for in the May of that year a Burgundian agent announced to the Croys that an English

embassy would be despatched to St. Omer on the coming St. John's day to confer with Lewis and Duke Philip on the peace and the marriage-treaty. But at this very moment Warwick, followed by the king, was hurrying to meet a new rising which Margaret had brought about by a landing in the north. On 15th May the Lancastrians were finally routed by Lord Montagu in the battle of Hexham, and the queen and her child driven over the Scotch border. The defeat of this rising seemed at last to bring the miserable war to a close. The victory of Hexham, with the capture of Henry that followed a year later, successes which were accepted by foreign powers as a final settlement of the civil strife, left Edward's hands free as they had never been free before, while his good fortune quickened the anxiety of Lewis, who felt every day the toils of the great confederacy of the French princes closing more tightly round him. But Margaret was still in his hands, and Warwick remained firm in his policy of alliance. At Michaelmas the Earl prepared to cross the sea for the meeting at St. Omer.

### **Edward's Marriage**

It was this moment that Edward chose for a sudden and decisive blow. Only six days before the departure of the embassy the young king informed his Council that he was already wedded. By a second match with a Kentish knight, Sir Richard Woodville, Jacquetta of Luxemburg, the widow of the Regent Duke of Bedford, had become the mother of a daughter Elizabeth. Elizabeth married Sir John Grey, a Lancastrian partizan, but his fall some few years back in the second battle of St. Albans left her a widow, and she returned to her mother's home. Here on his march northward to meet the rising which ended at Hexham, she caught the young king's fancy. At the opening of May, at the moment when Warwick's purpose to conclude the marriage-treaty was announced to the court of Burgundy, Edward secretly made her his wife. He reserved, however, the announcement of his marriage till the very eve of the negotiations, when its disclosure served not only to shatter Warwick's plans but to strike a sudden and decisive blow at the sway he had wielded till now in the royal Council. The blow in fact was so sudden and unexpected that Warwick could only take refuge in a feigned submission. "The King," wrote one of his partizans, Lord Wenlock, to the Court of Burgundy, "has taken a wife at his pleasure, without knowledge of them whom he ought to have called to counsel him; by

reason of which it is highly displeasing to many great lords and to the bulk of his Council. But since the marriage has gone so far that it cannot be helped, we must take patience in spite of ourselves." Not only did the negotiations with France come to an end, but the Earl found himself cut off from the king's counsels. "As one knows not," wrote his adherent, "seeing the marriage is made in this way, what purpose the King may have to go on with the other two points, truce or peace, the opinion of the Council is that my Lord of Warwick will not pass the sea till one learns the King's will and pleasure on that point." Even Warwick indeed might have paused before the new aspect of affairs across the Channel. For at this moment the growing weakness of Duke Philip enabled Charles of Charolais to overthrow the Croys, and to become the virtual ruler of the Burgundian states. At the close of 1464 the League of the Public Weal drew fast to a head, and Charles despatched the Chancellor of Burgundy to secure the aid of England. But the English Council met the advances of the League with coldness. Edward himself could have seen little save danger to his throne from its triumph. Count Charles, proud of his connexion with the House of Lancaster through his Portuguese mother, a descendant of John of Gaunt, was known to be hostile to the Yorkist throne. The foremost of his colleagues, John of Calabria, was a son of René of Anjou and a brother of Margaret. Another of the conspirators, the Count of Maine, was Margaret's uncle. It was significant that the Duke of Somerset had found a place in the train of Charles of Charolais. On the other hand the warmest advocates of the French alliance could hardly press for closer relations with a king whose ruin seemed certain, and even Warwick must have been held back by the utter collapse of the royal power when the League attacked Lewis in 1465. Deserted by every great noble, and cooped up within the walls of Paris, the French king could only save himself by a humiliating submission to the demands of the Leaguers.

### **The Woodvilles**

The close of the struggle justified Edward's policy of inaction, for the terms of the peace told strongly for English interests. The restoration of the towns on the Somme to Burgundy, the cession of Normandy to the king's brother, Francis, the hostility of Brittany, not only detached the whole western coast from the hold of Lewis, but forced its possessors to look for aid to the English king who lay in their rear. Edward himself

seemed at this moment freed from the last danger of revolt at home, for after some helpless wanderings Henry the Sixth was betrayed into the hands of his enemies and brought in triumph to London. His feet were tied to the stirrups, he was led thrice round the pillory, and then sent as a prisoner to the Tower. But Edward had little time to enjoy his good luck at home and abroad. No sooner had the army of the League broken up than its work was undone. The restless genius of Lewis detached prince from prince, won over the houses of Brittany and Anjou to friendship, snatched back Normandy in January 1466, and gathered an army in Picardy to meet attack either from England or Count Charles. From neither however was any serious danger to be feared. Charles was held at home till the close of the year by revolts at Liége and Dinant, while a war of factions within Edward's court distracted the energies of England. The young king had rapidly followed up the blow of his marriage by raising his wife's family to a greatness which was meant to balance that of the Nevilles. The queen's father, Lord Rivers, was made treasurer and constable; her brothers and sisters were matched with great nobles and heiresses; the heiress of the Duke of Exeter, Edward's niece, whose hand Warwick sought for his brother's son, was betrothed to Elizabeth's son by her former marriage. The king's confidence was given to his new kinsmen, and Warwick saw himself checked even at the council-board by the influence of the Woodvilles. Still true to an alliance with France, he was met by their advocacy of an alliance with Burgundy, where Charles of Charolais through his father's sickness and age was now supreme. Both powers were equally eager for English aid. Lewis despatched an envoy to prolong the truce from his camp on the Somme, and proposed to renew negotiations for a marriage treaty by seeking the hand of Edward's sister, Margaret, for a French prince. Though "the thing which Charles hated most," as Commines tells us, "was the house of York," the stress of politics drew him as irresistibly to Edward. His wife, Isabella of Bourbon, had died during the war of the League, and much as such a union was "against his heart," the activity of Lewis forced him at the close of 1466 to seek to buy English aid by demanding Margaret's hand in marriage.

### **The two Alliances**

It is from this moment that the two great lines of our foreign policy become settled and defined. In drawing together the states of the Low

Countries into a single political body, the Burgundian Dukes had built up a power which has ever since served as a barrier against the advance of France to the north or its mastery of the Rhine. To maintain this power, whether in the hands of the Dukes or their successors, the Spaniard or the Emperor, has always been a foremost object of English statesmanship; and the Burgundian alliance in its earlier or later shapes has been the constant rival of the alliance with France. At this moment however the attitude of Burgundy was one rather of attack than of defence. If Charles did not aim at the direct conquest of France, he looked to such a weakening of it as would prevent Lewis from hindering the great plan on which he had set his heart, the plan of uniting his scattered dominions on the northern and eastern frontier of his rival by the annexation of Lorraine, and of raising them into a great European power by extending his dominion along the whole course of the Rhine. His policy was still to strengthen the great feudatories against the Crown. "I love France so much," he laughed, "that I had rather it had six kings than one"; and weak as the league of the Public Weal had proved he was already trying to build up a new confederacy against Lewis. In this confederacy he strove that England should take part. Throughout 1466 the English court was the field for a diplomatic struggle between Charles and Lewis. Warwick pressed Margaret's marriage with one of the French princes. The marriage with Charles was backed by the Woodvilles. Edward bore himself between the two parties with matchless perfidy. Apparently yielding to the counsels of the Earl, he despatched him in 1467 to treat for peace with Lewis at Rouen. Warwick was received with honours which marked the importance of his mission in the French king's eyes. Bishops and clergy went out to meet him, his attendants received gifts of velvet robes and the rich stuffs of Rouen, and for twelve days the Earl and Lewis were seen busy in secret conference. But while the Earl was busy with the French king the Great Bastard of Burgundy crossed to England, and a sumptuous tourney, in which he figured with one of the Woodvilles, hardly veiled the progress of counter-negotiations between Charles and Edward himself. The young king seized on the honours paid to Warwick as the pretext for an outburst of jealousy. The seals were suddenly taken from his brother, the Archbishop of York, and when the Earl himself returned with a draft-treaty, stipulating a pension from France and a reference of the English claims on Normandy and Guienne to the Pope's decision, Edward listened coldly and disavowed his envoy.

## **The overthrow of Warwick**

Bitter reproaches on his intrigues with the French king marked even more vividly the close of Warwick's power. He withdrew from court to his castle of Middleham, while the conclusion of a marriage-treaty between Charles and Margaret proved the triumph of his rivals. The death of his father in the summer of 1467 raised Charles to the Dukedom of Burgundy, and his diplomatic success in England was followed by preparations for a new struggle with the French king. In 1468 a formal league bound England, Burgundy, and Brittany together against Lewis. While Charles gathered an army in Picardy Edward bound himself to throw a body of troops into the strong places of Normandy which were held by the Breton Duke; and six thousand mounted archers under the queen's brother, Anthony, Lord Scales, were held ready to cross the Channel. Parliament was called together in May, and the announcement of the Burgundian alliance and of the king's purpose to recover his heritage over sea was met by a large grant of supplies from the Commons. In June the pompous marriage of Margaret with the Burgundian Duke set its seal on Edward's policy. How strongly the current of national feeling ran in its favour was seen in Warwick's humiliation. Warwick was helpless. The king's dexterous use of his conference with Lewis and of the honours he had received from him gave him the colour of a false Englishman and of a friend to France. Warwick lost power over the Yorkists. The war party, who formed the bulk of it, went hotly with the king; the merchants, who were its most powerful support, leaned to a close connexion with the master of Flanders and the Lower Rhine. The danger of his position drove Warwick further and further from his old standing ground; he clung for aid to Lewis; he became the French king's pensioner and dependent. At the French court he was looked upon already as a partizan of the House of Lancaster. Edward dexterously seized on the rumour to cut him off more completely from his old party. He called on him to confront his accusers; and though Warwick purged himself of the charge, the stigma remained. The victor of Towton was no longer counted as a good Yorkist. But, triumphant as he was, Edward had no mind to drive the Earl into revolt, nor was Warwick ready for revenge. The two subtle enemies drew together again. The Earl appeared at court; he was formally reconciled both to the king and to the Woodvilles; as though to announce his conversion to the Burgundian alliance he rode before the new Duchess

Margaret on her way to the sea. His submission removed the last obstacle to the king's action, and Edward declared his purpose to take the field in person against the king of France.

### **The Marriage of Clarence**

But at the moment when the danger seemed greatest the quick, hard blows of Lewis paralyzed the League. He called Margaret from Bar to Harfleur, where her faithful adherent Jasper Tudor, the Earl of Pembroke, prepared to cross with a small force of French soldiers into Wales. The dread of a Lancastrian rising should Margaret land in England hindered Lord Scales from crossing the sea; and marking the slowness with which the Burgundian troops gathered in Picardy Lewis flung himself in September on the Breton Duke, reduced him to submission, and exacted the surrender of the Norman towns which offered an entry for the English troops. His eagerness to complete his work by persuading Charles to recognize his failure in a personal interview threw him into the Duke's hands; and though he was released at the end of the year it was only on humiliating terms. But the danger from the triple alliance was over; he had bought a fresh peace with Burgundy, and Edward's hopes of French conquest were utterly foiled. We can hardly doubt that this failure told on the startling revolution which marked the following year. Master of Calais, wealthy, powerful as he was, Warwick had shown by his feigned submission a consciousness that single-handed he was no match for the king. In detaching from him the confidence of the Yorkist party which had regarded him as its head, Edward had robbed him of his strength. But the king was far from having won the Yorkist party to himself. His marriage with the widow of a slain Lancastrian, his promotion of a Lancastrian family to the highest honours, estranged him from the men who had fought his way to the Crown. Warwick saw that the Yorkists could still be rallied round the elder of Edward's brothers, the Duke of Clarence; and the temper of Clarence, weak and greedy of power, hating the Woodvilles, looking on himself as heir to the crown yet dreading the claims of Edward's daughter Elizabeth, lent itself to his arts. The spring of 1469 was spent in intrigues to win over Clarence by offering him the hand of Warwick's elder daughter and co-heiress, and in preparations for a rising in Lancashire. So secretly were these conducted that Edward was utterly taken by surprise when Clarence and the Earl

met in July at Calais and the marriage of the Duke proved the signal for a rising at home.

### **Warwick's failure**

The revolt turned out a formidable one. The first force sent against it was cut to pieces at Edgecote near Banbury, and its leaders, Earl Rivers and one of the queen's brothers, taken and beheaded. Edward was hurrying to the support of this advanced body when it was defeated; but on the news his force melted away and he was driven to fall back upon London. Galled as he had been by his brother's marriage, the king saw nothing in it save the greed of Clarence for the Earl's heritage, and it was with little distrust that he summoned Warwick with the trained troops who formed the garrison of Calais to his aid. The Duke and Earl at once crossed the Channel. Gathering troops as they moved, they joined Edward near Oxford, and the end of their plot was at last revealed. No sooner had the armies united than Edward found himself virtually a prisoner in Warwick's hands. But the bold scheme broke down. The Yorkist nobles demanded the king's liberation. London called for it. The Duke of Burgundy "practised secretly," says Commynes, "that King Edward might escape," and threatened to break off all trade with Flanders if he were not freed. Warwick could look for support only to the Lancastrians, but the Lancastrians demanded Henry's restoration as the price of their aid. Such a demand was fatal to the plan for placing Clarence on the throne, and Warwick was thrown back on a formal reconciliation with the king. Edward was freed, and Duke and Earl withdrew to their estates for the winter. But the impulse which Warwick had given to his adherents brought about a new rising in the spring of 1470. A force gathered in Lincolnshire under Sir Robert Welles with the avowed purpose of setting Clarence on the throne; and Warwick and the Duke, though summoned to Edward's camp on pain of being held for traitors, remained sullenly aloof. The king however was now ready for the strife. A rapid march to the north ended in the rout of the insurgents, and Edward turned on the instigators of the rising. But Clarence and the Earl could gather no force to meet him. Yorkist and Lancastrian alike held aloof, and they were driven to flight. Calais, though held by Warwick's deputy, repulsed them from its walls, and the Earl's fleet was forced to take refuge in the harbours of France.

### **Warwick in France**

The long struggle seemed at last over. In subtlety as in warlike daring the young king had proved himself more than a match for the “subtlest man of men now living.” He had driven him to throw himself on “our adversary of France.” Warwick’s hold over the Yorkists was all but gone. His own brothers, the Earl of Northumberland and the Archbishop of York, held with the king, and Edward counted on the first as a firm friend. Warwick had lost Calais. Though he still retained his fleet he was forced to support it by making prizes of Flemish ships, and this involved him in fresh difficulties. The Duke of Burgundy made the reception of these ships in French harbours the pretext for a new strife with Lewis; he seized the goods of French merchants at Bruges and demanded redress. Lewis was in no humour for risking for so small a matter the peace he had won, and refused to see or speak with Warwick till the prizes were restored. But he was soon driven from this neutral position. The violent language of Duke Charles showed his desire to renew the war with France in the faith that Warwick’s presence at the French court would ensure Edward’s support; and Lewis resolved to prevent such a war by giving Edward work to do at home. He supplied Warwick with money and men, and pressed him to hasten his departure for England. “You know,” he wrote to an agent, “the desire I have for Warwick’s return to England, as well because I wish to see him get the better of his enemies as that at least through him the realm of England may be again thrown into confusion, so as to avoid the questions which have arisen out of his residence here.” But Warwick was too cautious a statesman to hope to win England with French troops only. His hopes of Yorkist aid were over with the failure of Clarence; and, covered as he was with Lancastrian blood, he turned to the House of Lancaster. Margaret was summoned to the French court; the mediation of Lewis bent her proud spirit to a reconciliation on Warwick’s promise to restore her husband to the throne, and after a fortnight’s struggle she consented at the close of July to betroth her son to the earl’s second daughter, Anne Neville. Such an alliance shielded Warwick, as he trusted, from Lancastrian vengeance, but it at once detached Clarence from his cause. Edward had already made secret overtures to his brother, and though Warwick strove to reconcile the Duke to his new policy by a provision that in default of heirs to the son of Margaret Clarence should inherit the throne, the Duke’s resentment drew him back to his brother’s side. But whether by Edward’s counsel or no his resentment was concealed; Clarence swore

fealty to the house of Lancaster, and joined in the preparations which Warwick was making for a landing in England.

### **Edward driven out**

What the Earl really counted on was not so much Lancastrian aid as Yorkist treason. Edward reckoned on the loyalty of Warwick's brothers, the Archbishop of York and Lord Montagu. The last indeed he "loved," and Montagu's firm allegiance during his brother's defection seemed to justify his confidence in him. But in his desire to redress some of the wrongs of the civil war Edward had utterly estranged the Nevilles. In 1469 he released Henry Percy from the Tower, and restored to him the title and estates of his father, the attainted Earl of Northumberland. Montagu had possessed both as his share of the Yorkist spoil, and though Edward made him a marquis in amends he had ever since nursed plans of revenge. From after events it is clear that he had already pledged himself to betray the king. But his treachery was veiled with consummate art, and in spite of repeated warnings from Burgundy Edward remained unconcerned at the threats of invasion. Of the Yorkist party he held himself secure since Warwick's desertion of their cause; of the Lancastrians he had little fear; and the powerful fleet of Duke Charles prisoned the Earl's ships in the Norman harbours. Fortune however was with his foes. A rising called Edward to the north in September, and while he was engaged in its suppression a storm swept the Burgundian ships from the Channel. Warwick seized the opportunity to cross the sea. On the thirteenth of September he landed with Clarence at Dartmouth, and with an army which grew at every step pushed rapidly northward to meet the king. Taken as he was by surprise, Edward felt little dread of the conflict. He relied on the secret promises of Clarence and on the repeated oaths of the two Nevilles, and called on Charles of Burgundy to cut off Warwick's retreat by sea after the victory on which he counted. But the Earl's army no sooner drew near than cries of "Long live King Henry!" from Montagu's camp announced his treason. Panic spread through the royal forces; and in the rout that followed Edward could only fly to the shore, and embarking some eight hundred men who still clung to him in a few trading vessels which he found there set sail for the coast of Holland.

### **Warwick's triumph**

In a single fortnight Warwick had destroyed a throne. The work of Towton was undone. The House of Lancaster was restored. Henry the Sixth was drawn from the Tower to play again the part of king, while his rival could only appeal as a destitute fugitive to the friendship of Charles the Bold. But Charles had small friendship to give. His disgust at the sudden overthrow of his plans for a joint attack on Lewis was quickened by a sense of danger. England was now at the French king's disposal, and the coalition of England and Burgundy against France which he had planned seemed likely to become a coalition of France and England against Burgundy. Lewis indeed was quick to seize on the new turn of affairs. Thanksgivings were ordered in every French town. Margaret and her son were feasted royally at Paris. An embassy crossed the sea to conclude a treaty of alliance, and Warwick promised that an immediate force of four thousand men should be despatched to Calais. With English aid the king felt he could become assailant in his turn; he declared the Duke of Burgundy a rebel, and pushed his army rapidly to the Somme. How keenly Charles felt his danger was seen in his refusal to receive Edward at his court, and in his desperate attempts to conciliate the new English government. His friendship, he said, was not for this or that English king but for England. He again boasted of his Lancastrian blood. He despatched the Lancastrian Dukes of Somerset and Exeter, who had found refuge ever since Towton at his court, to carry fair words to Margaret. The queen and her son were still at Paris, detained as it was said by unfavourable winds, but really by the wish of Lewis to hold a check upon Warwick and by their own distrust of him. Triumphant indeed as he seemed, the Earl found himself alone in the hour of his triumph. The marriage of Prince Edward with Anne Neville, which had been promised as soon as Henry was restored, was his one security against the vengeance of the Lancastrians, and the continued delays of Margaret showed little eagerness to redeem her promise. The heads of the Lancastrian party, the Dukes of Somerset and Exeter, had pledged themselves to Charles the Bold at their departure from his court to bring about Warwick's ruin. From Lewis he could look for no further help, for the remonstrances of the English merchants compelled him in spite of the treaty he had concluded to keep the troops he had promised against Burgundy at home. Of his own main supporters Clarence was only waiting for an opportunity of deserting him. Even his brother Montagu shrank from striking fresh blows to further the triumph of a party which

aimed at the ruin of the Nevilles, and looked forward with dread to the coming of the queen.

### **Fall of Warwick**

The preparations for her departure in March brought matters to a head. With a French queen on the throne a French alliance became an instant danger for Burgundy, and Charles was driven to lend a secret ear to Edward's prayer for aid. Money and ships were placed at his service, and on the fourteenth of March 1471 the young king landed at Ravenspur on the estuary of the Humber with a force of two thousand men. In the north all remained quiet. York opened its gates when Edward professed to be seeking not the crown but his father's dukedom. Montagu lay motionless at Pomfret as the little army marched by him to the south. Routing at Newark a force which had gathered on his flank, Edward pushed straight for Warwick, who had hurried from London to raise an army in his own county. His forces were already larger than those of his cousin, but the Earl cautiously waited within the walls of Coventry for the reinforcements under Clarence and Montagu which he believed to be hastening to his aid. The arrival of Clarence however was at once followed by his junction with Edward, and the offer of "good conditions" shows that Warwick himself was contemplating a similar treason when the coming of two Lancastrian leaders, the Duke of Exeter and the Earl of Oxford, put an end to the negotiation. The union of Montagu with his brother forced Edward to decisive action; he marched upon London, followed closely by Warwick's army, and found its gates opened by the perfidy of Archbishop Neville. Again master of Henry of Lancaster who passed anew to the Tower, Edward sallied afresh from the capital two days after his arrival with an army strongly reinforced. At early dawn on the fourteenth of April the two hosts fronted one another at Barnet. A thick mist covered the field, and beneath its veil Warwick's men fought fiercely till dread of mutual betrayal ended the strife. Montagu's followers attacked the Lancastrian soldiers of Lord Oxford, whether as some said through an error which sprang from the similarity of his cognizance to that of Edward, or as the Lancastrians alleged while themselves in the act of deserting to the enemy. Warwick himself was charged with cowardly flight. In three hours the medley of carnage and treason was over. Four thousand men lay on the field; and the Earl and his brother were found among the slain.

## **Battle of Tewkesbury**

But the fall of the Nevilles was far from giving rest to Edward. The restoration of Henry, the return of their old leaders, had revived the hopes of the Lancastrian party; and in the ruin of Warwick they saw only the removal of an obstacle to their cause. The great Lancastrian lords had been looking forward to a struggle with the Earl on Margaret's arrival, and their jealousy of him was seen in the choice of the queen's landing-place. Instead of joining her husband and the Nevilles in London she disembarked from the French fleet at Weymouth, to find the men of the western counties already flocking to the standards of the Duke of Somerset and of the Courtenays, the Welsh arming at the call of Jasper Tudor, and Cheshire and Lancashire only waiting for her presence to rise. A march upon London with forces such as these would have left Warwick at her mercy and freed the Lancastrian throne from the supremacy of the Nevilles. The news of Barnet which followed hard on the queen's landing scattered these plans to the winds; but the means which had been designed to overawe Warwick might still be employed against his conqueror. Moving to Exeter to gather the men of Devonshire and Cornwall, Margaret turned through Taunton on Bath to hear that Edward was already encamped in her front at Cirencester. The young king's action showed his genius for war. Barnet was hardly fought when he was pushing to the west. After a halt at Abingdon to gain news of Margaret's movements he moved rapidly by Cirencester and Malmesbury towards the Lancastrians at Bath. But Margaret was as eager to avoid a battle before her Welsh reinforcements reached her as Edward was to force one on. Slipping aside to Bristol, and detaching a small body of troops to amuse the king by a feint upon Sodbury, her army reached Berkeley by a night-march and hurried forward through the following day to Tewkesbury. But rapid as their movements had been, they had failed to outstrip Edward. Marching on an inner line along the open Cotswold country while his enemy was struggling through the deep and tangled lanes of the Severn valley, the king was now near enough to bring Margaret to bay; and the Lancastrian leaders were forced to take their stand on the slopes south of the town, in a position approachable only through "foul lanes and deep dykes." Here Edward at once fell on them at daybreak of the fourth of May. His army, if smaller in numbers, was superior in military quality to the motley host gathered round the queen, for as at Barnet he had with him a force of Germans armed with

hand-guns, then a new weapon in war, and a fine train of artillery. It was probably the fire from these that drew Somerset from the strong position which he held, but his repulse and the rout of the force he led was followed up with quick decision. A general advance broke the Lancastrian lines, and all was over. Three thousand were cut down on the field, and a large number of fugitives were taken in the town and abbey. To the leaders short shrift was given. Edward was resolute to make an end of his foes. The fall of the Duke of Somerset extinguished the male branch of the house of Beaufort. Margaret was a prisoner; and with the murder of her son after his surrender on the field and the mysterious death of Henry the Sixth in the Tower which followed the king's return to the capital the direct line of Lancaster passed away.

### **Charles and the Empire**

Edward was at last master of his realm. No noble was likely to measure swords with the conqueror of the Nevilles. The one rival who could revive the Lancastrian claims, the last heir of the house of Beaufort, Henry Tudor, was a boy and an exile. The king was free to display his genius for war on nobler fields than those of Barnet and Tewkesbury, and for a while his temper and the passion of his people alike drove him to the strife with France. But the country was too exhausted to meddle in the attack on Lewis which Charles, assured at any rate against English hostility, renewed in 1472 in union with the Dukes of Guienne and Brittany, and which was foiled as of old through the death of the one ally and the desertion of the other. The failure aided in giving a turn to his policy, which was to bring about immense results on the after history of Europe. French as he was in blood, the nature of his possessions had made Charles from the first a German prince rather than a French. If he held of Lewis his duchy of Burgundy, his domain on the Somme, and Flanders west of the Scheldt, the mass of his dominions was held of the Empire. While he failed too in extending his power on the one side it widened rapidly on the other. In war after war he had been unable to gain an inch of French ground beyond the towns of the Somme. But year after year had seen new gains on his German frontier. Elsass and the Breisgau passed into his hands as security for a loan to the Austrian Duke Sigismund; in 1473 he seized Lorraine by force of arms, and inherited from its Duke Gelderland and the county of Cleves. Master of the Upper Rhine and Lower Rhine, as well as of a crowd of German

princedom, Charles was now the mightiest among the princes of the Empire, and in actual power superior to the Emperor himself. The house of Austria, in which the Imperial crown seemed to be becoming hereditary, was weakened by attacks from without as by divisions within, by the loss of Bohemia and Hungary, by the loss of its hold over German Switzerland, and still more by the mean and spiritless temper of its Imperial head, Frederick the Third. But its ambition remained boundless as ever; and in the Burgundian dominion, destined now to be the heritage of a girl, for Mary was the Duke's only child, it saw the means of building up a greatness such as it had never known. Its overtures at once turned the Duke's ambition from France to Germany. He was ready to give his daughter's hand to Frederick's son, Maximilian; but his price was that of succession to the Imperial crown, and his election to the dignity of King of the Romans. In such an event the Empire and his vast dominions would pass together at his death to Maximilian, and the aim of the Austrian House would be realized. It was to negotiate this marriage, a marriage which in the end was destined to shape the political map of modern Europe, that Duke and Emperor met in 1473 at Trier.

### **Peace with France**

But if Frederick's policy was to strengthen his house the policy of the princes of the Empire lay in keeping it weak; and their pressure was backed by suspicions of the Duke's treachery, and of the possibility of a later marriage whose male progeny might for ever exclude the house of Austria from the Imperial throne. Frederick's sudden flight broke up the conference; but Charles was far from relinquishing his plans. To win the mastery of the whole Rhine valley was the first step in their realization, and at the opening of 1474 he undertook the siege of Neuss, whose reduction meant that of Köln and of the central district which broke his sway along it. But vast as were the new dreams of ambition which thus opened before Charles, he had given no open sign of his change of purpose. Lewis watched his progress on the Rhine almost as jealously as his attitude on the Somme; and the friendship of England was still of the highest value as a check on any attempt of France to interrupt his plans. With this view the Duke maintained his relations with England and fed Edward's hopes of a joint invasion. In the summer of 1474, on the eve of his march upon the Rhine, he concluded a treaty for an attack on France which was to open on his return after the capture of Neuss. Edward was

to recover Normandy and Aquitaine as well as his “kingdom of France”; Champagne and Bar were to be the prizes of Charles. Through the whole of 1474 the English king prepared actively for war. A treaty was concluded with Brittany. The nation was wild with enthusiasm. Large supplies were granted by Parliament: and a large army gathered for the coming campaign. The plan of attack was a masterly one. While Edward moved from Normandy on Paris, the forces of Burgundy and of Brittany on his right hand and his left were to converge on the same point. But the aim of Charles in these negotiations was simply to hold Lewis from any intervention in his campaign on the Rhine. The siege of Neuss was not opened till the close of July, and its difficulties soon unfolded themselves. Once master of the whole Rhineland, the house of Austria saw that Charles would be strong enough to wrest from it the succession to the Empire; and while Sigismund paid back his loan and roused Elsass to revolt the Emperor Frederick brought the whole force of Germany to the relief of the town. From that moment the siege was a hopeless one, but Charles clung to it with stubborn pride through autumn, winter, and spring, and it was only at the close of June 1475 that the menace of new leagues against his dominions on the upper Rhineland forced him to withdraw. So broken was his army that he could not, even if he would, have aided in carrying out the schemes of the preceding year. But an English invasion would secure him from attack by Lewis till his forces could be reorganized; and with the same unscrupulous selfishness as of old Charles pledged himself to co-operate and called on Edward to cross the Channel. In July Edward landed with an army of twenty-four thousand men at Calais. In numbers and in completeness of equipment no such force had as yet left English shores. But no Burgundian force was seen on the Somme; and after long delays Charles proposed that Edward should advance alone upon Paris on his assurance that the fortresses of the Somme would open their gates. The English army crossed the Somme and approached St. Quentin, but it was repulsed from the walls by a discharge of artillery. It was now the middle of August, and heavy rains prevented further advance; while only excuses for delay came from Brittany and it became every day clearer that the Burgundian Duke had no real purpose to aid. Lewis seized the moment of despair to propose peace on terms which a conqueror might have accepted, the security of Brittany, the payment of what the English deemed a tribute of fifty thousand crowns a year, and the betrothal of Edward’s daughter to

the Dauphin. A separate treaty provided for mutual aid in case of revolt among the subjects of either king; and for mutual shelter should either be driven from his realm. In spite of remonstrances from the Duke of Burgundy this truce was signed at the close of August and the English soldiers recrossed the sea.

### **Edward's policy**

The desertion of Charles threw Edward, whether he would or no, on the French alliance; and the ruin of the Duke explains the tenacity with which he clung to it. Defeated by the Swiss at Morat in the following year, Charles fell in the opening of 1477 on the field of Nanci, and his vast dominion was left in his daughter's charge. Lewis seized Picardy and Artois, the Burgundian duchy and Franche Comté: and strove to gain the rest by forcing on Mary of Burgundy the hand of the Dauphin. But the Imperial dreams which had been fatal to Charles had to be carried out through the very ruin they wrought. Pressed by revolt in Flanders, and by the French king's greed, Mary gave her hand to the Emperor's son, Maximilian; and her heritage passed to the Austrian house. Edward took no part in the war between Lewis and Maximilian which followed on the marriage. The contest between England and France had drifted into a mightier European struggle between France and the House of Austria; and from this struggle the king wisely held aloof. He saw what Henry the Seventh saw after him, and what Henry the Eighth learned at last to see, that England could only join in such a contest as the tool of one or other of the combatants, a tool to be used while the struggle lasted and to be thrown aside as soon as it was over. With the growth of Austrian power England was secure from French aggression; and rapidly as Lewis was adding province after province to his dominions his loyalty to the pledge he had given of leaving Brittany untouched and his anxiety to conclude a closer treaty of amity in 1478 showed the price he set on his English alliance. Nor was Edward's course guided solely by considerations of foreign policy. A French alliance meant peace; and peace was needful for the plans which Edward proceeded steadily to carry out. With the closing years of his reign the Monarchy took a new colour. The introduction of an elaborate spy system, the use of the rack, and the practice of interference with the purity of justice gave the first signs of an arbitrary rule which the Tudors were to develop. It was on his creation of a new financial system that the king laid the foundation of a despotic rule. Rich,

and secure at home as abroad, Edward had small need to call the Houses together; no parliament met for five years, and when one was called at last it was suffered to do little but raise the custom duties, which were now granted to the king for life. Sums were extorted from the clergy; monopolies were sold; the confiscations of the civil war filled the royal exchequer; Edward did not disdain to turn merchant on his own account. The promise of a French war had not only drawn heavy subsidies from the Commons, much of which remained in the royal treasury through the abrupt close of the strife, but enabled the king to deal a deadly blow at the liberty which the Commons had won. Edward set aside the usage of contracting loans by authority of parliament; and calling before him the merchants of London, begged from each a gift or "benevolence" in proportion to the royal needs. How bitterly this exaction was resented even by the classes with whom the king had been most popular was seen in the protest which the citizens addressed to his successor against these "extortions and new impositions against the laws of God and man and the liberty and laws of this realm." But for the moment resistance was fruitless, and the "benevolence" of Edward was suffered to furnish a precedent for the forced loans of Wolsey and of Charles the First.

### **Popularization of knowledge**

In the history of intellectual progress his reign takes a brighter colour. The founder of a new despotism presents a claim to our regard as the patron of Caxton. It is in the life of the first English printer that we see the new upgrowth of larger and more national energies which were to compensate for the decay of the narrower energies of the Middle Age. Beneath the mouldering forms of the old world a new world was bursting into life; if the fifteenth century was an age of death it was an age of birth as well, of that new birth, that Renaissance, from which the after life of Europe was to flow. The force which till now concentrated itself in privileged classes was beginning to diffuse itself through nations. The tendency of the time was to expansion, to diffusion. The smaller gentry and the merchant class rose in importance as the nobles fell. Religion and morality passed out of the hands of the priesthood into those of the laity. Knowledge became vulgarized, it stooped to lower and meaner forms that it might educate the whole people. England was slow to catch the intellectual fire which was already burning brightly across the Alps, but even amidst the turmoil of its wars and revolutions intelligence was

being more widely spread. While the older literary class was dying out, a glance beneath the surface shows us the stir of a new interest in knowledge amongst the masses of the people itself. The very character of the authorship of the time, its love of compendiums and abridgements of such scientific and historical knowledge as the world believed it possessed, its dramatic performances or mysteries, the commonplace morality of its poets, the popularity of its rimed chronicles, are proof that literature was ceasing to be the possession of a purely intellectual class, and was beginning to appeal to the nation at large. The correspondence of the Paston family not only displays a fluency and grammatical correctness which would have been impossible a few years before, but shows country squires discussing about books and gathering libraries. The increased use of linen paper in place of the costlier parchment helped in the popularization of letters. In no former age had finer copies of books been produced; in none had so many been transcribed. This increased demand for their production caused the processes of copying and illuminating manuscripts to be transferred from the scriptoria of the religious houses into the hands of trade-gilds like the Gild of St. John at Bruges or the Brothers of the Pen at Brussels. It was in fact this increase of demand for books, pamphlets, or fly-sheets, especially of a grammatical or religious character, in the middle of the fifteenth century that brought about the introduction of printing. We meet with the first records of the printer's art in rude sheets struck off from wooden blocks, "block-books" as they are now called. Later on came the vast advance of printing from separate and moveable types. Originating at Maintz with the three famous printers, Gutenberg, Fust, and Schoeffer, this new process travelled southward to Strassburg, crossed the Alps to Venice, where it lent itself through the Aldi to the spread of Greek literature in Europe, and then floated down the Rhine to the towns of Flanders.

### **Caxton**

It was probably at the press of Colard Mansion, in a little room over the porch of St. Donat's at Bruges, that William Caxton learned the art which he was the first to introduce into England. A Kentish boy by birth, but apprenticed to a London mercer, Caxton had already spent thirty years of his manhood in Flanders as Governor of the English gild of Merchant Adventurers there when we find him engaged as copyist in the service of Edward's sister, Duchess Margaret of Burgundy. But the

tedious process of copying was soon thrown aside for the new art which Colard Mansion had introduced into Bruges. "For as much as in the writing of the same," Caxton tells us in the preface to his first printed work, the *Tales of Troy*, "my pen is worn, my hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with over much looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labour as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body, and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address to them as hastily as I might the said book, therefore I have practised and learned at my great charge and dispense to ordain this said book in print after the manner and form as ye may see, and is not written with pen and ink as other books be, to the end that every man may have them at once, for all the books of this story here empynted as ye see were begun in one day and also finished in one day." The printing-press was the precious freight he brought back to England in 1476 after an absence of five-and-thirty years. Through the next fifteen, at an age when other men look for ease and retirement, we see him plunging with characteristic energy into his new occupation. His "red pale," or heraldic shield marked with a red bar down the middle, invited buyers to the press he established in the Almonry at Westminster, a little enclosure containing a chapel and almshouses near the west front of the church, where the alms of the abbey were distributed to the poor. "If it please any man, spiritual or temporal," runs his advertisement, "to buy any pyes of two or three commemorations of Salisbury use empynted after the form of the present letter, which be well and truly correct, let him come to Westminster into the Almonry at the red pale, and he shall have them good chepe." Caxton was a practical man of business, as this advertisement shows, no rival of the Venetian Aldi or of the classical printers of Rome, but resolved to get a living from his trade, supplying priests with service books and preachers with sermons, furnishing the clerk with his "Golden Legend" and knight and baron with "joyous and pleasant histories of chivalry." But while careful to win his daily bread, he found time to do much for what of higher literature lay fairly to hand. He printed all the English poetry of any moment which was then in existence. His reverence for that "worshipful man, Geoffrey Chaucer," who "ought to be eternally remembered," is shown not merely by his edition of the "Canterbury Tales," but by his reprint of them when a purer text of the poem offered itself. The poems of Lydgate and Gower

were added to those of Chaucer. The Chronicle of Brut and Higden's "Polychronicon" were the only available works of an historical character then existing in the English tongue, and Caxton not only printed them but himself continued the latter up to his own time. A translation of Boethius, a version of the *Æneid* from the French, and a tract or two of Cicero, were the stray first-fruits of the classical press in England.

### **Caxton's work**

Busy as was Caxton's printing-press, he was even busier as a translator than as a printer. More than four thousand of his printed pages are from works of his own rendering. The need of these translations shows the popular drift of literature at the time; but, keen as the demand seems to have been, there is nothing mechanical in the temper with which Caxton prepared to meet it. A natural, simple-hearted taste and enthusiasm, especially for the style and forms of language, breaks out in his curious prefaces. "Having no work in hand," he says in the preface to his *Æneid*, "I sitting in my study where as lay many divers pamphlets and books, happened that to my hand came a little book in French, which late was translated out of Latin by some noble clerk of France—which book is named Eneydos, and made in Latin by that noble poet and great clerk Vergyl—in which book I had great pleasure by reason of the fair and honest termes and wordes in French which I never saw to-fore-like, none so pleasant nor so well ordered, which book as me seemed should be much requisite for noble men to see, as well for the eloquence as the histories; and when I had advised me to this said book I deliberated and concluded to translate it into English, and forthwith took a pen and ink and wrote a leaf or twain." But the work of translation involved a choice of English which made Caxton's work important in the history of our language. He stood between two schools of translation, that of French affectation and English pedantry. It was a moment when the character of our literary tongue was being settled, and it is curious to see in his own words the struggle over it which was going on in Caxton's time. "Some honest and great clerks have been with me and desired me to write the most curious terms that I could find"; on the other hand, "some gentlemen of late blamed me, saying that in my translations I had over many curious terms which could not be understood of common people, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations." "Fain would I please every man," comments the good-humoured printer, but

his sturdy sense saved him alike from the temptations of the court and the schools. His own taste pointed to English, but “to the common terms that be daily used” rather than to the English of his antiquarian advisers. “I took an old book and read therein, and certainly the English was so rude and broad I could not well understand it,” while the Old-English charters which the Abbot of Westminster lent as models from the archives of his house seemed “more like to Dutch than to English.” To adopt current phraseology however was by no means easy at a time when even the speech of common talk was in a state of rapid flux. “Our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was born.” Not only so, but the tongue of each shire was still peculiar to itself and hardly intelligible to men of another county. “Common English that is spoken in one shire varieth from another so much, that in my days happened that certain merchants were in a ship in Thames for to have sailed over the sea into Zealand, and for lack of wind they tarried at Foreland and went on land for to refresh them. And one of them, named Sheffield, a mercer, came into a house and asked for meat, and especially he asked them after eggs. And the good wife answered that she could speak no French. And the merchant was angry, for he also could speak no French, but would have eggs, but she understood him not. And then at last another said he would have eyren, then the good wife said she understood him well. Lo! what should a man in these days now write,” adds the puzzled printer, “eggs or eyren? certainly it is hard to please every man by cause of diversity and change of language.” His own mother-tongue too was that of “Kent in the Weald, where I doubt not is spoken as broad and rude English as in any place in England”; and coupling this with his long absence in Flanders we can hardly wonder at the confession he makes over his first translation, that “when all these things came to fore me, after that I had made and written a five or six quires, I fell in despair of this work, and purposed never to have continued therein, and the quires laid apart, and in two years after laboured no more in this work.” He was still however busy translating when he died. All difficulties in fact were lightened by the general interest which his labours aroused. When the length of the “Golden Legend” makes him “half desperate to have accomplished it” and ready to “lay it apart,” the Earl of Arundel solicits him in no wise to leave it and promises a yearly fee of a buck in summer and a doe in winter, once it were done. “Many noble and divers gentle men of this realm came and

demanded many and often times wherefore I have not made and imprinted the noble history of the ‘San Graal.’” We see his visitors discussing with the sagacious printer the historic existence of Arthur. Duchess Margaret of Somerset lent him her “Blanchardine and Eglantine”; an Archdeacon of Colchester brought him his translation of the work called “Cato”; a mercer of London pressed him to undertake the “Royal Book” of Philip le Bel. Earl Rivers chatted with him over his own translation of the “Sayings of the Philosophers.” Even kings showed their interest in his work; his “Tully” was printed under the patronage of Edward the Fourth, his “Order of Chivalry” dedicated to Richard the Third, his “Fayts of Arms” published at the desire of Henry the Seventh. Caxton profited in fact by the wide literary interest which was a mark of the time. The fashion of large and gorgeous libraries had passed from the French to the English princes of his day: Henry the Sixth had a valuable collection of books; that of the Louvre was seized by Duke Humphrey of Gloucester and formed the basis of the fine library which he presented to the University of Oxford. Great nobles took an active and personal part in the literary revival. The warrior, Sir John Fastolf, was a well-known lover of books. Earl Rivers was himself one of the authors of the day; he found leisure in the intervals of pilgrimages and politics to translate the “Sayings of the Philosophers” and a couple of religious tracts for Caxton’s press. A friend of far greater intellectual distinction however than these was found in John Tiptoft Earl of Worcester. He had wandered during the reign of Henry the Sixth in search of learning to Italy, had studied at her universities and become a teacher at Padua, where the elegance of his Latinity drew tears from the most learned of the Popes, Pius the Second, better known as Æneas Sylvius. Caxton can find no words warm enough to express his admiration of one “which in his time flowered in virtue and cunning, to whom I know none like among the lords of the temporality in science and moral virtue.” But the ruthlessness of the Renaissance appeared in Tiptoft side by side with its intellectual vigour, and the fall of one whose cruelty had earned him the surname of “the Butcher” even amidst the horrors of civil war was greeted with sorrow by none but the faithful printer. “What great loss was it,” he says in a preface printed long after his fall, “of that noble, virtuous, and well-disposed lord; when I remember and advertise his life, his science, and his virtue, me thinketh (God not displeased) over great the loss of such a man considering his estate and cunning.”

## **Richard of Gloucester**

Among the nobles who encouraged the work of Caxton was the king's youngest brother, Richard Duke of Gloucester. Edward had never forgiven Clarence his desertion; and his impeachment in 1478 on a charge of treason, a charge soon followed by his death in the Tower, brought Richard nearer to the throne. Ruthless and subtle as Edward himself, the Duke was already renowned as a warrior; his courage and military skill had been shown at Barnet and Tewkesbury; and at the close of Edward's reign an outbreak of strife with the Scots enabled him to march in triumph upon Edinburgh in 1482. The sudden death of his brother called Richard at once to the front. Worn with excesses, though little more than forty years old, Edward died in the spring of 1483, and his son Edward the Fifth succeeded peacefully to the throne. The succession of a boy of thirteen woke again the fierce rivalries of the court. The Woodvilles had the young king in their hands; but Lord Hastings, the chief adviser of his father, at once joined with Gloucester and the Duke of Buckingham, the heir of Edward the Third's youngest son and one of the greatest nobles of the realm, to overthrow them. The efforts of the queen-mother to obtain the regency were foiled, Lord Rivers and two Woodvilles were seized and sent to the block, and the king transferred to the charge of Richard, who was proclaimed by a great council of bishops and nobles Protector of the Realm. But if he hated the queen's kindred Hastings was as loyal as the Woodvilles themselves to the children of Edward the Fourth; and the next step of the two Dukes was to remove this obstacle. Little more than a month had passed after the overthrow of the Woodvilles when Richard suddenly entered the Council-chamber and charged Hastings with sorcery and attempts upon his life. As he dashed his hand upon the table the room filled with soldiery. "I will not dine," said the Duke, turning to the minister, "till they have brought me your head." Hastings was hurried to execution in the courtyard of the Tower, his fellow-counsellors thrown into prison, and the last check on Richard's ambition was removed. Buckingham lent him his aid in a claim of the crown; and on the twenty-fifth of June the Duke consented after some show of reluctance to listen to the prayer of a Parliament hastily gathered together, which, setting aside Edward's children as the fruit of an unlawful marriage and those of Clarence as disabled by his attainder, besought him to take the office and title of king.

## Henry Tudor

Violent as his acts had been, Richard's career had as yet jarred little with popular sentiment. The Woodvilles were unpopular, Hastings was detested as the agent of Edward's despotism, the reign of a child-king was generally deemed impossible. The country, longing only for peace after all its storms, called for a vigorous and active ruler; and Richard's vigour and ability were seen in his encounter with the first danger that threatened his throne. The new revolution had again roused the hopes of the Lancastrian party. With the deaths of Henry the Sixth and his son all the descendants of Henry the Fourth passed away; but the line of John of Gaunt still survived in the heir of the Beauforts. The legality of the royal act which barred their claim to the crown was a more than questionable one; the Beauforts had never admitted it, and the conduct of Henry the Sixth in his earlier years points to a belief in their right of succession. Their male line was extinguished by the fall of the last Duke of Somerset at Tewkesbury, but the claim of the house was still maintained by the son of Margaret Beaufort, the daughter of Duke John and great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt. While still but a girl Margaret had become both wife and mother. She had wedded the Earl of Richmond, Edmund Tudor, a son of Henry the Fifth's widow, Katharine of France, by a marriage with a Welsh squire, Owen Tudor; and had given birth to a son, the later Henry the Seventh. From very childhood the life of Henry had been a troubled one. His father died in the year of his birth; his uncle and guardian, Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, was driven from the realm on the fall of the House of Lancaster; and the boy himself, attainted at five years old, remained a prisoner till the restoration of Henry the Sixth by Lord Warwick. But Edward's fresh success drove him from the realm, and escaping to Brittany he was held there, half-guest, half-prisoner, by its Duke. The extinction of the direct Lancastrian line had given Henry a new importance. Edward the Fourth never ceased to strive for his surrender, and if the Breton Duke refused to give him up, his alliance with the English king was too valuable to be imperilled by suffering him to go free. The value of such a check on Richard was seen by Lewis of France; and his demands for Henry's surrender into his hands drove the Duke of Brittany, who was now influenced by a minister in Richard's pay, to seek for aid from England. In June the king sent a thousand archers to Brittany; but the troubles of the Duchy had done more for Henry than Lewis could have done. The nobles rose against Duke and

minister; and in the struggle that followed the young Earl was free to set sail as he would.

### **Richard's reign**

He found unexpected aid in the Duke of Buckingham, whose support had done much to put Richard on the throne. Though rewarded with numerous grants and the post of Constable, Buckingham's greed was still unsated; and on the refusal of his demand of the lands belonging to the earldom of Hereford the Duke lent his ear to the counsels of Margaret Beaufort, who had married his brother, Henry Stafford, but still remained true to the cause of her boy. Buckingham looked no doubt to the chance of fooling Yorkist and Lancastrian alike, and of pressing his own claims to the throne on Richard's fall. But he was in the hands of subtler plotters. Morton, the exiled Bishop of Ely, had founded a scheme of union on the disappearance of Edward the Fifth and his brother, who had been imprisoned in the Tower since Richard's accession to the throne, and were now believed to have been murdered by his orders. The death of the boys left their sister Elizabeth, who had taken sanctuary at Westminster with her mother, the heiress of Edward the Fourth; and the scheme of Morton was to unite the discontented Yorkists with what remained of the Lancastrian party by the marriage of Elizabeth with Henry Tudor. The queen-mother and her kindred gave their consent to this plan, and a wide revolt was organized under Buckingham's leadership. In October 1483 the Woodvilles and their adherents rose in Wiltshire, Kent, and Berkshire, the Courtenays in Devon, while Buckingham marched to their support from Wales. Troubles in Brittany had at this moment freed Henry Tudor, and on the news of the rising he sailed with a strong fleet and five thousand soldiers on board. A proclamation of the new pretender announced to the nation what seems as yet to have been carefully hidden, the death of the princes in the Tower. But, whether the story was believed or no, the duration of the revolt was too short for it to tell upon public opinion. Henry's fleet was driven back by a storm, Buckingham was delayed by a flood in the Severn, and the smaller outbreaks were quickly put down. Richard showed little inclination to deal roughly with the insurgents. Buckingham indeed was beheaded, but the bulk of his followers were pardoned, and the overthrow of her hopes reconciled the queen-mother to the king. She quitted the sanctuary with Elizabeth, and thus broke up the league on

which Henry's hopes hung. But Richard was too wary a statesman to trust for safety to mere force of arms. He resolved to enlist the nation on his side. During his brother's reign he had watched the upgrowth of public discontent as the new policy of the monarchy developed itself, and he now appealed to England as the restorer of its ancient liberties. "We be determined," said the citizens of London in a petition to the king, "rather to adventure and to commit us to the peril of our lives and jeopardy of death than to live in such thralldom and bondage as we have lived some time heretofore, oppressed and injured by extortions and new impositions against the laws of God and man and the liberty and laws of this realm wherein every Englishman is inherited." Richard met the appeal by convoking Parliament in January 1484, and by sweeping measures of reform. The practice of extorting money by benevolences was declared illegal, while grants of pardons and remissions of forfeitures reversed in some measure the policy of terror by which Edward at once held the country in awe and filled his treasury. Numerous statutes broke the slumbers of Parliamentary legislation. A series of mercantile enactments strove to protect the growing interests of English commerce. The king's love of literature showed itself in a provision that no statutes should act as a hindrance "to any artificer or merchant stranger, of what nation or country he be, for bringing into this realm or selling by retail or otherwise of any manner of books, written or imprinted." His prohibition of the iniquitous seizure of goods before conviction of felony which had prevailed during Edward's reign, his liberation of the bondmen who still remained unenfranchised on the royal domain, and his religious foundations show Richard's keen anxiety to purchase a popularity in which the bloody opening of his reign might be forgotten.

### **Bosworth Field**

It was doubtless the same wish to render his throne popular which led Richard to revive the schemes of a war with France. He had strongly remonstrated against his brother's withdrawal and alliance in 1475, and it must have been rather a suspicion of his warlike designs than any horror at the ruthlessness of his ambition which led Lewis the Eleventh on his death-bed to refuse to recognize his accession. At the close of Edward the Fourth's reign the alliance which had bound the two countries together was brought to an end by the ambition and faithlessness of the

French king. The war between Lewis and Maximilian ended at the close of 1482 through the sudden death of Mary of Burgundy and the reluctance of the Flemish towns to own Maximilian's authority as guardian of her son, Philip, the heir of the Burgundian states. Lewis was able to conclude a treaty at Arras, by which Philip's sister, Margaret, was betrothed to the Dauphin Charles, and brought with her as dower the counties of Artois and Burgundy. By the treaty with England Charles was already betrothed to Edward's daughter, Elizabeth; and this open breach of treaty was followed by the cessation of the subsidy which had been punctually paid since 1475. France in fact had no more need of buying English neutrality. Galled as he was, Edward's death but a few months later hindered any open quarrel, but the refusal of Lewis to recognize Richard and his attempts to force from Brittany the surrender of Henry Tudor added to the estrangement of the two courts; and we can hardly wonder that on the death of the French king only a few months after his accession Richard seized the opportunity which the troubles at the French court afforded him. Charles the Eighth was a minor; and the control of power was disputed as of old between the Regent, Anne of Beaujeu, and the Duke of Orleans. Orleans entered into correspondence with Richard and Maximilian, whom Anne's policy was preventing from gaining the mastery over the Low Countries, and preparations were making for a coalition which would have again brought an English army and the young English king on to the soil of France. It was to provide against this danger that Anne had received Henry Tudor at the French court when the threat of delivering him up to Richard forced him to quit Brittany after the failure of his first expedition; and she met the new coalition by encouraging the Earl to renew his attack. Had Richard retained his popularity the attempt must have ended in a failure even more disastrous than before. But the news of the royal children's murder had slowly spread through the nation, and even the most pitiless shrank aghast before this crowning deed of blood. The pretence of a constitutional rule too was soon thrown off, and in the opening of 1485 a general irritation was caused by the levy of benevolences in defiance of the statute which had just been passed. The king felt himself safe; the consent of the queen-mother to his contemplated marriage with her daughter Elizabeth appeared to secure him against any danger from the discontented Yorkists; and Henry, alone and in exile, seemed a small danger. Henry however had no sooner landed at Milford Haven than a

wide conspiracy revealed itself. Lord Stanley had as yet stood foremost among Richard's adherents; he had supported him in the rising of 1483 and had been rewarded with Buckingham's post of Constable. His brother too stood high in the king's confidence. But Margaret Beaufort, again left a widow, wedded Lord Stanley; and turned her third marriage, as she had turned her second, to the profit of her boy. A pledge of support from her husband explains the haste with which Henry pressed forward to his encounter with the king. The treason however was skilfully veiled; and though defection after defection warned Richard of his danger as Henry moved against him, the Stanleys still remained by his side and held command of a large body of his forces. But the armies no sooner met on the twenty-second of August at Bosworth Field in Leicestershire than their treason was declared. The forces under Lord Stanley abandoned the king when the battle began; a second body of troops under the Earl of Northumberland drew off as it opened. In the crisis of the fight Sir William Stanley passed over to Henry's side. With a cry of "Treason! treason!" Richard flung himself into the thick of the battle, and in the fury of his despair he had already dashed the Lancastrian standard to the ground and hewed his way into the presence of his rival when he fell overpowered with numbers, and the crown which he had worn and which was found as the struggle ended lying near a hawthorn bush was placed on the head of the conqueror.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

#### 1485-1514

#### **Henry the Seventh**

Still young, for he was hardly thirty when his victory at Bosworth placed him on the throne, the temper of Henry the Seventh seemed to promise the reign of a poetic dreamer rather than of a statesman. The spare form, the sallow face, the quick eye, lit now and then with a fire that told of his Celtic blood, the shy, solitary humour which was only broken by outbursts of pleasant converse or genial sarcasm, told of an inner concentration and enthusiasm; and to the last Henry's mind remained imaginative and adventurous. He dreamed of crusades, he dwelt with delight on the legends of Arthur which Caxton gave to the world in the year of his accession. His tastes were literary and artistic. He called foreign scholars to his court to serve as secretaries and historiographers; he trained his children in the highest culture of their day; he was a patron of the new printing press, a lover of books and of art. The chapel at Westminster which bears his name reflects his passion for architecture. But life gave Henry little leisure for dreams or culture. From the first he had to struggle for very existence against the dangers that beset him. A battle and treason had given him the throne; treason and a battle might dash him from it. His claim of blood was an uncertain and disputable one even by men of his own party. He stood attainted by solemn Act of Parliament; and though the judges ruled that the possession of the crown cleared all attain the stigma and peril remained. His victory had been a surprise; he could not trust the nobles; of fifty-two peers he dared summon only a part to the Parliament which assembled after his coronation and gave its recognition to his claim of the crown. The Act made no mention of hereditary right, or of any right by conquest, but simply declared "that the inheritance of the crown should be, rest, remain, and abide in the most royal person of their sovereign Lord, King Henry the Seventh, and the heirs of his body lawfully ensuing." Such a declaration gave Henry a true Parliamentary title to his throne; and his consciousness of this was shown in a second Act which

assumed him to have been king since the death of Henry the Sixth and attainted Richard and his adherents as rebels and traitors. But such an Act was too manifestly unjust to give real strength to his throne; it was in fact practically undone in 1495 when a new statute declared that no one should henceforth be attainted for serving a de facto king; and so insecure seemed Henry's title that no power acknowledged him as king save France and the Pope, and the support of France—gained as men believed by a pledge to abandon the English claims on Normandy and Guienne—was as perilous at home as it was useful abroad.

### **Revolt of Simnel**

It was in vain that he carried out his promise to Morton and the Woodvilles by marrying Elizabeth of York; he had significantly delayed the marriage till he was crowned as king in his own right, and a purely Lancastrian claim to the throne roused wrath in every Yorkist which no after match could allay. During the early years of his reign the country was troubled with local insurrections, some so obscure that they have escaped the notice of our chroniclers, some, like that of Lovel and of the Staffords, general and formidable. The turmoil within was quickened by encouragement from without. The Yorkist sympathies of the Earl of Kildare, the deputy of Ireland, offered a starting-point for a descent from the west; while the sister of Edward the Fourth, the Duchess Margaret of Burgundy, a fanatic in the cause of her house, was ready to aid any Yorkist attempt from Flanders. A trivial rising in 1486 proved to be the prelude of a vast conspiracy in the following year. The Earl of Warwick, the son of the Duke of Clarence and thus next male heir of the Yorkist line, had been secured by Henry as by Richard in the Tower; but in the opening of 1487 Lambert Simnel, a boy carefully trained for the purpose of this imposture, landed under his name in Ireland. The whole island espoused Simnel's cause, the Lord Deputy supported him, and he was soon joined by the Earl of Lincoln, John de la Pole, the son of a sister of Edward the Fourth by the Duke of Suffolk, and who on the death of Richard's son had been recognized by that sovereign as his heir. Edward's queen and the Woodvilles seem to have joined in the plot, and Margaret sent troops which enabled the pretender to land in Lancashire. But Henry was quick to meet the danger, and the impostor's defeat at Stoke near Newark proved fatal to the hopes of the Yorkists. Simnel was taken and made a scullion in the king's kitchen, Lincoln fell on the field.

## **Henry's Government**

The victory of Stoke set Henry free to turn to the inner government of his realm. He took up with a new vigour and fulness the policy of Edward the Fourth. Parliament was only summoned on rare and critical occasions. It was but twice convened during the last thirteen years of Henry's reign. The chief aim of the king was the accumulation of a treasure which should relieve him from the need of ever appealing for its aid. Subsidies granted for the support of wars which Henry evaded formed the base of a royal treasure which was swelled by the revival of dormant claims of the crown, by the exaction of fines for the breach of forgotten tenures, and by a host of petty extortions. Benevolences were again revived. A dilemma of Henry's minister, which received the name of "Morton's fork," extorted gifts to the exchequer from men who lived handsomely on the ground that their wealth was manifest, and from those who lived plainly on the plea that economy had made them wealthy. Still greater sums were drawn from those who were compromised in the revolts which chequered the king's rule. It was with his own hand that Henry endorsed the rolls of fines imposed after every insurrection. So successful were these efforts that at the end of his reign the king bequeathed a hoard of two millions to his successor. The same imitation of Edward's policy was seen in Henry's civil government. Broken as was the strength of the baronage, there still remained lords whom the new monarch watched with a jealous solicitude. Their power lay in the hosts of disorderly retainers who swarmed round their houses, ready to furnish a force in case of revolt, while in peace they became centres of outrage and defiance to the law. Edward had ordered the dissolution of these military households in his Statute of Liveries, and the statute was enforced by Henry with the utmost severity. On a visit to the Earl of Oxford, one of the most devoted adherents of the Lancastrian cause, the king found two long lines of liveried retainers drawn up to receive him. "I thank you for your good cheer, my Lord," said Henry as they parted, "but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you." The Earl was glad to escape with a fine of £10,000. It was with a special view to the suppression of this danger that Henry employed the criminal jurisdiction of the royal Council. The king in his Council had always asserted a right in the last resort to enforce justice and peace by dealing with offenders too strong to be dealt with by his ordinary courts. Henry systematized this occasional jurisdiction by

appointing in 1486 a committee of his Council as a regular court, to which the place where it usually sat gave the name of the Court of Star Chamber. The king's aim was probably little more than a purpose to enforce order on the land by bringing the great nobles before his own judgement-seat; but the establishment of the court as a regular and no longer an exceptional tribunal, whose traditional powers were confirmed by Parliamentary statute, and where the absence of a jury cancelled the prisoner's right to be tried by his peers, furnished his son with an instrument of tyranny which laid justice at the feet of the monarchy.

### **War of Brittany**

In his foreign policy Henry like Edward clung to a system of peace. His aim was to keep England apart, independent of the two great continental powers which during the Wars of the Roses had made revolutions at their will. Peace indeed was what Henry needed, whether for the general welfare of the land, or for the building up of his own system of rule. Peace however was hard to win. The old quarrel with France seemed indeed at an end; for it was Henry's pledge of friendship which had bought the French aid that enabled him to mount the throne. But in England itself hatred of the French burned fiercely as ever; and the growth of the French monarchy in extent and power through the policy of Lewis the Eleventh, his extinction of the great feudatories, and the administrative centralization he introduced, made even the coolest English statesman look on it as a danger to the realm. Only Brittany broke the long stretch of French coast which fronted England; and the steady refusal of Edward the Fourth to suffer Lewis to attack the Duchy showed the English sense of its value. Under its new king however, Charles the Eighth, France showed her purpose of annexing Brittany. Henry contented himself for a while with sending a few volunteers to aid in resistance; but when the death of the Duke left Brittany and its heiress, Anne, at the mercy of the French king the country called at once for war. Henry was driven to find allies in the states which equally dreaded the French advance, in the house of Austria and in the new power of Spain, to call on Parliament for supplies, and to cross the Channel in 1492 with twenty-five thousand men. But his allies failed him; a marriage of Charles with Anne gave the Duchy irretrievably to the French king; and troubles at home brought Henry to listen to terms of peace on payment of a heavy subsidy.

## **Henry and Ireland**

Both kings indeed were eager for peace. Charles was anxious to free his hands for the designs he was forming against Italy. What forced Henry to close the war was the appearance of a new pretender. At the opening of 1492, at the moment when the king was threatening a descent on the French coast, a youth calling himself Richard, Duke of York, landed suddenly in Ireland. His story of an escape from the Tower and of his bringing up in Portugal was accepted by a crowd of partizans; but he was soon called by Charles to France, and his presence there adroitly used to wring peace from the English king as the price of his abandonment. At the conclusion of peace the pretender found a new refuge with Duchess Margaret; his claims were recognized by the House of Austria and the king of Scots; while Henry, who declared the youth's true name to be Perkin Warbeck, weakened his cause by conflicting accounts of his origin and history. Fresh Yorkist plots sprang up in England. The Duchess gathered a fleet, Maximilian sent soldiers to the young claimant's aid, and in 1495 he sailed for England with a force as large as that which had followed Henry ten years before. But he found a different England. Though fierce outbreaks still took place in the north, the country at large had tasted the new sweets of order and firm government, and that reaction of feeling, that horror of civil wars, which gave their strength to the Tudors had already begun to show its force. The pretender's troops landed at Deal only to be seized by the country folk and hanged as pirates. Their leader sailed on to Ireland. Here too however he found a new state of things. Since the recall of Richard and his army in 1399 English sovereignty over the island had dwindled to a shadow. For a hundred years the native chieftains had ruled without check on one side the Pale, and the lords of the Pale had ruled with but little check on the other. But in 1494 Henry took the country in hand. Sir Edward Poynings, a tried soldier, was despatched as deputy to Ireland with troops at his back. English officers, English judges were quietly sent over. The Lords of the Pale were scared by the seizure of their leader, the Earl of Kildare. The Parliament of the Pale was bridled by a statute passed at the Deputy's dictation; the famous Poynings Act, by which it was forbidden to treat of any matters save those first approved of by the English king and his Council. It was this new Ireland that the pretender found when he appeared off its coast. He withdrew in despair, and Henry at once set about finishing his work. The time had not yet come when

England was strong enough to hold Ireland by her own strength. For a while the Lords of the Pale must still serve as the English garrison against the unconquered Irish, and Henry called his prisoner Kildare to his presence. "All Ireland cannot rule this man," grumbled his ministers. "Then shall he rule all Ireland," laughed the king, and Kildare returned as Lord Deputy to hold the country loyally in Henry's name.

### **Henry and Scotland**

The same political forecast, winning from very danger the elements of future security, was seen in the king's dealings with Scotland. From the moment when England finally abandoned the fruitless effort to subdue it the story of Scotland had been a miserable one. Whatever peace might be concluded, a sleepless dread of the old danger from the south tied the country to an alliance with France, and this alliance dragged it into the vortex of the Hundred Years War. But after the final defeat and capture of David on the field of Neville's Cross the struggle died down on both sides into marauding forays and battles, like those of Otterburn and Homildon Hill, in which alternate victories were won by the feudal lords of the Scotch or English border. The ballad of "Chevy Chase" brings home to us the spirit of the contest, the daring and defiance which stirred Sidney's heart "like a trumpet." But the effect of the struggle on the internal development of Scotland was utterly ruinous. The houses of Douglas and of March which it raised into supremacy only interrupted their strife with England to battle fiercely with one another or to coerce their king. The power of the Crown sank in fact into insignificance under the earlier sovereigns of the line of Stuart which succeeded to the throne on the extinction of the male line of Bruce in 1371. Invasions and civil feuds not only arrested but even rolled back the national industry and prosperity. The country was a chaos of disorder and misrule, in which the peasant and the trader were the victims of feudal outrage. The Border became a lawless land, where robbery and violence reigned utterly without check. So pitiable seemed the state of the kingdom that at the opening of the fifteenth century the clans of the Highlands drew together to swoop upon it as a certain prey; but the common peril united the factions of the nobles, and the victory of Harlaw saved the Lowlands from the rule of the Celt.

### **Margaret Tudor**

A great name at last broke the line of the Scottish kings. Schooled by a long captivity in England, James the First returned to his realm in 1424 to be the ablest of her rulers as he was the first of her poets. In the twelve years of a wonderful reign justice and order were restored for the while, the Scotch Parliament organized, the clans of the Highlands assailed in their own fastnesses and reduced to swear fealty to the "Saxon" king. James turned to assail the great houses; but feudal violence was still too strong for the hand of the law, and a band of ruffians who burst into his chamber left the king lifeless with sixteen stabs in his body. His death in 1437 was the signal for a struggle between the House of Douglas and the Crown which lasted through half a century. Order however crept gradually in; the exile of the Douglasses left the Scottish monarchs supreme in the Lowlands; while their dominion over the Highlands was secured by the ruin of the Lords of the Isles. But in its outer policy the country still followed in the wake of France; every quarrel between French king and English king brought danger with it on the Scottish border; and the war of Brittany at once set James the Fourth among Henry's foes. James welcomed the fugitive pretender at his court after his failure in Ireland, wedded him to his cousin, and in 1497 marched with him to the south. Not a man however greeted the Yorkist claimant, the country mustered to fight him; and an outbreak among his nobles, many of whom Henry had in his pay, called the Scot-king back again. Abandonment of the pretender was the first provision of peace between the two countries. Forced to quit Scotland the youth threw himself on the Cornish coast, drawn there by a revolt in June, only two months before his landing, which had been stirred up by the heavy taxation for the Scotch war, and in which a force of Cornishmen had actually pushed upon London and only been dispersed by the king's artillery on Blackheath. His temper however shrank from any real encounter; and though he succeeded in raising a body of Cornishmen and marched on Taunton, at the approach of the royal forces he fled from his army, took sanctuary at Beaulieu, and surrendered on promise of life. But the close of this danger made no break in Henry's policy of winning Scotland to a new attitude towards his realm. The lure to James was the hand of the English king's daughter, Margaret Tudor. For five years the negotiations dragged wearily along. The bitter hate of the two peoples blocked the way, and even Henry's ministers objected that the English crown might be made by the match the heritage of a Scottish king. "Then," they said,

“Scotland will annex England.” “No,” said the king with shrewd sense; “in such a case England would annex Scotland, for the greater always draws to it the less.” His steady pressure at last won the day. In 1502 the marriage-treaty with the Scot-king was formally concluded; and quiet, as Henry trusted, secured in the north.

### **The Spanish Marriage**

The marriage of Margaret was to bring the House of Stuart at an after time to the English throne. But results as momentous and far more immediate followed on the marriage of Henry’s sons. From the outset of his reign Henry had been driven to seek the friendship and alliance of Spain. Though his policy to the last remained one of peace, yet the acquisition of Brittany forced him to guard against attack from France and the mastery of the Channel which the possession of the Breton ports was likely to give to the French fleet. The same dread of French attack drew Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabel of Castile, whose marriage was building up the new monarchy of Spain, to the side of the English king; and only a few years after his accession they offered the hand of their daughter Catharine for his eldest son. But the invasion of Italy by Charles the Eighth drew French ambition to a distant strife, and once delivered from the pressure of immediate danger Henry held warily back from a close connexion with the Spanish realms which might have involved him in continental wars. It was not till 1501 that the marriage-treaty was really carried out. The Low Countries had now passed to the son of Mary of Burgundy by her husband Maximilian, the Austrian Archduke Philip. The Yorkist sympathies of the Duchess Margaret were shared by Philip, and Flanders had till now been the starting-point of the pretenders who had threatened Henry’s crown. But Philip’s marriage with Juana, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabel, bound him to the cause of Spain, and it was to secure his throne by winning Philip’s alliance, as well as to gain in the friendship of the Low Countries a fresh check upon French attack, that Henry yielded to Ferdinand’s renewed demand for the union of Arthur and Catharine. The match was made in blood. Henry’s own temper was merciful and even generous; he punished rebellion for the most part by fines rather than bloodshed, and he had been content to imprison or degrade his rivals. But the Spanish ruthlessness would see no living claimant left to endanger Catharine’s throne, and Perkin Warbeck

and the Earl of Warwick were put to death on a charge of conspiracy before the landing of the bride.

Catharine however was widow almost as soon as wife, for only three months after his wedding Arthur sickened and died. But a contest with France for Southern Italy, which Ferdinand claimed as king of Aragon, now made the friendship of England more precious than ever to the Spanish sovereigns; and Isabel pressed for her daughter's union with the king's second son, Henry, whom his brother's death left heir to the throne. In his anxiety to avoid a breach with Spain the king suffered Henry to be betrothed to Catharine, and threw the burthen of decision on Rome. A dispensation was necessary, and the case was of course the more difficult if the first marriage had been completed. The pleadings were put in, though both Julius the Second and Henry were in no haste for a decision. But the victories of Spain in Southern Italy enabled Isabel to put fresh pressure on the Pope, and on a denial being given of the consummation of the earlier marriage Julius was brought to sign a bull legitimating, even in case of such a consummation, the later one. Henry however still shrank from any real union. His aim was neither to complete the marriage, which would have alienated France, nor to wholly break it off and so alienate Spain. A balanced position between the two battling powers allowed him to remain at peace, to maintain an independent policy, and to pursue his system of home-government. He guarded his son's interests therefore by suggesting that he should enter a secret protest against the validity of his betrothal; and Catharine remained through the later years of his reign at the English court betrothed but unmarried, sick with love-longing and baffled pride.

### **The Renaissance**

But great as were the issues of Henry's policy, it shrinks into littleness if we turn from it to the weighty movements which were now stirring the minds of men. The world was passing through changes more momentous than any it had witnessed since the victory of Christianity and the fall of the Roman Empire. Its physical bounds were suddenly enlarged. The discoveries of Copernicus revealed to man the secret of the universe. Portuguese mariners doubled the Cape of Good Hope and anchored their merchant fleets in the harbours of India. Columbus crossed the untraversed ocean to add a New World to the Old. Sebastian Cabot, starting from the port of Bristol, threaded his way among the

icebergs of Labrador. This sudden contact with new lands, new faiths, new races of men quickened the slumbering intelligence of Europe into a strange curiosity. The first book of voyages that told of the Western World, the travels of Amerigo Vespucci, was soon "in everybody's hands." The "Utopia" of More, in its wide range of speculation on every subject of human thought and action, tells us how roughly and utterly the narrowness and limitation of human life had been broken up. At the very hour when the intellectual energy of the Middle Ages had sunk into exhaustion the capture of Constantinople by the Turks and the flight of its Greek scholars to the shores of Italy opened anew the science and literature of an older world. The exiled Greek scholars were welcomed in Italy; and Florence, so long the home of freedom and of art, became the home of an intellectual Revival. The poetry of Homer, the drama of Sophocles, the philosophy of Aristotle and of Plato woke again to life beneath the shadow of the mighty dome with which Brunelleschi had just crowned the City by the Arno. All the restless energy which Florence had so long thrown into the cause of liberty she flung, now that her liberty was reft from her, into the cause of letters. The galleys of her merchants brought back manuscripts from the East as the most precious portion of their freight. In the palaces of her nobles fragments of classic sculpture ranged themselves beneath the frescoes of Ghirlandajo. The recovery of a treatise of Cicero's or a tract of Sallust's from the dust of a monastic library was welcomed by the group of statesmen and artists who gathered in the Rucellai gardens with a thrill of enthusiasm. Foreign scholars soon flocked over the Alps to learn Greek, the key of the new knowledge, from the Florentine teachers. Grocyn, a fellow of New College, was perhaps the first Englishman who studied under the Greek exile, Chalcondylas; and the Greek lectures which he delivered in Oxford on his return in 1491 mark the opening of a new period in our history. Physical as well as literary activity awoke with the rediscovery of the teachers of Greece; and the continuous progress of English science may be dated from the day when Linacre, another Oxford student, returned from the lectures of the Florentine Politian to revive the older tradition of medicine by his translation of Galen.

### **John Colet**

But from the first it was manifest that the revival of letters would take a tone in England very different from the tone it had taken in Italy, a

tone less literary, less largely human, but more moral, more religious, more practical in its bearings both upon society and politics. The awakening of a rational Christianity, whether in England or in the Teutonic world at large, begins with the Italian studies of John Colet; and the vigour and earnestness of Colet were the best proof of the strength with which the new movement was to affect English religion. He came back to Oxford utterly untouched by the Platonic mysticism or the semi-serious infidelity which characterized the group of scholars round Lorenzo the Magnificent. He was hardly more influenced by their literary enthusiasm. The knowledge of Greek seems to have had one almost exclusive end for him, and this was a religious end. Greek was the key by which he could unlock the Gospels and the New Testament, and in these he thought that he could find a new religious standing-ground. It was this resolve of Colet to throw aside the traditional dogmas of his day and to discover a rational and practical religion in the Gospels themselves which gave its peculiar stamp to the theology of the Renaissance. His faith stood simply on a vivid realization of the person of Christ. In the prominence which such a view gave to the moral life, in his free criticism of the earlier Scriptures, in his tendency to simple forms of doctrine and confessions of faith, Colet struck the keynote of a mode of religious thought as strongly in contrast with that of the later Reformation as with that of Catholicism itself. The allegorical and mystical theology on which the Middle Ages had spent their intellectual vigour to such little purpose fell before his rejection of all but the historical and grammatical sense of the Biblical text. In his lectures on the Romans we find hardly a single quotation from the Fathers or the scholastic teachers. The great fabric of belief built up by the mediæval doctors seemed to him simply "the corruptions of the Schoolmen." In the life and sayings of its Founder he saw a simple and rational Christianity, whose fittest expression was the Apostles' creed. "About the rest," he said with characteristic impatience, "let divines dispute as they will." Of his attitude towards the coarser aspects of the current religion his behaviour at a later time before the famous shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury gives us a rough indication. As the blaze of its jewels, its costly sculptures, its elaborate metal-work burst on Colet's view, he suggested with bitter irony that a saint so lavish to the poor in his lifetime would certainly prefer that they should possess the wealth heaped round him since his death. With petulant disgust he rejected the

rags of the martyr which were offered for his adoration and the shoe which was offered for his kiss. The earnestness, the religious zeal, the very impatience and want of sympathy with the past which we see in every word and act of the man burst out in the lectures on St. Paul's Epistles which he delivered at Oxford in 1497. Even to the most critical among his hearers he seemed "like one inspired, raised in voice, eye, his whole countenance and mien, out of himself."

### **Erasmus**

Severe as was the outer life of the new teacher, a severity marked by his plain black robe and the frugal table which he preserved amidst his later dignities, his lively conversation, his frank simplicity, the purity and nobleness of his life, even the keen outbursts of his troublesome temper, endeared him to a group of scholars, foremost among whom stood Erasmus and Thomas More. "Greece has crossed the Alps," cried the exiled Argyropulos on hearing a translation of Thucydides by the German Reuchlin; but the glory, whether of Reuchlin or of the Teutonic scholars who followed him, was soon eclipsed by that of Erasmus. His enormous industry, the vast store of classical learning which he gradually accumulated, Erasmus shared with others of his day. In patristic study he may have stood beneath Luther; in originality and profoundness of thought he was certainly inferior to More. His theology, though he made a greater mark on the world by it than even by his scholarship, he derived almost without change from Colet. But his combination of vast learning with keen observation, of acuteness of remark with a lively fancy, of genial wit with a perfect good sense—his union of as sincere a piety and as profound a zeal for rational religion as Colet's with a dispassionate fairness towards older faiths, a large love of secular culture, and a genial freedom and play of mind—this union was his own, and it was through this that Erasmus embodied for the Teutonic peoples the quickening influence of the New Learning during the long scholar-life which began at Paris and ended amidst sorrow and darkness at Basle. At the time of Colet's return from Italy Erasmus was young and comparatively unknown, but the chivalrous enthusiasm of the new movement breaks out in his letters from Paris, whither he had wandered as a scholar. "I have given up my whole soul to Greek learning," he writes, "and as soon as I get any money I shall buy Greek books—and then I shall buy some clothes." It was in despair of reaching Italy that the young scholar made

his way in 1498 to Oxford, as the one place on this side the Alps where he would be enabled through the teaching of Grocyn to acquire a knowledge of Greek. But he had no sooner arrived there than all feeling of regret vanished away. "I have found in Oxford," he writes, "so much polish and learning that now I hardly care about going to Italy at all, save for the sake of having been there. When I listen to my friend Colet it seems like listening to Plato himself. Who does not wonder at the wide range of Grocyn's knowledge? What can be more searching, deep, and refined than the judgement of Linacre? When did Nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing, and happy than the temper of Thomas More?"

### **Revival of Letters**

But the new movement was far from being bounded by the walls of Oxford. The printing press was making letters the common property of all. In the last thirty years of the fifteenth century ten thousand editions of books and pamphlets are said to have been published throughout Europe, the most important half of them of course in Italy. All the Latin authors were accessible to every student before the century closed. Almost all the more valuable authors of Greece were published in the twenty years that followed. The profound influence of this burst of the two great classic literatures on the world at once made itself felt. "For the first time," to use the picturesque phrase of M. Taine, "men opened their eyes and saw." The human mind seemed to gather new energies at the sight of the vast field which opened before it. It attacked every province of knowledge, and in a few years it transformed all. Experimental science, the science of philology, the science of politics, the critical investigation of religious truth, all took their origin from this Renaissance—this "New Birth" of the world. Art, if it lost much in purity and propriety, gained in scope and in the fearlessness of its love of Nature. Literature, if crushed for the moment by the overpowering attraction of the great models of Greece and Rome, revived with a grandeur of form, a large spirit of humanity, such as it has never known since their day. In England the influence of the new movement extended far beyond the little group in which it had a few years before seemed concentrated. The great churchmen became its patrons. Langton, Bishop of Winchester, took delight in examining the young scholars of his episcopal family every evening, and sent all the most promising of them to study across

the Alps. Learning found a yet warmer friend in the Archbishop of Canterbury.

### **Warham**

Immersed as Archbishop Warham was in the business of the state, he was no mere politician. The eulogies which Erasmus lavished on him while he lived, his praises of the Primate's learning, of his ability in business, his pleasant humour, his modesty, his fidelity to friends, may pass for what eulogies of living men are commonly worth. But it is difficult to doubt the sincerity of the glowing picture which he drew of him when death had destroyed all interest in mere adulation. The letters indeed which passed between the great churchman and the wandering scholar, the quiet, simple-hearted grace which amidst constant instances of munificence preserved the perfect equality of literary friendship, the enlightened piety to which Erasmus could address the noble words of his preface to St. Jerome, confirm the judgement of every good man of Warham's day. The Archbishop's life was a simple one; and an hour's pleasant reading, a quiet chat with some learned new-comer, alone broke the endless round of civil and ecclesiastical business. Few men realized so thoroughly as Warham the new conception of an intellectual and moral equality before which the old social distinctions of the world were to vanish away. His favourite relaxation was to sup among a group of scholarly visitors, enjoying their fun and retorting with fun of his own. Colet, who had now become Dean of St. Paul's and whose sermons were stirring all London, might often be seen with Grocyn and Linacre at the Primate's board. There too might probably have been seen Thomas More, who, young as he was, was already famous through his lectures at St. Lawrence on "The City of God." But the scholar-world found more than supper or fun at the Primate's board. His purse was ever open to relieve their poverty. "Had I found such a patron in my youth," Erasmus wrote long after, "I too might have been counted among the fortunate ones." It was with Grocyn that Erasmus on a second visit to England rowed up the river to Warham's board at Lambeth, and in spite of an unpromising beginning the acquaintance turned out wonderfully well. The Primate loved him, Erasmus wrote home, as if he were his father or his brother, and his generosity surpassed that of all his friends. He offered him a sinecure, and when he declined it he bestowed on him a pension of a hundred crowns a year. When Erasmus wandered to Paris it

was Warham's invitation which recalled him to England. When the rest of his patrons left him to starve on the sour beer of Cambridge it was Warham who sent him fifty angels. "I wish there were thirty legions of them," the Primate puns in his good-humoured way.

### **Henry the Eighth**

Real however as this progress was, the group of scholars who represented the New Learning in England still remained a little one through the reign of Henry the Seventh. But the king's death in 1509 wholly changed their position. A "New Order," to use their own enthusiastic phrase, dawned on them in the accession of his son. Henry the Eighth had hardly completed his eighteenth year when he mounted the throne; but his manly beauty, his bodily vigour, and skill in arms, seemed matched by a frank and generous temper and a nobleness of political aims. Pole, his bitterest enemy, owned in later days that at the beginning of his reign Henry's nature was one "from which all excellent things might have been hoped." Already in stature and strength a king among his fellows, taller than any, bigger than any, a mighty wrestler, a mighty hunter, an archer of the best, a knight who bore down rider after rider in the tourney, the young monarch combined with this bodily lordliness a largeness and versatility of mind which was to be the special characteristic of the age that had begun. His fine voice, his love of music, his skill on lute or organ, the taste for poetry that made him delight in Surrey's verse, the taste for art which made him delight in Holbein's canvas, left room for tendencies of a more practical sort, for dabbling in medicine, or for a real skill in shipbuilding. There was a popular fibre in Henry's nature which made him seek throughout his reign the love of his people; and at its outset he gave promise of a more popular system of government by checking the extortion which had been practised under colour of enforcing forgotten laws, and by bringing his father's financial ministers, Empson and Dudley, to trial on a charge of treason. His sympathies were known to be heartily with the New Learning; he was a clever linguist, he had a taste that never left him for theological study, he was a fair scholar. Even as a boy of nine he had roused by his wit and attainments the wonder of Erasmus, and now that he mounted the throne the great scholar hurried back to England to pour out his exultation in the "Praise of Folly," a song of triumph over the old world of ignorance and bigotry that was to vanish away before the light and knowledge of the

new reign. Folly in his amusing little book mounts a pulpit in cap and bells, and pelts with her satire the absurdities of the world around her, the superstition of the monk, the pedantry of the grammarian, the dogmatism of the doctors, of the schools, the selfishness and tyranny of kings.

### **Colet's School**

The irony of Erasmus was backed by the earnest effort of Colet. He seized the opportunity to commence the work of educational reform by devoting in 1510 his private fortune to the foundation of a Grammar School beside St. Paul's. The bent of its founder's mind was shown by the image of the Child Jesus over the master's chair with the words "Hear ye Him" graven beneath it. "Lift up your little white hands for me," wrote the Dean to his scholars in words which prove the tenderness that lay beneath the stern outer seeming of the man,—“for me which prayeth for you to God.” All the educational designs of the reformers were carried out in the new foundation. The old methods of instruction were superseded by fresh grammars composed by Erasmus and other scholars for its use. Lilly, an Oxford student who had studied Greek in the East, was placed at its head. The injunctions of the founder aimed at the union of rational religion with sound learning, at the exclusion of the scholastic logic, and at the steady diffusion of the two classical literatures. The more bigoted of the clergy were quick to take alarm. "No wonder," More wrote to the Dean, "your school raises a storm, for it is like the wooden horse in which armed Greeks were hidden for the ruin of barbarous Troy." But the cry of alarm passed helplessly away. Not only did the study of Greek creep gradually into the schools which existed, but the example of Colet was followed by a crowd of imitators. More grammar schools, it has been said, were founded in the latter years of Henry than in the three centuries before. The impulse only grew the stronger as the direct influence of the New Learning passed away. The grammar schools of Edward the Sixth and of Elizabeth, in a word the system of middle-class education which by the close of the century had changed the very face of England, were the outcome of Colet's foundation of St. Paul's.

### **The Universities**

But the "armed Greeks" of More's apologue found a yet wider field in the reform of the higher education of the country. On the Universities

the influence of the New Learning was like a passing from death to life. Erasmus gives us a picture of what happened in 1516 at Cambridge where he was himself for a time a teacher of Greek. "Scarcely thirty years ago nothing was taught here but the *Parva Logicalia*, Alexander, those antiquated exercises from Aristotle, and the *Quæstiones* of Scotus. As time went on better studies were added, mathematics, a new, or at any rate a renovated, Aristotle, and a knowledge of Greek literature. What has been the result? The University is now so flourishing that it can compete with the best universities of the age." William Latimer and Croke returned from Italy and carried on the work of Erasmus at Cambridge, where Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, himself one of the foremost scholars of the new movement, lent it his powerful support. At Oxford the Revival met with a fiercer opposition. The contest took the form of boyish frays, in which the youthful partizans and opponents of the New Learning took sides as Greeks and Trojans. The young king himself had to summon one of its fiercest enemies to Woodstock, and to impose silence on the tirades which were delivered from the University pulpit. The preacher alleged that he was carried away by the Spirit. "Yes," retorted the king, "by the spirit, not of wisdom, but of folly." But even at Oxford the contest was soon at an end. Fox, Bishop of Winchester, established the first Greek lecture there in his new college of Corpus Christi, and a Professorship of Greek was at a later time established by the Crown. "The students," wrote an eye-witness in 1520, "rush to Greek letters, they endure watching, fasting, toil, and hunger in the pursuit of them." The work was crowned at last by the munificent foundation of Cardinal College, to share in whose teaching Wolsey invited the most eminent of the living scholars of Europe, and for whose library he promised to obtain copies of all the manuscripts in the Vatican.

### **Church Reform**

From the reform of education the New Learning pressed on to the reform of the Church. It was by Warham's commission that Colet was enabled in 1512 to address the Convocation of the Clergy in words which set before them with unsparing severity the religious ideal of the new movement. "Would that for once," burst forth the fiery preacher, "you would remember your name and profession and take thought for the reformation of the Church! Never was it more necessary, and never did the state of the Church need more vigorous endeavours." "We are

troubled with heretics," he went on, "but no heresy of theirs is so fatal to us and to the people at large as the vicious and depraved lives of the clergy. That is the worst heresy of all." It was the reform of the bishops that must precede that of the clergy, the reform of the clergy that would lead to a general revival of religion in the people at large. The accumulation of benefices, the luxury and worldliness of the priesthood, must be abandoned. The prelates ought to be busy preachers, to forsake the Court and labour in their own dioceses. Care should be taken for the ordination and promotion of worthy ministers, residence should be enforced, the low standard of clerical morality should be raised. It is plain that the men of the New Learning looked forward, not to a reform of doctrine but to a reform of life, not to a revolution which should sweep away the older superstitions which they despised but to a regeneration of spiritual feeling before which these superstitions would inevitably fade away. Colet was soon charged with heresy by the Bishop of London. Warham however protected him, and Henry to whom the Dean was denounced bade him go boldly on. "Let every man have his own doctor," said the young king after a long interview, "but this man is the doctor for me!"

### **Henry's Temper**

But for the success of the new reform, a reform which could only be wrought out by the tranquil spread of knowledge and the gradual enlightenment of the human conscience, the one thing needful was peace; and peace was already vanishing away. Splendid as were the gifts with which Nature had endowed Henry the Eighth, there lay beneath them all a boundless selfishness. "He is a prince," said Wolsey as he lay dying, "of a most royal courage; sooner than miss any part of his will he will endanger one half of his kingdom, and I do assure you I have often kneeled to him, sometimes for three hours together, to persuade him from his appetite and could not prevail." It was this personal will and appetite that was in Henry the Eighth to shape the very course of English history, to override the highest interests of the state, to trample under foot the wisest counsels, to crush with the blind ingratitude of fate the servants who opposed it. Even Wolsey, while he recoiled from the monstrous form which had revealed itself, could hardly have dreamed of the work which that royal courage and yet more royal appetite was to accomplish in the years to come. As yet however Henry was far from having reached

the height of self-assertion which bowed all constitutional law and even the religion of his realm beneath his personal will. But one of the earliest acts of his reign gave an earnest of the part which the new strength of the crown was to enable an English king to play. Through the later years of Henry the Seventh Catharine of Aragon had been recognized at the English court simply as Arthur's widow and Princess Dowager of Wales. Her betrothal to Prince Henry was looked upon as cancelled by his protest, and though the king was cautious not to break openly with Spain by sending her home, he was resolute not to suffer a marriage which would bring a break with France and give Ferdinand an opportunity of dragging England into the strife between the two great powers of the west.

### **France**

But with the young king's accession this policy of cautious isolation was at once put aside. There were grave political reasons indeed for the quick resolve which bore down the opposition of counsellors like Warham. As cool a head as that of Henry the Seventh was needed to watch without panic the rapid march of French greatness. In mere extent France had grown with a startling rapidity since the close of her long strife with England. Guienne had fallen to Charles the Seventh. Provence, Roussillon, and the Duchy of Burgundy had successively swelled the realm of Lewis the Eleventh. Brittany had been added to that of Charles the Eighth. From Calais to Bayonne, from the Jura to the Channel, stretched a wide and highly organized realm, whose disciplined army and unrivalled artillery lifted it high above its neighbours in force of war. The efficiency of its army was seen in the sudden invasion and conquest of Italy while England was busy with the pretended Duke of York. The passage of the Alps by Charles the Eighth shook the whole political structure of Europe. In wealth, in political repute, in arms, in letters, in arts, Italy at this moment stood foremost among the peoples of Western Christendom, and the mastery which Charles won over it at a single blow lifted France at once above the states around her. Twice repulsed from Naples, she remained under the successor of Charles, Lewis the Twelfth, mistress of the Duchy of Milan and of the bulk of Northern Italy; the princes and republics of Central Italy grouped themselves about her; and at the close of Henry the Seventh's reign the ruin of Venice in the League of Cambray crushed the last Italian state

which could oppose her designs on the whole peninsula. It was this new and mighty power, a France that stretched from the Atlantic to the Mincio, that fronted the young king at his accession and startled him from his father's attitude of isolation. He sought Ferdinand's alliance none the less that it meant war, for his temper was haughty and adventurous, his pride dwelt on the older claims of England to Normandy and Guienne, and his devotion to the Papacy drew him to listen to the cry of Julius the Second, and to long like a crusader to free Rome from the French pressure. Nor was it of less moment to a will such as the young king's that Catharine's passionate love for him had roused as ardent a love in return.

### **Ferdinand of Aragon**

Two months therefore after his accession the Infanta became the wife of Henry the Eighth. The influence of the king of Aragon became all-powerful in the English council chamber. Catharine spoke of her husband and herself as Ferdinand's subjects. The young king wrote that he would obey Ferdinand as he had obeyed his own father. His obedience was soon to be tested. Ferdinand seized on his new ally as a pawn in the great game which he was playing on the European chess-board, a game which left its traces on the political and religious map of Europe for centuries after him. It was not without good ground that Henry the Seventh faced so coolly the menacing growth of France. He saw what his son failed to see, that the cool, wary king of Aragon was building up as quickly a power which was great enough to cope with it, and that grow as the two rivals might they were matched too evenly to render England's position a really dangerous one. While the French kings aimed at the aggrandizement of a country, Ferdinand aimed at the aggrandizement of a House. Through the marriage of their daughter and heiress Juana with the son of the Emperor Maximilian, the Archduke Philip, the blood of Ferdinand and Isabel had merged in that of the House of Austria, and the aim of Ferdinand was nothing less than to give to the Austrian House the whole world of the west. Charles of Austria, the issue of Philip's marriage, had been destined from his birth by both his grandfathers, Maximilian and Ferdinand, to succeed to the empire; Franche Comté and the state built up by the Burgundian Dukes in the Netherlands had already passed into his hands at the death of his father; the madness of his mother left him next heir of Castille; the death of Ferdinand would

bring him Aragon and the dominion of the kings of Aragon in Southern Italy; that of Maximilian would add the Archduchy of Austria, with the dependencies in the south and its hopes of increase by the winning through marriage of the realms of Bohemia and Hungary. A share in the Austrian Archduchy indeed belonged to Charles's brother, the Archduke Ferdinand; but a kingdom in Northern Italy would at once compensate Ferdinand for his abandonment of this heritage and extend the Austrian supremacy over the Peninsula, for Rome and Central Italy would be helpless in the grasp of the power which ruled at both Naples and Milan. A war alone could drive France from the Milanese, but such a war might be waged by a league of European powers which would remain as a check upon France, should she attempt to hinder this vast union of states in the hand of Charles or to wrest from him the Imperial Crown. Such a league, the Holy League as it was called from the accession to it of the Pope, Ferdinand was enabled to form at the close of 1511 by the kinship of the Emperor, the desire of Venice and Julius the Second to free Italy from the stranger, and the warlike temper of Henry the Eighth.

### **The Holy League**

Dreams of new Crécy and Agincourts roused the ardour of the young king; and the campaign of 1512 opened with his avowal of the old claims on his "heritage of France." But the subtle intriguer in whose hands he lay pushed steadily to his own great ends. The League drove the French from the Milanese. An English army which landed under the Marquis of Dorset at Fontarabia to attack Guienne found itself used as a covering force to shield Ferdinand's seizure of Navarre, the one road through which France could attack his grandson's heritage of Spain. The troops mutinied and sailed home; Scotland, roused again by the danger of France, threatened invasion; the world scoffed at Englishmen as useless for war. Henry's spirit however rose with the need. In 1513 he landed in person in the north of France, and a sudden rout of the French cavalry in an engagement near Guinegate, which received from its bloodless character the name of the Battle of the Spurs, gave him the fortresses of Téroouanne and Tournay. A victory yet more decisive awaited his arms at home. A Scotch army crossed the border, with James the Fourth at its head; but on the 9th of September it was met by an English force under the Earl of Surrey at Flodden in Northumberland. James "fell near his banner," and his army was driven off the field with

heavy loss. Flushed with this new glory, the young king was resolute to continue the war when in the opening of 1514 he found himself left alone by the dissolution of the League. Ferdinand had gained his ends, and had no mind to fight longer simply to realize the dreams of his son-in-law. Henry had indeed gained much. The might of France was broken. The Papacy was restored to freedom. England had again figured as a great power in Europe. But the millions left by his father were exhausted, his subjects had been drained by repeated subsidies, and, furious as he was at the treachery of his Spanish ally, Henry was driven to conclude a peace.

### **Protest of the New Learning**

To the hopes of the New Learning this sudden outbreak of the spirit of war, this change of the monarch from whom they had looked for a “new order” into a vulgar conqueror, proved a bitter disappointment. Colet thundered from the pulpit of St. Paul’s that “an unjust peace is better than the justest war,” and protested that “when men out of hatred and ambition fight with and destroy one another, they fight under the banner, not of Christ, but of the devil.” Erasmus quitted Cambridge with a bitter satire against the “madness” around him. “It is the people,” he said, in words which must have startled his age,—“it is the people who build cities, while the madness of princes destroys them.” The sovereigns of his time appeared to him like ravenous birds pouncing with beak and claw on the hard-won wealth and knowledge of mankind. “Kings who are scarcely men,” he exclaimed in bitter irony, “are called ‘divine’; they are ‘invincible’ though they fly from every battle-field; ‘serene’ though they turn the world upside down in a storm of war; ‘illustrious’ though they grovel in ignorance of all that is noble; ‘Catholic’ though they follow anything rather than Christ. Of all birds the Eagle alone has seemed to wise men the type of royalty, a bird neither beautiful nor musical nor good for food, but murderous, greedy, hateful to all, the curse of all, and with its great powers of doing harm only surpassed by its desire to do it.” It was the first time in modern history that religion had formally dissociated itself from the ambition of princes and the horrors of war, or that the new spirit of criticism had ventured not only to question but to deny what had till then seemed the primary truths of political order.

### **The Jerome of Erasmus**

But the indignation of the New Learning was diverted to more practical ends by the sudden peace. However he had disappointed its hopes, Henry still remained its friend. Through all the changes of his terrible career his home was a home of letters. His boy, Edward the Sixth, was a fair scholar in both the classical languages. His daughter Mary wrote good Latin letters. Elizabeth began every day with an hour's reading in the Greek Testament, the tragedies of Sophocles, or the orations of Demosthenes. The ladies of the Court caught the royal fashion and were found poring over the pages of Plato. Widely as Henry's ministers differed from each other, they all agreed in sharing and fostering the culture around them. The panic of the scholar-group therefore soon passed away. Colet toiled on with his educational efforts; Erasmus forwarded to England the works which English liberality was enabling him to produce abroad. Warham extended to him as generous an aid as the protection he had afforded to Colet. His edition of the works of St. Jerome had been begun under the Primate's encouragement during the great scholar's residence at Cambridge, and it appeared with a dedication to the Archbishop on its title-page. That Erasmus could find protection in Warham's name for a work which boldly recalled Christendom to the path of sound Biblical criticism, that he could address him in words so outspoken as those of his preface, shows how fully the Primate sympathized with the highest efforts of the New Learning. Nowhere had the spirit of enquiry so firmly set itself against the claims of authority. "Synods and decrees, and even councils," wrote Erasmus, "are by no means in my judgement the fittest modes of repressing error, unless truth depend simply on authority. But on the contrary, the more dogmas there are, the more fruitful is the ground in producing heresies. Never was the Christian faith purer or more undefiled than when the world was content with a single creed, and that the shortest creed we have." It is touching even now to listen to such an appeal of reason and of culture against the tide of dogmatism which was soon to flood Christendom with Augsburg Confessions and Creeds of Pope Pius and Westminster Catechisms and Thirty-nine Articles.

### **The New Testament of Erasmus**

But the principles which Erasmus urged in his "Jerome" were urged with far greater clearness and force in a work that laid the foundation of the future Reformation, the edition of the Greek Testament on which he

had been engaged at Cambridge and whose production was almost wholly due to the encouragement and assistance he received from English scholars. In itself the book was a bold defiance of theological tradition. It set aside the Latin version of the Vulgate which had secured universal acceptance in the Church. Its method of interpretation was based, not on received dogmas, but on the literal meaning of the text. Its real end was the end at which Colet had aimed in his Oxford lectures. Erasmus desired to set Christ himself in the place of the Church, to recall men from the teaching of Christian theologians to the teaching of the Founder of Christianity. The whole value of the Gospels to him lay in the vividness with which they brought home to their readers the personal impression of Christ himself. "Were we to have seen him with our own eyes, we should not have so intimate a knowledge as they give us of Christ, speaking, healing, dying, rising again, as it were in our very presence." All the superstitions of mediæval worship faded away in the light of this personal worship of Christ. "If the footprints of Christ are shown us in any place, we kneel down and adore them. Why do we not rather venerate the living and breathing picture of him in these books? We deck statues of wood and stone with gold and gems for the love of Christ. Yet they only profess to represent to us the outer form of his body, while these books present us with a living picture of his holy mind." In the same way the actual teaching of Christ was made to supersede the mysterious dogmas of the older ecclesiastical teaching. "As though Christ taught such subtleties," burst out Erasmus: "subtleties that can scarcely be understood even by a few theologians—or as though the strength of the Christian religion consisted in man's ignorance of it! It may be the safer course," he goes on with characteristic irony, "to conceal the state mysteries of kings, but Christ desired his mysteries to be spread abroad as openly as was possible." In the diffusion, in the universal knowledge of the teaching of Christ the foundation of a reformed Christianity had still, he urged, to be laid. With the tacit approval of the Primate of a Church which from the time of Wyclif had held the translation and reading of the Bible in the common tongue to be heresy and a crime punishable with the fire, Erasmus boldly avowed his wish for a Bible open and intelligible to all. "I wish that even the weakest woman might read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. I wish that they were translated into all languages, so as to be read and understood not only by Scots and Irishmen, but even by Saracens and Turks. But the

first step to their being read is to make them intelligible to the reader. I long for the day when the husbandman shall sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, when the weaver shall hum them to the tune of his shuttle, when the traveller shall while away with their stories the weariness of his journey." From the moment of its publication in 1516 the New Testament of Erasmus became the topic of the day; the Court, the Universities, every household to which the New Learning had penetrated, read and discussed it. But, bold as its language may have seemed, Warham not only expressed his approbation, but lent the work—as he wrote to its author—"to bishop after bishop." The most influential of his suffragans, Bishop Fox of Winchester, declared that the mere version was worth ten commentaries, one of the most learned, Fisher of Rochester, entertained Erasmus at his house.

### **More**

Daring and full of promise as were these efforts of the New Learning in the direction of educational and religious reform, its political and social speculations took a far wider range in the "Utopia" of Thomas More. Even in the household of Cardinal Morton, where he had spent his childhood, More's precocious ability had raised the highest hopes. "Whoever may live to see it," the grey-haired statesman used to say, "this boy now waiting at table will turn out a marvellous man." We have seen the spell which his wonderful learning and the sweetness of his temper threw at Oxford over Colet and Erasmus; and young as he was, More no sooner quitted the University than he was known throughout Europe as one of the foremost figures in the new movement. The keen, irregular face, the grey restless eye, the thin mobile lips, the tumbled brown hair, the careless gait and dress, as they remain stamped on the canvas of Holbein, picture the inner soul of the man, his vivacity, his restless, all-devouring intellect, his keen and even reckless wit, the kindly, half-sad humour that drew its strange veil of laughter and tears over the deep, tender reverence of the soul within. In a higher, because in a sweeter and more loveable form than Colet, More is the representative of the religious tendency of the New Learning in England. The young law-student who laughed at the superstition and asceticism of the monks of his day wore a hair shirt next his skin, and schooled himself by penances for the cell he desired among the Carthusians. It was characteristic of the man that among all the gay, profligate scholars of the Italian Renaissance

he chose as the object of his admiration the disciple of Savonarola, Pico di Mirandola. Free-thinker as the bigots who listened to his daring speculations termed him, his eye would brighten and his tongue falter as he spoke with friends of heaven and the after-life. When he took office, it was with the open stipulation "first to look to God, and after God to the King."

In his outer bearing indeed there was nothing of the monk or recluse. The brightness and freedom of the New Learning seemed incarnate in the young scholar with his gay talk, his winsomeness of manner, his reckless epigrams, his passionate love of music, his omnivorous reading, his paradoxical speculations, his gibes at monks, his schoolboy fervour of liberty. But events were soon to prove that beneath this sunny nature lay a stern inflexibility of conscientious resolve. The Florentine scholars penned declamations against tyrants while they covered with their flatteries the tyranny of the house of Medici. More no sooner entered Parliament in 1504 than his ready argument and keen sense of justice led to the rejection of the demand for a heavy subsidy. "A beardless boy," said the courtiers,—and More was only twenty-six,—"has disappointed the King's purpose"; and during the rest of Henry the Seventh's reign the young lawyer found it prudent to withdraw from public life. But the withdrawal had little effect on his buoyant activity. He rose at once into repute at the bar. He wrote his "Life of Edward the Fifth," the first work in which what we may call modern English prose appears written with purity and clearness of style and a freedom either from antiquated forms of expression or classical pedantry. His ascetic dreams were replaced by the affections of home. It is when we get a glimpse of him in his house at Chelsea that we understand the endearing epithets which Erasmus always lavishes upon More. The delight of the young husband was to train the girl he had chosen for his wife in his own taste for letters and for music. The reserve which the age exacted from parents was thrown to the winds in More's intercourse with his children. He loved teaching them, and lured them to their deeper studies by the coins and curiosities he had gathered in his cabinet. He was as fond of their pets and their games as his children themselves, and would take grave scholars and statesmen into the garden to see his girls' rabbit-hutches or to watch the gambols of their favourite monkey. "I have given you kisses enough," he wrote to his little ones in merry verse when far away on political business, "but stripes hardly ever."

## The Utopia

The accession of Henry the Eighth drew More back into the political current. It was at his house that Erasmus penned the "Praise of Folly," and the work, in its Latin title, "Moriæ Encomium," embodied in playful fun his love of the extravagant humour of More. He was already in Henry's favour; he was soon called to the royal court and used in the king's service. But More "tried as hard to keep out of court," says his descendant, "as most men try to get into it." When the charm of his conversation gave so much pleasure to the young sovereign "that he could not once in a month get leave to go home to his wife or children, whose company he much desired,... he began thereupon to dissemble his nature, and so, little by little, from his former mirth to dissemble himself." He shared to the full the disappointment of his friends at the sudden outbreak of Henry's warlike temper, but the Peace again brought him to Henry's side and he was soon in the king's confidence both as a counsellor and as a diplomatist. It was on one of his diplomatic missions that More describes himself as hearing news of the Kingdom of "Nowhere." "On a certain day when I had heard mass in Our Lady's Church, which is the fairest, the most gorgeous and curious church of building in all the city of Antwerp and also most frequented of people, and service being over I was ready to go home to my lodgings, I chanced to espy my friend Peter Gilles talking with a certain stranger, a man well stricken in age, with a black sun-burnt face a large beard, and a cloke cast trimly about his shoulders, whom by his favour and apparell forthwith I judged to be a mariner." The sailor turned out to have been a companion of Amerigo Vespucci in those voyages to the New World "that be now in print and abroad in every man's hand," and on More's invitation he accompanied him to his house, and "there in my garden upon a bench covered with green turves we sate down, talking together" of the man's marvellous adventures, his desertion in America by Vespucci, his wanderings over the country under the equinoctial line, and at last of his stay in the Kingdom of "Nowhere."

It was the story of "Nowhere," or Utopia, which More began in 1515 to embody in the wonderful book which reveals to us the heart of the New Learning. As yet the movement had been one of scholars and divines. Its plans of reform had been almost exclusively intellectual and religious. But in More the same free play of thought which had shaken

off the old forms of education and faith turned to question the old forms of society and politics. From a world where fifteen hundred years of Christian teaching had produced social injustice, religious intolerance, and political tyranny the humourist philosopher turned to a “Nowhere” in which the mere efforts of natural human virtue realized those ends of security, equality, brotherhood, and freedom for which the very institution of society seemed to have been framed. It is as he wanders through this dreamland of the new reason that More touches the great problems which were fast opening before the modern world, problems of labour, of crime, of conscience, of government. Merely to have seen and to have examined questions such as these would prove the keenness of his intellect, but its far-reaching originality is shown in the solutions which he proposes. Amidst much that is the pure play of an exuberant fancy, much that is mere recollection of the dreams of bygone dreamers, we find again and again the most important social and political discoveries of later times anticipated by the genius of Thomas More.

### **Labour and Health**

In some points, such as his treatment of the question of Labour, he still remains far in advance of current opinion. The whole system of society around him seemed to him “nothing but a conspiracy of the rich against the poor.” Its economic legislation from the Statute of Labourers to the statutes by which the Parliament of 1515 strove to fix a standard of wages was simply the carrying out of such a conspiracy by process of law. “The rich are ever striving to pare away something further from the daily wages of the poor by private fraud and even by public law, so that the wrong already existing (for it is a wrong that those from whom the State derives most benefit should receive least reward) is made yet greater by means of the law of the State.” “The rich devise every means by which they may in the first place secure to themselves what they have amassed by wrong, and then take to their own use and profit at the lowest possible price the work and labour of the poor. And so soon as the rich decide on adopting these devices in the name of the public, then they become law.” The result was the wretched existence to which the labour class was doomed, “a life so wretched that even a beast’s life seems enviable.” No such cry of pity for the poor, of protest against the system of agrarian and manufacturing tyranny which found its expression in the Statute-book had been heard since the days of Piers Ploughman. But

from Christendom More turns with a smile to “Nowhere.” In “Nowhere” the aim of legislation is to secure the welfare, social, industrial, intellectual, religious, of the community at large, and of the labour-class as the true basis of a well-ordered commonwealth. The end of its labour-laws was simply the welfare of the labourer. Goods were possessed indeed in common, but work was compulsory with all. The period of toil was shortened to the nine hours demanded by modern artizans, and the object of this curtailment was the intellectual improvement of the worker. “In the institution of the weal public this end is only and chiefly pretended and minded that what time may possibly be spared from the necessary occupations and affairs of the commonwealth, all that the citizens should withdraw from bodily service to the free liberty of the mind and garnishing of the same. For herein they conceive the felicity of this life to consist.” A public system of education enabled the Utopians to avail themselves of their leisure. While in England half of the population could read no English, every child was well taught in “Nowhere.” The physical aspects of society were cared for as attentively as its moral. The houses of Utopia “in the beginning were very low and like homely cottages or poor shepherd huts made at all adventures of every rude piece of timber that came first to hand, with mud walls and ridged roofs thatched over with straw.” The picture was really that of the common English town of More’s day, the home of squalor and pestilence. In Utopia however they had at last come to realize the connexion between public morality and the health which springs from light, air, comfort, and cleanliness. “The streets were twenty feet broad; the houses backed by spacious gardens, and curiously builded after a gorgeous and gallant sort, with their stories one after another. The outsides of the walls be made either of hard flint, or of plaster, or else of brick; and the inner sides be well strengthened by timber work. The roofs be plain and flat, covered over with plaster, so tempered that no fire can hurt or perish it, and withstanding the violence of the weather better than lead. They keep the wind out of their windows with glass, for it is there much used, and sometimes also with fine linen cloth dipped in oil or amber, and that for two commodities, for by this means more light cometh in and the wind is better kept out.”

## **Crime**

The same foresight which appears in More's treatment of the questions of Labour and the Public Health is yet more apparent in his treatment of the question of Crime. He was the first to suggest that punishment was less effective in suppressing it than prevention. "If you allow your people to be badly taught, their morals to be corrupted from childhood, and then when they are men punish them for the very crimes to which they have been trained in childhood—what is this but to make thieves, and then to punish them?" He was the first to plead for proportion between the punishment and the crime, and to point out the folly of the cruel penalties of his day. "Simple theft is not so great an offence as to be punished with death." If a thief and a murderer are sure of the same penalty, More shows that the law is simply tempting the thief to secure his theft by murder. "While we go about to make thieves afraid, we are really provoking them to kill good men." The end of all punishment he declares to be reformation, "nothing else but the destruction of vice and the saving of men." He advises "so using and ordering criminals that they cannot choose but be good, and what harm soever they did before, the residue of their lives to make amends for the same." Above all he urges that to be remedial punishment must be wrought out by labour and hope, so that "none is hopeless or in despair to recover again his former state of freedom by giving good tokens and likelihood of himself that he will ever after that live a true and honest man." It is not too much to say that in the great principles More lays down he anticipated every one of the improvements in our criminal system which have distinguished the last hundred years.

### **Religion**

His treatment of the religious question was even more in advance of his age. If the houses of Utopia were strangely in contrast with the halls of England, where the bones from every dinner lay rotting in the dirty straw which strewed the floor, where the smoke curled about the rafters, and the wind whistled through the unglazed windows; if its penal legislation had little likeness to the gallows which stood out so frequently against our English sky; the religion of "Nowhere" was in yet stronger conflict with the faith of Christendom. It rested simply on nature and reason. It held that God's design was the happiness of man, and that the ascetic rejection of human delights, save for the common good, was thanklessness to the Giver. Christianity indeed had already reached

Utopia, but it had few priests; religion found its centre rather in the family than in the congregation: and each household confessed its faults to its own natural head. A yet stranger characteristic was seen in the peaceable way in which it lived side by side with the older religions. More than a century before William of Orange More discerned and proclaimed the great principle of religious toleration. In “Nowhere” it was lawful to every man to be of what religion he would. Even the disbelievers in a Divine Being or in the immortality of man, who by a single exception to its perfect religious indifference were excluded from public office, were excluded, not on the ground of their religious belief, but because their opinions were deemed to be degrading to mankind and therefore to incapacitate those who held them from governing in a noble temper. But they were subject to no punishment, because the people of Utopia were “persuaded that it is not in a man’s power to believe what he list.” The religion which a man held he might propagate by argument, though not by violence or insult to the religion of others. But while each sect performed its rites in private, all assembled for public worship in a spacious temple, where the vast throng, clad in white, and grouped round a priest clothed in fair raiment wrought marvellously out of birds’ plumage, joined in hymns and prayers so framed as to be acceptable to all. The importance of this public devotion lay in the evidence it afforded that liberty of conscience could be combined with religious unity.

### **Political Liberty**

But even more important than More’s defence of religious freedom was his firm maintenance of political liberty against the monarchy. Steady and irresistible as was the growth of the royal power, it was far from seeming to the keenest political thinker of that day so natural and inevitable a development of our history as it seems to some writers in our own. In political hints which lie scattered over the whole of the Utopia More notes with a bitter irony the advance of the new despotism. It was only in “Nowhere” that a sovereign was “removable on suspicion of a design to enslave his people.” In England the work of slavery was being quietly wrought, hints the great lawyer, through the law. “There will never be wanting some pretence for deciding in the king’s favour; as that equity is on his side, or the strict letter of the law, or some forced interpretation of it: or if none of these, that the royal prerogative ought with conscientious judges to outweigh all other considerations.” We are

startled at the precision with which More describes the processes by which the law-courts were to lend themselves to the advance of tyranny till their crowning judgement in the case of ship-money. But behind these judicial expedients lay great principles of absolutism, which partly from the example of foreign monarchies, partly from the sense of social and political insecurity, and yet more from the isolated position of the Crown, were gradually winning their way in public opinion. "These notions"—More goes boldly on in words written, it must be remembered, within the precincts of Henry's court and beneath the eye of Wolsey—"these notions are fostered by the maxim that the king can do no wrong, however much he may wish to do it; that not only the property but the persons of his subjects are his own; and that a man has a right to no more than the king's goodness thinks fit not to take from him." It is only in the light of this emphatic protest against the king-worship which was soon to override liberty and law that we can understand More's later career. Steady to the last in his loyalty to Parliaments, as steady in his resistance to mere personal rule, it was with a smile as fearless as the smile with which he penned the half-jesting words of his Utopia that he sealed them with his blood on Tower Hill.

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## CHAPTER III

### WOLSEY

#### 1514-1529

#### Wolsey's rise

“There are many things in the Commonwealth of Nowhere that I rather wish than hope to see embodied in our own.” It was with these words of characteristic irony that More closed the first work which embodied the dreams of the New Learning. Destined as they were to fulfilment in the course of ages, its schemes of social, religious, and political reform broke in fact helplessly against the temper of the time. At the moment when More was pleading the cause of justice between rich and poor social discontent was being fanned by new exactions and sterner laws into a fiercer flame. While he was advocating toleration and Christian comprehension Christendom stood on the verge of a religious strife which was to rend it for ever in pieces. While he aimed sarcasm after sarcasm at king-worship the new despotism of the Monarchy was being organised into a vast and all-embracing system by the genius of Thomas Wolsey. Wolsey was the son of a wealthy townsman of Ipswich whose ability had raised him into notice at the close of the preceding reign, and who had been taken by Bishop Fox into the service of the Crown. The activity which he showed in organizing and equipping the royal army for the campaign of 1513 won for him a foremost place in the confidence of Henry the Eighth. The young king lavished dignities on him with a profusion that marked the completeness of his trust. From the post of royal almoner he was advanced in 1513 to the see of Tournay. At the opening of 1514 he became bishop of Lincoln; at its close he was translated to the archbishoprick of York. In 1515 Henry procured from Rome his elevation to the office of cardinal and raised him to the post of chancellor. So quick a rise stirred envy in the men about him; and his rivals noted bitterly the songs, the dances, and carousals which had won, as they believed, the favour of the king. But sensuous and worldly as was Wolsey's temper, his powers lifted him high above the level of a court favourite. His noble bearing, his varied ability, his enormous capacity for toil, the natural breadth and grandeur of his mind, marked him naturally

out as the minister of a king who showed throughout his reign a keen eye for greatness in the men about him.

### **Wolsey's policy**

Wolsey's mind was European rather than English; it dwelt little on home affairs but turned almost exclusively to the general politics of the European powers and of England as one of them. Whatever might be Henry's disappointment in the issue of his French campaigns the young king might dwell with justifiable pride on the general result of his foreign policy. If his direct gains from the Holy League had been little, he had at any rate won security on the side of France. The loss of Navarre and of the Milanese left Lewis a far less dangerous neighbour than he had seemed at Henry's accession, while the appearance of the Swiss soldiery during the war of the League destroyed the military supremacy which France had enjoyed from the days of Charles the Eighth. But if the war had freed England from the fear of French pressure Wolsey was as resolute to free her from the dictation of Ferdinand, and this the resentment of Henry at his unscrupulous desertion enabled him to bring about. Crippled as she was, France was no longer formidable as a foe; and her alliance would not only break the supremacy of Ferdinand over English policy but secure Henry on his northern border. Her husband's death at Flodden and the infancy of their son raised Margaret Tudor to the Scotch regency, and seemed to promise Henry a hold on his troublesome neighbours. But her marriage a year later with the Earl of Angus, Archibald Douglas, soon left the Regent powerless among the factions of warring nobles. She appealed to her brother for aid, while her opponents called on the Duke of Albany, the son of the Albany who had been driven to France in 1484 and heir to the crown after the infant king, to return and take the regency. Albany held broad lands in France; he had won fame as a French general; and Scotland in his hands would be simply a means of French attack. A French alliance not only freed Henry from dependence on Ferdinand but would meet this danger from the north; and in the summer of 1514 a treaty was concluded with the French king and ratified by his marriage with Henry's youngest sister, Mary Tudor.

### **Francis the First**

The treaty was hardly signed when the death of Lewis in January 1515 undid this marriage and placed his young cousin, Francis the First, upon the throne. But the old king's death brought no change of policy. Francis at once prepared to renew the war in Italy, and for this purpose he needed the friendship of his two neighbours in the west and the north, Henry and the ruler of the Netherlands, the young Charles of Austria. Both were willing to give their friendship. Charles, jealous of Maximilian's desire to bring him into tutelage, looked to a French alliance as a security against the pressure of the Emperor, while Henry and Wolsey were eager to despatch Francis on a campaign across the Alps, which would at any rate while it lasted remove all fear of an attack on England. A yet stronger ground in the minds of both Charles and Henry for facilitating the French king's march was their secret belief that his invasion of the Milanese would bring the young king to inevitable ruin, for the Emperor and Ferdinand of Aragon were leagued with every Italian state against Francis, and a Swiss army prepared to dispute with him the possession of the Milanese. Charles therefore betrothed himself to the French king's sister, and Henry concluded a fresh treaty with him in the spring of 1515. But the dreams of both rulers were roughly broken. Francis succeeded both in crossing the Alps and in beating the Swiss army. His victory in the greatest battle of the age, the battle of Marignano, at once gave him the Milanese and laid the rest of Italy at his feet. The work of the Holy Alliance was undone, and the dominion which England had dreaded in the hands of Lewis the Twelfth was restored in the younger and more vigorous hands of his successor. Neither the king nor the Cardinal could hide their chagrin when the French minister announced his master's victory, but it was no time for an open breach. All Wolsey could do was to set himself secretly to hamper the French king's work. English gold hindered any reconciliation between France and the Swiss, and enabled Maximilian to lead a joint army of Swiss and Imperial soldiers in the following year over the Alps.

### **Charles the Fifth**

But the campaign broke down. At this juncture indeed the death of Ferdinand in January 1516 changed the whole aspect of European politics. It at once opened to Charles of Austria his Spanish and Neapolitan heritage. The presence of the young king was urgently called for by the troubles that followed in Castile, and Charles saw that peace

was needed for the gathering into his hands of realms so widely scattered as his own. Maximilian too was ready to set aside all other aims to secure the aggrandizement of his house. After an inactive campaign therefore the Emperor negotiated secretly with France, and the treaty of Noyon which Charles concluded with Francis in August 1516 was completed in March 1517 by the accession of Maximilian to their alliance in the Treaty of Cambray. To all outer seeming the Treaty of Cambray left Francis supreme in the west, unequalled in military repute, a soldier who at twenty had withstood and broken the league of all Europe in arms, master of the Milanese, and through his alliances with Venice, Florence, and the Pope virtually master of all Italy save the Neapolitan realm. On the other hand the treaty left England exposed and alone, should France choose this moment for attack. Francis was well aware of Wolsey's efforts against him, and the state of Scotland offered the ready means of bringing about a quarrel. While Henry, anxious as he was to aid his sister, was fettered by the fear that English intervention would bring French intervention in its train and endanger the newly concluded alliance, Albany succeeded in evading the English cruisers and landing in the May of 1515. He was at once declared Protector of the realm by the Parliament at Edinburgh. Margaret on the other hand was driven into Stirling, and after a short siege forced to take refuge in England. The influence of Albany and the French party whom he headed secured for Francis in any struggle the aid of Scotland. But neither Henry nor his minister really dreaded danger from the Treaty of Cambray; on the contrary it solved all their difficulties. So well did they understand the aim of Charles in concluding it that they gave him the gold which enabled him to reach Spain. Master of Castile and Aragon, of Naples and the Netherlands, the Spanish king rose into a check on the French monarchy such as the policy of Henry or Wolsey had never been able to construct before. Instead of towering over Europe, Francis found himself confronted in the hour of his pride by a rival whom he was never to overcome; while England, deserted and isolated as she seemed for the moment, was eagerly sought in alliance by both princes. In October 1518 Francis strove to bind her to his cause by a new treaty of peace, in which England sold Tournay to France and the hand of the French dauphin was promised to Henry's daughter Mary, now a child of two years old.

### **Wolsey's greatness**

At the close of 1518 therefore the policy of Wolsey seemed justified by success. He had found England a power of the second order, overawed by France and dictated to by Ferdinand of Spain. She now stood in the forefront of European affairs, a state whose alliance was desired alike by French king and Spanish king, and which dealt on equal terms with Pope or Emperor. In European cabinets Wolsey was regarded as hardly less a power to be conciliated than his royal master. Both Charles and Francis sought his friendship; and in the years which followed his official emoluments were swelled by pensions from both princes. At home the king loaded him with new proofs of favour. The revenues of two sees whose tenants were foreigners fell into his hands; he held the bishoprick of Winchester and the abbacy of St. Albans. He spent this vast wealth with princely ostentation. His pomp was almost royal. A train of prelates and nobles followed him as he moved; his household was composed of five hundred persons of noble birth, and its chief posts were occupied by knights and barons of the realm. Two of the houses he built, Hampton Court and York House, the later Whitehall, were splendid enough to serve at his fall as royal palaces. Nor was this magnificence a mere show of power. The whole direction of home and foreign affairs rested with Wolsey alone. His toil was ceaseless. The morning was for the most part given to his business as chancellor in Westminster Hall and at the Star-Chamber; but nightfall still found him labouring at exchequer business or home administration, managing Church affairs, unravelling the complexities of Irish misgovernment, planning schools and colleges, above all drawing and studying despatches and transacting the whole diplomatic correspondence of the state. Greedy as was his passion for toil, Wolsey felt the pressure of this enormous mass of business, and his imperious tones, his angry outbursts of impatience, showed him to be overworked. Even his vigorous frame gave way. Still a strong and handsome man in 1518 at the age of forty-seven, Wolsey was already an old man, broken by disease, when he fell from power at fifty-eight. But enormous as was the mass of work which he undertook, it was thoroughly done. His administration of the royal treasury was rigidly economical. The number of his despatches is hardly less remarkable than the care he bestowed on each. Even More, an avowed enemy, owns that as Chancellor he surpassed all men's expectations. The court of Chancery indeed became so crowded through

the character for expedition and justice which it gained under his rule that subordinate courts had to be created for its relief.

### **Concentration of secular and ecclesiastical power**

But not even with this concentration of authority in a single hand was Henry content. At the close of 1517 he procured from the Pope the Cardinal's appointment as Legate *a latere* in the realm. Such a Legate was entrusted with powers almost as full as those of the Pope himself; his jurisdiction extended over every bishop and priest, it overrode every privilege or exemption of abbey or cell, while his court superseded that of Rome as the final court of ecclesiastical appeal for the realm. Already wielding the full powers of secular justice in his capacity of Chancellor and of president of the royal Council, Wolsey wielded the full power of spiritual justice in his capacity of Legate. His elevation was no mere freak of royal favour; it was the result of a distinct policy. The moment had come when the Monarchy was to gather up all government into the personal grasp of the king. The checks which had been imposed on the action of the sovereign by the presence of great prelates and lords at his council were practically removed. His fellow-councillors learned to hold their peace when the haughty minister "clapped his rod on the board." The restraints of public justice were equally done away. Even the distant check of Rome was gone. All secular, all ecclesiastical power was summed up in a single hand. It was this concentration of authority in Wolsey which accustomed England to a system of personal government under Henry and his successors. It was the Cardinal's long tenure of the whole Papal authority within the realm, and the consequent suspension of appeals to Rome, that led men to acquiesce at a later time in Henry's own claim of religious supremacy. For proud as was Wolsey's bearing and high as were his natural powers he stood before England as the mere creature of the king. Greatness, wealth, authority he held, and owned he held, simply at the royal will. In raising his low-born favourite to the head of church and state Henry was gathering all religious as well as all civil authority into his personal grasp. The nation which trembled before Wolsey learned to tremble before the master who could destroy Wolsey with a breath.

### **Rivalry of Charles and Francis**

The rise of Charles of Austria gave a new turn to Wolsey's policy. Till now France had been a pressing danger, and the political scheme both of Henry and his minister lay in organizing leagues to check her greatness or in diverting her activity to the fields of Lombardy. But from the moment of Ferdinand's death this power of Francis was balanced by the power of Charles. Possessor of the Netherlands, of Franche Comté, of Spain, Charles already pressed France on its northern, eastern, and southern borders when the death of his grandfather Maximilian in the spring of 1519 added to his dominions the heritage of the House of Austria in Swabia and on the Danube. It did yet more for him in opening to him the Empire. The intrigues of Maximilian had secured for Charles promises of support from a majority of the Electors, and though Francis redoubled his efforts and Henry the Eighth sent an envoy to push his own succession, the cry of Germany for a German head carried all before it. In June 1519 Charles was elected Emperor; and France saw herself girt in on every side by a power whose greed was even greater than her own. For, boy of nineteen as he was, Charles from the first moment of his rule meant to make himself master of the world; and France, thrown suddenly on the defensive, nerved herself for the coming struggle. Both needed the gold and friendship of England. Convinced as he was of Henry's treachery in the Imperial election, where the English sovereign had promised Francis his support, the French king clung to the alliance which Wolsey in his uncertainty as to the actual drift of Charles had concluded in 1518, and pressed for an interview with Henry himself. But the need of France had woke dreams of more than mere safety or a balanced neutrality in Wolsey and his master. The time seemed come at last for a bolder game. The claim on the French crown had never been waived; the dream of recovering at least Guienne and Normandy still lived on in the hearts of English statesmen; and the subtle, unscrupulous youth who was now planning his blow for the mastery of the world knew well how to seize upon dreams such as these. Nor was Wolsey forgotten. If Henry coveted France, his minister coveted no less a prize than the Papacy; and the young Emperor was lavish of promises of support in any coming election. The result of his seductions was quickly seen. While Henry deferred the interview with Francis till the summer of 1520, Charles had already planned a meeting with his uncle in the opening of the year.

### **League with Charles**

What importance Charles attached to this meeting was seen in his leaving Spain ablaze with revolt behind him to keep his engagement. He landed at Dover in the end of May, and King and Emperor rode alone to Canterbury, but of the promises or pledges which passed we know little save from the after-course of English politics. Nothing could have differed more vividly from this simple ride than the interview with Francis which followed in June. A camp of three hundred white tents surrounded a faery palace with gilded posterns and brightly-coloured oriels which rose like a dream from the barren plain of Guisnes, its walls hung with tapestry, its roof embossed with roses, its golden fountain spouting wine over the greensward. But all this pomp and splendour, the chivalrous embraces and tourneys of the kings, the gorgeous entry of Wolsey in his crimson robe on a mule trapped with gold, the fresh treaty which ratified the alliance, hardly veiled the new English purpose. A second interview between Charles and his uncle as he returned from the meeting with Francis ended in a secret confederacy of the two sovereigns and the promise of the Emperor to marry his cousin, Henry's one child, Mary Tudor. With her hand passed the heritage of the English Crown. Henry had now ceased to hope for a son from Catharine, and Mary was his destined successor. Her right to the throne was asserted by a deed which proved how utterly the baronage now lay at the mercy of the king. The Duke of Buckingham stood first in blood as in power among the English nobles; he was the descendant of Edward the Third's youngest son, and if Mary's succession were denied he stood heir to the throne. His hopes had been fanned by prophets and astrologers, and wild words told his purpose to seize the crown on Henry's death in defiance of every opponent. But word and act had for two years been watched by the king; and in 1521 the Duke was arrested, condemned as a traitor by his peers, and beheaded on Tower Hill. His blood was a pledge of Henry's sincerity which Charles could not mistake. Francis on the other hand had never for a moment been deceived by the profuse assurances of friendship which the king and Wolsey lavished on him. A revolt of the Spanish towns offered a favourable opportunity for an attack on his rival, and a French army passed over the Pyrenees into Navarre while Francis himself prepared to invade the Netherlands. Both princes appealed for aid under their separate treaties to Henry; and the English sovereign, whom the quick stroke of the French had taken by surprise, could only gain time by a feigned mediation in which Wolsey visited both Emperor and King.

But at the close of the year England was at last ready for action, and Wolsey's solemn decision that Francis was the aggressor was followed in November by a secret league which was concluded at Calais between the Pope, the Emperor, and Henry.

### **Benevolences**

The conquest of the Milanese by the imperial generals turned at this moment the balance of the war, and as the struggle went on the accession of Venice and the lesser Italian republics, of the king of Hungary and Ferdinand of Austria, to whom Charles had ceded his share in the hereditary duchy of their house, to the alliance for the recovery of Italy from the French, threatened ruin to the cause of Francis. In real power however the two combatants were still fairly matched. If she stood alone, France was rich and compact, while her opponents were scattered, distracted by warring aims, and all equally poor. The wealth which had given Henry his weight in the counsels of Europe at the opening of his reign had been exhausted by his earlier wars, and Wolsey's economy had done nothing more than tide the crown through the past years of peace. But now that Henry had promised to raise forty thousand men for the coming campaign the ordinary resources of the treasury were utterly insufficient. With the instinct of despotism Wolsey shrank from reviving the tradition of the Parliament. Though Henry had thrice called the Houses together to supply the expenses of his earlier struggle with France his minister had governed through seven years of peace without once assembling them. War made a Parliament inevitable, but for a while Wolsey strove to delay its summons by a wide extension of the practice which Edward the Fourth had invented of raising money by gifts called "Benevolences," or by forced loans nominally to be repaid by a coming Parliament. Large sums were assessed upon every county. Twenty thousand pounds were exacted from London, and its wealthier citizens were summoned before the Cardinal and required to give an account of the value of their estates. Commissioners were sent into each shire for the purposes of assessment, and precepts were issued on their information, requiring in some cases supplies of soldiers, in others a tenth of a man's income, for the king's service. So poor however was the return that the Earl of Surrey, who was sent as general to Calais, could muster only a force of seventeen thousand men; and while Charles succeeded in driving the French from Milan, the English campaign

dwindled into a mere raid upon Picardy, from which the army fell back, broken with want and disease.

### **Wolsey and the Parliament**

The Cardinal was driven to call the Estates together in April 1523; and the conduct of the Commons showed how little the new policy of the Monarchy had as yet done to change the temper of the nation or to break its loyalty to the tradition of constitutional freedom. Wolsey needed the sum of eight hundred thousand pounds, and proposed to raise it by a property tax of twenty per cent. Such a demand was unprecedented, but the Cardinal counted on his presence to bear down all opposition, and made the demand in person. He was received with obstinate silence. It was in vain that he called on member after member to answer; and his appeal to More, who had been elected to fill the chair of the House of Commons, was met by the Speaker's falling on his knees and representing his powerlessness to reply till he had received instructions from the House itself. The effort to overawe the Commons had in fact failed, and Wolsey was forced to retire. He had no sooner withdrawn than an angry debate began, and the Cardinal returned to answer the objections which were raised to the subsidy. But the Commons again foiled the minister's attempt to influence their deliberations by refusing to discuss the matter in his presence. The struggle continued for a fortnight; and though successful in procuring a grant the court party were forced to content themselves with less than half of Wolsey's original demand. The Church displayed as independent a spirit. Wolsey's aim of breaking down constitutional traditions was shown, as in the case of the Commons, by his setting aside the old assembly of the provincial convocations, and as Legate summoning the clergy to meet in a national synod. But the clergy held as stubbornly to constitutional usage as the laity, and the Cardinal was forced to lay his demand before them in their separate convocations. Even here however the enormous grant he asked was disputed for four months, and the matter had at last to be settled by a compromise.

### **War with France**

It was plain that England was far from having sunk to a slavish submission to the monarchy. But galled as Wolsey was by the resistance, his mind was too full of vast schemes of foreign conquest to turn to any

resolute conflict with opposition at home. The treason of the Duke of Bourbon stirred a new hope of conquering France. Bourbon was Constable of France, the highest of the French nobles both from his blood and the almost independent power he wielded in his own duchy and in Provence. But a legal process by which Francis sought to recall his vast possessions to the domain of the crown threatened him with ruin; and driven to secret revolt, he pledged himself to rise against the king on the appearance of the allied armies in the heart of the realm. His offer was eagerly accepted, and so confident were the conspirators of success that they at once settled the division of their spoil. To Henry his hopes seemed at last near their realization; and while Burgundy fell naturally to Charles, his ally claimed what remained of France and the French crown. The departure of Francis with his army for Italy was to be the signal for the execution of the scheme, a joint army of English and Imperialists advancing to Bourbon's aid from the north while a force of Spaniards and Germans marched to the same point from the south. As the French troops moved to the Alps a German force penetrated in August into Lorraine, an English army disembarked at Calais, and a body of Spaniards descended from the Pyrenees. But at the moment of its realization the discovery of the plot and an order for his arrest foiled Bourbon's designs; and his precipitate flight threw these skilful plans into confusion. Francis remained in his realm. Though the army which he sent over the Alps was driven back from the walls of Milan it still held to Piedmont, while the allied force in northern France under the command of the Duke of Suffolk advanced to the Oise only to find itself unsupported and to fall hastily back, and the slow advance of the Spaniards frustrated the campaign in Guienne. In Scotland alone a gleam of success lighted on the English arms. At the close of the former war Albany had withdrawn to France and Margaret regained her power; but a quarrel both with her husband and the English king brought the queen-mother herself to invite the Duke to return. On the outbreak of the new struggle with Francis Henry at once insisted on his withdrawal, and though Albany marched on England with a large and well-equipped army, the threats of the English commander so wrought on him that he engaged to disband it and fled over sea. Henry and his sister drew together again; and Margaret announced that her son, James the Fifth, who had now reached his twelfth year, assumed the government as king, while Lord Surrey advanced across the border to support her against the

French party among the nobles. But the presence of an English army roused the whole people to arms. Albany was recalled; and Surrey saw himself forced to retreat while the Duke with sixty thousand men crossed the border and formed the siege of Wark. But again his cowardice ruined all. No sooner did Surrey, now heavily reinforced, advance to offer battle than Albany fell back to Lauder. Laying down the regency he set sail for France, and the resumption of her power by Margaret relieved England from its dread of a Scotch attack.

### **Henry and Charles**

Baffled as he had been, Henry still clung to his schemes of a French crown; and the defeat of the French army in Lombardy in 1524, the evacuation of Italy, and the advance of the Imperialist troops into France itself revived his hopes of success. Unable to set an army on foot in Picardy, he furnished the Emperor with supplies which enabled his troops to enter the south. But the selfish policy of Charles was at once shown by the siege of Marseilles. While Henry had gained nothing from the alliance Charles had gained the Milanese, and he was now preparing by the conquest of Provence and the Mediterranean coast to link his possessions in Italy with his possessions in Spain. Such a project was more practical and statesmanlike than the visions of a conquest of France; but it was not to further the Emperor's greatness that England had wasted money and men. Henry felt that he was tricked as he had been tricked in 1523. Then as now it was clearly the aim of Charles to humble Francis, but not to transfer the French crown to his English ally. Nor was the resentment of Wolsey at the Emperor's treachery less than that of the king. At the death of Leo the Tenth, as at the death of his successor, Charles had fulfilled his pledge to the Cardinal by directing his party in the Sacred College to support his choice. But secret directions counteracted the open ones; and Wolsey had seen the tutor of the Emperor, Adrian the Sixth, and his partizan, Clement the Seventh, successively raised to the papal chair. The eyes of both king and minister were at last opened, and Henry drew cautiously from his ally, suspending further payments to Bourbon's army, and opening secret negotiations with France. But the face of affairs was changed anew by the obstinate resistance of Marseilles, the ruin and retreat of the Imperialist forces, and the sudden advance of Francis with a new army over the Alps. Though Milan was saved from his grasp, the Imperial troops were surrounded

and besieged in Pavia. For three months they held stubbornly out, but famine at last forced them to a desperate resolve; and in February 1525, at a moment when the French army was weakened by the despatch of forces to Southern Italy, a sudden attack of the Imperialists ended in a crushing victory. The French were utterly routed and Francis himself remained a prisoner in the hands of the conquerors. The ruin as it seemed of France roused into fresh life the hopes of the English king. Again drawing closely to Charles he offered to join the Emperor in an invasion of France with forty thousand men, to head his own forces, and to furnish heavy subsidies for the cost of the war. Should the allies prove successful and Henry be crowned king of France, he pledged himself to cede to Bourbon Dauphiny and his duchy, to surrender Burgundy, Provence, and Languedoc to the Emperor, and to give Charles the hand of his daughter, Mary, and with it the heritage of two crowns which would in the end make him master of the world.

### **Resistance to Benevolences**

Though such a project seemed hardly perhaps as possible to Wolsey as to his master it served to test the sincerity of Charles in his adhesion to the alliance. But whether they were in earnest or no in proposing it, king and minister had alike to face the difficulty of an empty treasury. Money was again needed for action, but to obtain a new grant from Parliament was impossible, nor was Wolsey eager to meet fresh rebuffs from the spirit of the Commons or the clergy. He was driven once more to the system of Benevolences. In every county a tenth was demanded from the laity and a fourth from the clergy by the royal commissioners. But the demand was met by a general resistance. The political instinct of the nation discerned as of old that in the question of self-taxation was involved that of the very existence of freedom. The clergy put themselves in the forefront of the opposition, and preached from every pulpit that the commission was contrary to the liberties of the realm and that the king could take no man's goods but by process of law. Archbishop Warham, who was pressing the demand in Kent, was forced to write to the court that "there was sore grudging and murmuring among the people." "If men should give their goods by a commission," said the Kentish squires, "then it would be worse than the taxes of France, and England should be bond, not free." So stirred was the nation that Wolsey bent to the storm and offered to rely on the voluntary loans of each

subject. But the statute of Richard the Third which declared all exaction of Benevolences illegal was recalled to memory; the demand was evaded by London, and the Commissioners were driven out of Kent. A revolt actually broke out among the weavers of Suffolk; the men of Cambridge banded for resistance; the Norwich clothiers, though they yielded at first, soon threatened to rise. "Who is your captain?" the Duke of Norfolk asked the crowd. "His name is Poverty," was the answer, "for he and his cousin Necessity have brought us to this doing." There was in fact a general strike of the employers. Clothmakers discharged their workers, farmers put away their servants. "They say the King asketh so much that they be not able to do as they have done before this time." Such a peasant insurrection as was raging in Germany was only prevented by the unconditional withdrawal of the royal demand.

### **End of the Austrian Alliance**

The check was too rough a one not to rouse both Wolsey and the king. Henry was wroth at the need of giving way before rebels, and yet more wroth at the blow which the strife had dealt to the popularity on which he set so great a store. Wolsey was more keenly hurt by the overthrow of his hopes for a decisive campaign. Without money it was impossible to take advantage of the prostration of France or bring the Emperor to any serious effort for its subjection and partition. But Charles had no purpose in any case of playing the English game, or of carrying out the pledges by which he had lured England into war. He concluded an armistice with his prisoner, and used Wolsey's French negotiations in the previous year as a ground for evading fulfilment of his stipulations. The alliance was in fact at an end; and the schemes of winning anew "our inheritance of France" had ended in utter failure. So sharp a blow could hardly fail to shake Wolsey's power. The popular clamour against him on the score of the Benevolences found echoes at court; and it was only by a dexterous gift to Henry of his newly-built palace at Hampton Court that Wolsey again won his old influence over the king. Buried indeed as both Henry and his minister were in schemes of distant ambition, the sudden and general resistance of England woke them to an uneasy consciousness that their dream of uncontrolled authority was yet to find hindrances in the temper of the people they ruled. And at this moment a new and irresistible power began to quicken the national love of freedom and law. It was the influence of religion which was destined to ruin the fabric of

the Monarchy; and the year which saw the defeat of the Crown in its exaction of Benevolences saw the translation of the English Bible.

### **Luther**

While Charles and Francis were struggling for the lordship of the world, Germany had been shaken by the outburst of the Reformation. "That Luther has a fine genius!" laughed Leo the Tenth when he heard in 1517 that a German Professor had nailed some Propositions denouncing the abuse of Indulgences, or of the Papal power to remit certain penalties attached to the commission of sins, against the doors of a church at Wittemberg. But the "Quarrel of Friars," as the controversy was termed contemptuously at Rome, soon took larger proportions. If at the outset Luther flung himself "prostrate at the feet" of the Papacy and owned its voice as the voice of Christ, the sentence of Leo no sooner confirmed the doctrine of Indulgences than their opponent appealed to a future Council of the Church. In 1520 the rupture was complete. A Papal Bull formally condemned the errors of the Reformer, and Luther publicly consigned the Bull to the flames. A second condemnation expelled him from the bosom of the Church, and the ban of the Empire was soon added to that of the Papacy. Charles the Fifth had bought Leo's alliance with himself and England by a promise of repressing the new heresy; and its author was called to appear before him in a Diet at Worms. "Here stand I; I can none other," Luther replied to the young Emperor as he pressed him to recant; and from a hiding-place in the Thuringian forest where he was sheltered after his condemnation by the Elector of Saxony he denounced not merely, as at first, the abuses of the Papacy, but the Papacy itself. The heresies of Wyclif were revived; the infallibility, the authority of the Roman See, the truth of its doctrines, the efficacy of its worship, were denied and scoffed at in vigorous pamphlets which issued from his retreat and were dispersed throughout the world by the new printing-press. Germany welcomed them with enthusiasm. Its old resentment against the oppression of Rome, the moral revolt in its more religious minds against the secularity and corruption of the Church, the disgust of the New Learning at the superstition which the Papacy now formally protected, combined to secure for Luther a widespread popularity and the protection of the northern princes of the Empire.

### **Luther and the New Learning**

In England his protest seemed at first to find no echo. The king himself was both on political and religious grounds firm on the Papal side. England and Rome were drawn to a close alliance by the identity of their political position. Each was hard pressed between the same great powers; Rome had to hold its own between the masters of southern and the masters of northern Italy, as England had to hold her own between the rulers of France and of the Netherlands. From the outset of his reign to the actual break with Clement the Seventh the policy of Henry is always at one with that of the Papacy. Nor were the king's religious tendencies hostile to it. He was a trained theologian and proud of his theological knowledge, but to the end his convictions remained firmly on the side of the doctrines which Luther denied. In 1521 therefore he entered the lists against Luther with an "Assertion of the Seven Sacraments" for which he was rewarded by Leo with the title of "Defender of the Faith." The insolent abuse of the Reformer's answer called More and Fisher into the field. The influence of the New Learning was now strong at the English Court. Colet and Grocyn were among its foremost preachers; Linacre was Henry's physician; More was a privy councillor; Pace was one of the Secretaries of State; Tunstall was Master of the Rolls. And as yet the New Learning, though scared by Luther's intemperate language, had steadily backed him in his struggle. Erasmus pleaded for him with the Emperor. Ulrich von Hutten attacked the friars in satires and invectives as violent as his own. But the temper of the Renaissance was even more antagonistic to the temper of Luther than that of Rome itself. From the golden dream of a new age wrought peaceably and purely by the slow progress of intelligence, the growth of letters, the development of human virtue, the Reformer of Wittemberg turned away with horror. He had little or no sympathy with the new culture. He despised reason as heartily as any Papal dogmatist could despise it. He hated the very thought of toleration or comprehension. He had been driven by a moral and intellectual compulsion to declare the Roman system a false one, but it was only to replace it by another system of doctrine just as elaborate, and claiming precisely the same infallibility. To degrade human nature was to attack the very base of the New Learning; and his attack on it called the foremost of its teachers to the field. But Erasmus no sooner advanced to its defence than Luther declared man to be utterly enslaved by original sin and incapable through any efforts of his own of discovering truth or of arriving at goodness.

Such a doctrine not only annihilated the piety and wisdom of the classic past, from which the New Learning had drawn its larger views of life and of the world; it trampled in the dust reason itself, the very instrument by which More and Erasmus hoped to regenerate both knowledge and religion. To More especially, with his keener perception of its future effect, this sudden revival of a purely theological and dogmatic spirit, severing Christendom into warring camps and ruining all hopes of union and tolerance, was especially hateful. The temper which hitherto had seemed so “endearing, gentle, and happy,” suddenly gave way. His reply to Luther’s attack upon the king sank to the level of the work it answered; and though that of Bishop Fisher was calmer and more argumentative the divorce of the New Learning from the Reformation seemed complete.

### **Tyndale**

But if the world of scholars and thinkers stood aloof from the new movement it found a warmer welcome in the larger world where men are stirred rather by emotion than by thought. There was an England of which even More and Colet knew little in which Luther’s words kindled a fire that was never to die. As a great social and political movement Lollardry had ceased to exist, and little remained of the directly religious impulse given by Wyclif beyond a vague restlessness and discontent with the system of the Church. But weak and fitful as was the life of Lollardry the prosecutions whose records lie scattered over the bishops’ registers failed wholly to kill it. We see groups meeting here and there to read “in a great book of heresy all one night certain chapters of the Evangelists in English,” while transcripts of Wyclif’s tracts passed from hand to hand. The smouldering embers needed but a breath to fan them into flame, and the breath came from William Tyndale. Born among the Cotswolds when Bosworth Field gave England to the Tudors, Tyndale passed from Oxford to Cambridge to feel the full impulse given by the appearance there of the New Testament of Erasmus. From that moment one thought was at his heart. He “perceived by experience how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother-tongue.” “If God spare my life,” he said to a learned controversialist, “ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the scripture than thou dost.” But he was a man of forty before his dream became fact. Drawn from his

retirement in Gloucestershire by the news of Luther's protest at Wittemberg, he found shelter for a year with a London Alderman, Humfrey Monmouth. "He studied most part of the day at his book," said his host afterwards, "and would eat but sodden meat by his good will and drink but small single beer." The book at which he studied was the Bible. But it was soon needful to quit England if his purpose was to hold. "I understood at the last not only that there was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England." From Hamburg, where he took refuge in 1524, he probably soon found his way to the little town which had suddenly become the sacred city of the Reformation. Students of all nations were flocking there with an enthusiasm which resembled that of the Crusades. "As they came in sight of the town," a contemporary tells us, "they returned thanks to God with clasped hands, for from Wittemberg, as heretofore from Jerusalem, the light of evangelical truth had spread to the utmost parts of the earth."

### **Translation of the Bible**

Such a visit could only fire Tyndale to face the "poverty, exile, bitter absence from friends, hunger and thirst and cold, great dangers, and innumerable other hard and sharp fightings," which the work he had set himself was to bring with it. In 1525 his version of the New Testament was completed, and means were furnished by English merchants for printing it at Köln. But Tyndale had soon to fly with his sheets to Worms, a city whose Lutheran tendencies made it a safer refuge, and it was from Worms that six thousand copies of the New Testament were sent in 1526 to English shores. The king was keenly opposed to a book which he looked on as made "at the solicitation and instance of Luther"; and even the men of the New Learning from whom it might have hoped for welcome were estranged from it by its Lutheran origin. We can only fairly judge their action by viewing it in the light of the time. What Warham and More saw over sea might well have turned them from a movement which seemed breaking down the very foundations of religion and society. Not only was the fabric of the Church rent asunder and the centre of Christian unity denounced as "Babylon," but the reform itself seemed passing into anarchy. Luther was steadily moving onward from the denial of one Catholic dogma to that of another; and what Luther still clung to his followers were ready to fling away. Carlstadt was

denouncing the reformer of Wittemberg as fiercely as Luther himself had denounced the Pope, and meanwhile the religious excitement was kindling wild dreams of social revolution, and men stood aghast at the horrors of a Peasant-War which broke out in Southern Germany. It was not therefore as a mere translation of the Bible that Tyndale's work reached England. It came as a part of the Lutheran movement, and it bore the Lutheran stamp in its version of ecclesiastical words. "Church" became "congregation," "priest" was changed into "elder." It came too in company with Luther's bitter invectives and reprints of the tracts of Wyclif, which the German traders of the Steelyard were importing in large numbers. We can hardly wonder that More denounced the book as heretical, or that Warham ordered it to be given up by all who possessed it.

### **Wolsey and Lutheranism**

Wolsey took little heed of religious matters, but his policy was one of political adhesion to Rome, and he presided over a solemn penance to which some Steelyard men submitted in St. Paul's. "With six and thirty abbots, mitred priors, and bishops, and he in his whole pomp mitred" the Cardinal looked on while "great baskets full of books ... were commanded after the great fire was made before the Rood of Northen," the crucifix by the great north door of the cathedral, "thus to be burned, and those heretics to go thrice about the fire and to cast in their fagots." But scenes and denunciations such as these were vain in the presence of an enthusiasm which grew every hour. "Englishmen," says a scholar of the time, "were so eager for the gospel as to affirm that they would buy a New Testament even if they had to give a hundred thousand pieces of money for it." Bibles and pamphlets were smuggled over to England and circulated among the poorer and trading classes through the agency of an association of "Christian Brethren," consisting principally of London tradesmen and citizens, but whose missionaries spread over the country at large. They found their way at once to the Universities, where the intellectual impulse given by the New Learning was quickening religious speculation. Cambridge had already won a name for heresy; Barnes, one of its foremost scholars, had to carry his fagot before Wolsey at St. Paul's; two other Cambridge teachers, Bilney and Latimer, were already known as "Lutherans." The Cambridge scholars whom Wolsey introduced into Cardinal College which he was founding spread the

contagion through Oxford. A group of “Brethren” was formed in Cardinal College for the secret reading and discussion of the Epistles; and this soon included the more intelligent and learned scholars of the University. It was in vain that Clark, the centre of this group, strove to dissuade fresh members from joining it by warnings of the impending dangers. “I fell down on my knees at his feet,” says one of them, Anthony Dalaber, “and with tears and sighs besought him that for the tender mercy of God he should not refuse me, saying that I trusted verily that he who had begun this on me would not forsake me, but would give me grace to continue therein to the end. When he heard me say so he came to me, took me in his arms, and kissed me, saying, ‘The Lord God Almighty grant you so to do, and from henceforth ever take me for your father, and I will take you for my son in Christ.’”

### **Latimer**

In 1528 the excitement which followed on this rapid diffusion of Tyndale’s works forced Wolsey to more vigorous action; many of the Oxford Brethren were thrown into prison and their books seized. But in spite of the panic of the Protestants, some of whom fled over sea, little severity was really exercised. Henry’s chief anxiety indeed was lest in the outburst against heresy the interest of the New Learning should suffer harm. This was remarkably shown in the protection he extended to one who was destined to eclipse even the fame of Colet as a popular preacher. Hugh Latimer was the son of a Leicestershire yeoman, whose armour the boy had buckled on in Henry the Seventh’s days ere he set out to meet the Cornish insurgents at Blackheath field. Latimer has himself described the soldierly training of his youth. “My father was delighted to teach me to shoot with the bow. He taught me how to draw, how to lay my body to the bow, not to draw with strength of arm as other nations do but with the strength of the body.” At fourteen he was at Cambridge, flinging himself into the New Learning which was winning its way there with a zeal that at last told on his physical strength. The ardour of his mental efforts left its mark on him in ailments and enfeebled health from which, vigorous as he was, his frame never wholly freed itself. But he was destined to be known, not as a scholar, but as a preacher. In his addresses from the pulpit the sturdy good sense of the man shook off the pedantry of the schools as well as the subtlety of the theologian. He had little turn for speculation, and in the religious changes

of the day we find him constantly lagging behind his brother reformers. But he had the moral earnestness of a Jewish prophet, and his denunciations of wrong had a prophetic directness and fire. "Have pity on your soul," he cried to Henry, "and think that the day is even at hand when you shall give an account of your office, and of the blood that hath been shed by your sword." His irony was yet more telling than his invective. "I would ask you a strange question," he said once at Paul's Cross to a ring of Bishops; "who is the most diligent prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing of his office? I will tell you. It is the Devil! of all the pack of them that have cure, the Devil shall go for my money; for he ordereth his business. Therefore, you unpreaching prelates, learn of the Devil to be diligent in your office. If you will not learn of God, for shame learn of the Devil." But Latimer was far from limiting himself to invective. His homely humour breaks in with story and apologue; his earnestness is always tempered with good sense; his plain and simple style quickens with a shrewd mother-wit. He talks to his hearers as a man talks to his friends, telling stories such as we have given of his own life at home, or chatting about the changes and chances of the day with a transparent simplicity and truth that raises even his chat into grandeur. His theme is always the actual world about him, and in his simple lessons of loyalty, of industry, of pity for the poor, he touches upon almost every subject from the plough to the throne. No such preaching had been heard in England before his day, and with the growth of his fame grew the danger of persecution. There were moments when, bold as he was, Latimer's heart failed him. "If I had not trust that God will help me," he wrote once, "I think the ocean sea would have divided my Lord of London and me by this day." A citation for heresy at last brought the danger home. "I intend," he wrote with his peculiar medley of humour and pathos, "to make merry with my parishioners this Christmas, for all the sorrow, lest perchance I may never return to them again." But he was saved throughout by the steady protection of the Court. Wolsey upheld him against the threats of the Bishop of Ely; Henry made him his own chaplain; and the king's interposition at this critical moment forced Latimer's judges to content themselves with a few vague words of submission.

### **Anne Boleyn**

What really sheltered the reforming movement was Wolsey's indifference to all but political matters. In spite of the foundation of Cardinal College in which he was now engaged, and of the suppression of some lesser monasteries for its endowment, the men of the New Learning looked on him as really devoid of any interest in the revival of letters or in their hopes of a general enlightenment. He took hardly more heed of the new Lutheranism. His mind had no religious turn, and the quarrel of faiths was with him simply one factor in the political game which he was carrying on and which at this moment became more complex and absorbing than ever. The victory of Pavia had ruined that system of balance which Henry the Seventh and in his earlier days Henry the Eighth had striven to preserve. But the ruin had not been to England's profit, but to the profit of its ally. While the Emperor stood supreme in Europe Henry had won nothing from the war, and it was plain that Charles meant him to win nothing. He set aside all projects of a joint invasion; he broke his pledge to wed Mary Tudor and married a princess of Portugal; he pressed for a peace with France which would give him Burgundy. It was time for Henry and his minister to change their course. They resolved to withdraw from all active part in the rivalry of the two powers. In June, 1525, a treaty was secretly concluded with France. But Henry remained on fair terms with the Emperor; and though England joined the Holy League for the deliverance of Italy from the Spaniards which was formed between France, the Pope, and the lesser Italian states on the release of Francis in the spring of 1526 by virtue of a treaty which he at once repudiated, she took no part in the lingering war which went on across the Alps. Charles was too prudent to resent Henry's alliance with his foes, and from this moment the country remained virtually at peace. No longer spurred by the interest of great events, the king ceased to take a busy part in foreign politics, and gave himself to hunting and sport. Among the fairest and gayest ladies of his court stood Anne Boleyn. She was sprung of a merchant family which had but lately risen to distinction through two great marriages, that of her grandfather with the heiress of the Earls of Ormond, and that of her father, Sir Thomas Boleyn, with a sister of the Duke of Norfolk. It was probably through his kinship with the Duke, who was now Lord Treasurer and high in the king's confidence, that Boleyn was employed throughout Henry's reign in state business, and his diplomatic abilities had secured his appointment as envoy both to France and to the Emperor. His son,

George Boleyn, a man of culture and a poet, was among the group of young courtiers in whose society Henry took most pleasure. Anne was his youngest daughter; born in 1507, she was still but a girl of fifteen when the outbreak of war drew her from a stay in France to the English court. Her beauty was small, but her bright eyes, her flowing hair, her gaiety and wit, soon won favour with the king, and only a month after her return in 1522 the grant of honours to her father marked her influence over Henry. Fresh gifts in the following years showed that the favour continued; but in 1524 a new colour was given to this intimacy by a resolve on the king's part to break his marriage with the queen. Catharine had now reached middle age; her personal charms had departed. The death of every child save Mary may have woke scruples as to the lawfulness of a marriage on which a curse seemed to rest; the need of a male heir for public security may have deepened this impression. But whatever were the grounds of his action we find Henry from this moment pressing the Roman See to grant him a divorce.

### **The Divorce**

It is probable that the matter was already mooted in 1525, a year which saw new proof of Anne's influence in the elevation of Sir Thomas Boleyn to the baronage as Lord Rochford. It is certain that it was the object of secret negotiation with the Pope in 1526. No sovereign stood higher in the favour of Rome than Henry, whose alliance had ever been ready in its distress and who was even now prompt with aid in money. But Clement's consent to his wish meant a break with the Emperor, Catharine's nephew; and the exhaustion of France, the weakness of the league in which the lesser Italian states strove to maintain their independence against Charles after the battle of Pavia, left the Pope at the Emperor's mercy. While the English envoy was mooting the question of divorce in 1526 the surprise of Rome by an Imperial force brought home to Clement his utter helplessness. It is hard to discover what part Wolsey had as yet taken in the matter or whether as in other cases Henry had till now been acting alone, though the Cardinal himself tells us that on Catharine's first discovery of the intrigue she attributed the proposal of divorce to "my procurement and setting forth." But from this point his intervention is clear. As legate he took cognizance of all matrimonial causes, and in May 1527 a collusive action was brought in his court against Henry for cohabiting with his brother's wife. The king appeared

by proctor; but the suit was suddenly dropped. Secret as were the proceedings, they had now reached Catharine's ear; and as she refused to admit the facts on which Henry rested his case her appeal would have carried the matter to the tribunal of the Pope, and Clement's decision could hardly be a favourable one.

### **Wolsey and the Divorce**

The Pope was now in fact a prisoner in the Emperor's hands. At the very moment of the suit Rome was stormed and sacked by the army of the Duke of Bourbon. "If the Pope's holiness fortune either to be slain or taken," Wolsey wrote to the king when the news of this event reached England, "it shall not a little hinder your Grace's affairs." But it was needful for the Cardinal to find some expedient to carry out the king's will, for the group around Anne were using her skilfully for their purposes. A great party had now gathered to her support. Her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, an able and ambitious man, counted on her rise to set him at the head of the council-board; the brilliant group of young courtiers to which her brother belonged saw in her success their own elevation; and the Duke of Suffolk with the bulk of the nobles hoped through her means to bring about the ruin of the statesman before whom they trembled. What most served their plans was the growth of Henry's passion. "If it please you," the king wrote at this time to Anne Boleyn, "to do the office of a true, loyal mistress, and give yourself body and heart to me, who have been and mean to be your loyal servant, I promise you not only the name but that I shall make you my sole mistress, remove all others from my affection, and serve you only." What stirred Henry's wrath most was Catharine's "stiff and obstinate" refusal to bow to his will. Wolsey's advice that "your Grace should handle her both gently and doulcely" only goaded Henry's impatience. He lent an ear to the rivals who charged his minister with slackness in the cause, and danger drove the Cardinal to a bolder and yet more unscrupulous device. The entire subjection of Italy to the Emperor was drawing closer the French alliance; and a new treaty had been concluded in April. But this had hardly been signed when the sack of Rome and the danger of the Pope called for bolder measures. Wolsey was despatched on a solemn embassy to Francis to promise an English subsidy on the despatch of a French army across the Alps. But he aimed at turning the Pope's situation to the profit of the divorce. Clement was virtually a prisoner in the Castle

of St. Angelo; and as it was impossible for him to fulfil freely the function of a Pope, Wolsey proposed in conjunction with Francis to call a meeting of the College of Cardinals at Avignon which should exercise the papal powers till Clement's liberation. As Wolsey was to preside over this assembly, it would be easy to win from it a favourable answer to Henry's request.

### **The Legatine Commission**

But Clement had no mind to surrender his power, and secret orders from the Pope prevented the Italian Cardinals from attending such an assembly. Nor was Wolsey more fortunate in another plan for bringing about the same end by inducing Clement to delegate to him his full powers westward of the Alps. Henry's trust in him was fast waning before these failures and the steady pressure of his rivals at court, and the coldness of the king on his return in September was an omen of his minister's fall. Henry was in fact resolved to take his own course; and while Wolsey sought from the Pope a commission enabling him to try the case in his legatine court and pronounce the marriage null and void by sentence of law, Henry had determined at the suggestion of the Boleyns and apparently of Thomas Cranmer, a Cambridge scholar who was serving as their chaplain, to seek without Wolsey's knowledge from Clement either his approval of a divorce, or if a divorce could not be obtained a dispensation to re-marry without any divorce at all. For some months his envoys could find no admission to the Pope; and though in December Clement succeeded in escaping to Orvieto and drew some courage from the entry of the French army into Italy, his temper was still too timid to venture on any decided course. He refused the dispensation altogether. Wolsey's proposal for leaving the matter to a legatine court found better favour; but when the commission reached England it was found to be "of no effect or authority." What Henry wanted was not merely a divorce but the express sanction of the Pope to his divorce, and this Clement steadily evaded. A fresh embassy with Wolsey's favourite and secretary, Stephen Gardiner, at its head reached Orvieto in March 1528 to find in spite of Gardiner's threats hardly better success; but Clement at last consented to a legatine commission for the trial of the case in England. In this commission Cardinal Campeggio, who was looked upon as a partisan of the English king, was joined with Wolsey.

### **The Papal difficulties**

Great as the concession seemed, this gleam of success failed to hide from the minister the dangers which gathered round him. The great nobles whom he had practically shut out from the king's counsels were longing for his fall. The Boleyns and the young courtiers looked on him as cool in Anne's cause. He was hated alike by men of the old doctrine and men of the new. The clergy had never forgotten his extortions, the monks saw him suppressing small monasteries. The foundation of Cardinal College failed to reconcile to him the scholars of the New Learning; their poet, Skelton, was among his bitterest assailants. The Protestants, goaded by the persecution of this very year, hated him with a deadly hatred. His French alliances, his declaration of war with the Emperor, hindered the trade with Flanders and secured the hostility of the merchant class. The country at large, galled with murrain and famine and panic-struck by an outbreak of the sweating sickness which carried off two thousand in London alone, laid all its suffering at the door of the Cardinal. And now that Henry's mood itself became uncertain Wolsey knew his hour was come. Were the marriage once made, he told the French ambassador, and a male heir born to the realm, he would withdraw from state affairs and serve God for the rest of his life. But the divorce had still to be brought about ere marriage could be made or heir be born. Henry indeed had seized on the grant of a commission as if the matter were at an end. Anne Boleyn was installed in the royal palace, and honoured with the state of a wife. The new legate, Campeggio, held the bishoprick of Salisbury, and had been asked for as judge from the belief that he would favour the king's cause. But he bore secret instructions from the Pope to bring about if possible a reconciliation between Henry and the queen, and in no case to pronounce sentence without reference to Rome. The slowness of his journey presaged ill; he did not reach England till the end of September, and a month was wasted in vain efforts to bring Henry to a reconciliation or Catharine to retirement into a monastery. A new difficulty disclosed itself in the supposed existence of a brief issued by Pope Julius and now in the possession of the Emperor, which overruled all the objections to the earlier dispensation on which Henry relied. The hearing of the cause was delayed through the winter, while new embassies strove to induce Clement to declare this brief also invalid. Not only was such a demand glaringly unjust, but the progress of the Imperial arms brought vividly home to the Pope its injustice. The danger which he feared was not merely a danger to his temporal domain

in Italy. It was a danger to the Papacy itself. It was in vain that new embassies threatened Clement with the loss of his spiritual power over England. To break with the Emperor was to risk the loss of his spiritual power over a far larger world. Charles had already consented to the suspension of the judgement of his diet at Worms, a consent which gave security to the new Protestantism in North Germany. If he burned heretics in the Netherlands, he employed them in his armies. Lutheran soldiers had played their part in the sack of Rome. Lutheranism had spread from North Germany along the Rhine, it was now pushing fast into the hereditary possessions of the Austrian House, it had all but mastered the Low Countries. France itself was mined with heresy; and were Charles once to give way, the whole continent would be lost to Rome.

### **The Trial of the Divorce**

Amidst difficulties such as these the Papal court saw no course open save one of delay. But the long delay told fatally for Wolsey's fortunes. Even Clement blamed him for having hindered Henry from judging the matter in his own realm and marrying on the sentence of his own courts, and the Boleyns naturally looked upon his policy as dictated by hatred to Anne. Norfolk and the great peers took courage from the bitter tone of the girl; and Henry himself charged the Cardinal with a failure in fulfilling the promises he had made him. King and minister still clung indeed passionately to their hopes from Rome. But in 1529 Charles met their pressure with a pressure of his own; and the progress of his arms decided Clement to avoke the cause to Rome. Wolsey could only hope to anticipate this decision by pushing the trial hastily forward, and at the end of May the two Legates opened their court in the great hall of the Blackfriars. King and queen were cited to appear before them when the court again met on the eighteenth of June. Henry briefly announced his resolve to live no longer in mortal sin. The queen offered an appeal to Clement, and on the refusal of the Legates to admit it flung herself at Henry's feet. "Sire," said Catharine, "I beseech you to pity me, a woman and a stranger, without an assured friend and without an indifferent counsellor. I take God to witness that I have always been to you a true and loyal wife, that I have made it my constant duty to seek your pleasure, that I have loved all whom you loved, whether I have reason or not, whether they are friends to me or foes. I have been your wife for

years; I have brought you many children. God knows that when I came to your bed I was a virgin, and I put it to your own conscience to say whether it was not so. If there be any offence which can be alleged against me I consent to depart with infamy; if not, then I pray you to do me justice.” The piteous appeal was wasted on a king who was already entertaining Anne Boleyn with royal state in his own palace; the trial proceeded, and on the twenty-third of July the court assembled to pronounce sentence. Henry’s hopes were at their highest when they were suddenly dashed to the ground. At the opening of the proceedings Campeggio rose to declare the court adjourned to the following October.

### **Henry’s wrath**

The adjournment was a mere evasion. The pressure of the Imperialists had at last forced Clement to summon the cause to his own tribunal at Rome, and the jurisdiction of the Legates was at an end. “Now see I,” cried the Duke of Suffolk as he dashed his hand on the table, “that the old saw is true, that there was never Legate or Cardinal that did good to England!” The Duke only echoed his master’s wrath. Through the twenty years of his reign Henry had known nothing of opposition to his will. His imperious temper had chafed at the weary negotiations, the subterfuges and perfidies of the Pope. Though the commission was his own device, his pride must have been sorely galled by the summons to the Legates’ court. The warmest adherents of the older faith revolted against the degradation of the crown. “It was the strangest and newest sight and device,” says Cavendish, “that ever we read or heard of in any history or chronicle in any region that a King and Queen should be convented and constrained by process compellatory to appear in any court as common persons, within their own realm and dominion, to abide the judgement and decree of their own subjects, having the royal diadem and prerogative thereof.” Even this degradation had been borne in vain. Foreign and Papal tribunal as that of the Legates really was, it lay within Henry’s kingdom and had the air of an English court. But the citation to Rome was a summons to the king to plead in a court without his realm. Wolsey had himself warned Clement of the hopelessness of expecting Henry to submit to such humiliation as this. “If the King be cited to appear in person or by proxy and his prerogative be interfered with, none of his subjects will tolerate the insult.... To cite the King to Rome, to threaten him with excommunication, is no more tolerable than to deprive

him of his royal dignity.... If he were to appear in Italy it would be at the head of a formidable army.” But Clement had been deaf to the warning, and the case had been avoked out of the realm.

### **Wolsey’s fall**

Henry’s wrath fell at once on Wolsey. Whatever furtherance or hindrance the Cardinal had given to his re-marriage, it was Wolsey who had dissuaded him from acting at the first independently, from conducting the cause in his own courts and acting on the sentence of his own judges. Whether to secure the succession by a more indisputable decision or to preserve uninjured the prerogatives of the Papal See, it was Wolsey who had counselled him to seek a divorce from Rome and promised him success in his suit. And in this counsel Wolsey stood alone. Even Clement had urged the king to carry out his original purpose when it was too late. All that the Pope sought was to be freed from the necessity of meddling in the matter at all. It was Wolsey who had forced Papal intervention on him, as he had forced it on Henry, and the failure of his plans was fatal to him. From the close of the Legatine court Henry would see him no more, and his favourite, Stephen Gardiner, who had become chief Secretary of State, succeeded him in the king’s confidence. If Wolsey still remained minister for a while, it was because the thread of the complex foreign negotiations which he was conducting could not be roughly broken. Here too however failure awaited him. His diplomacy sought to bring fresh pressure on the Pope and to provide a fresh check on the Emperor by a closer alliance with France. But Francis was anxious to recover his children who had remained as hostages for his return; he was weary of the long struggle, and hopeless of aid from his Italian allies. At this crisis of his fate therefore Wolsey saw himself deceived and outwitted by the conclusion of peace between France and the Emperor in a new treaty at Cambray. Not only was his French policy no longer possible, but a reconciliation with Charles was absolutely needful, and such a reconciliation could only be brought about by Wolsey’s fall. In October, on the very day that the Cardinal took his place with a haughty countenance and all his former pomp in the Court of Chancery, an indictment was preferred against him by the king’s attorney for receiving bulls from Rome in violation of the Statute of Præmunire. A few days later he was deprived of the seals. Wolsey was prostrated by the blow. In a series of abject appeals he offered to give up everything

that he possessed if the king would but cease from his displeasure. "His face," wrote the French ambassador, "is dwindled to half its natural size. In truth his misery is such that his enemies, Englishmen as they are, cannot help pitying him." For the moment Henry seemed contented with his disgrace. A thousand boats full of Londoners covered the Thames to see the Cardinal's barge pass to the Tower, but he was permitted to retire to Esher. Although judgement of forfeiture and imprisonment was given against him in the King's Bench at the close of October, in the following February he received a pardon on surrender of his vast possessions to the Crown and was permitted to withdraw to his diocese of York, the one dignity he had been suffered to retain.

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**CHAPTER IV**  
**THOMAS CROMWELL**  
**1529-1540**

**The new Despotism**

The ten years which follow the fall of Wolsey are among the most momentous in our history. The Monarchy at last realized its power, and the work for which Wolsey had paved the way was carried out with a terrible thoroughness. The one great institution which could still offer resistance to the royal will was struck down. The Church became a mere instrument of the central despotism. The people learned their helplessness in rebellions easily suppressed and avenged with ruthless severity. A reign of terror, organized with consummate and merciless skill, held England panic-stricken at Henry's feet. The noblest heads rolled from the block. Virtue and learning could not save Thomas More; royal descent could not save Lady Salisbury. The putting away of one queen, the execution of another, taught England that nothing was too high for Henry's "courage" or too sacred for his "appetite." Parliament assembled only to sanction acts of unscrupulous tyranny, or to build up by its own statutes the fabric of absolute rule. All the constitutional safeguards of English freedom were swept away. Arbitrary taxation, arbitrary legislation, arbitrary imprisonment were powers claimed without dispute and unsparingly used by the Crown.

The history of this great revolution, for it is nothing less, is the history of a single man. In the whole line of English statesmen there is no one of whom we would willingly know so much, no one of whom we really know so little, as of Thomas Cromwell. When he meets us in Henry's service he had already passed middle life; and during his earlier years it is hardly possible to do more than disentangle a few fragmentary facts from the mass of fable which gathered round them. His youth was one of roving adventure. Whether he was the son of a poor blacksmith at Putney or no, he could hardly have been more than a boy when he was engaged in the service of the Marchioness of Dorset, and he must still have been young when he took part as a common soldier in the wars of Italy, a "ruffian," as he owned afterwards to Cranmer, in the most

unscrupulous school the world contained. But it was a school in which he learned lessons even more dangerous than those of the camp. He not only mastered the Italian language but drank in the manners and tone of the Italy around him, the Italy of the Borgias and the Medici. It was with Italian versatility that he turned from the camp to the counting-house; he was certainly engaged as a commercial agent to one of the Venetian traders; tradition finds him as a clerk at Antwerp; and in 1512 history at last encounters him as a thriving wool merchant at Middelburg in Zeeland.

### **Cromwell and Wolsey**

Returning to England, Cromwell continued to amass wealth as years went on by adding the trade of scrivener, something between that of a banker and attorney, to his other occupations, as well as by advancing money to the poorer nobles; and on the outbreak of the second war with France we find him a busy and influential member of the Commons in Parliament. Five years later, in 1528, the aim of his ambition was declared by his entering into Wolsey's service. The Cardinal needed a man of business for the suppression of the smaller monasteries which he had undertaken as well as for the transfer of their revenues to his foundations at Oxford and Ipswich, and he showed his usual skill in the choice of men by finding such an agent in Cromwell. The task was an unpopular one, and it was carried out with a rough indifference to the feelings it aroused which involved Cromwell in the hate that was gathering round his master. But his wonderful self-reliance and sense of power only broke upon the world at Wolsey's fall. Of the hundreds of dependants who waited on the Cardinal's nod, Cromwell, hated and in danger as he must have known himself to be, was the only one who clung to his master at the last. In the lonely hours of his disgrace at Esher Wolsey "made his moan unto Master Cromwell, who comforted him the best he could, and desired my Lord to give him leave to go to London, where he would make or mar, which was always his common saying." His plan was to purchase not only his master's safety but his own. Wolsey was persuaded to buy off the hostility of the courtiers by giving his personal confirmation to the prodigal grants of pensions and annuities which had been already made from his revenues, while Cromwell acquired importance as the go-between in these transactions. "Then began both noblemen and others who had patents from the King," for

grants from the Cardinal's estate, "to make earnest suit to Master Cromwell for to solicit their causes, and for his pains therein they promised not only to reward him, but to show him such pleasure as should be in their power." But if Cromwell showed his consummate craft in thus serving himself as well as his master, he can have had no personal reasons for the stand he made in the Parliament which was summoned in November against a bill for disqualifying the Cardinal for all after employment, which was introduced by Norfolk and More. It was by Cromwell that this was defeated and it was by him that the negotiations were conducted which permitted the fallen minister to withdraw pardoned to York.

A general esteem seems to have rewarded this rare instance of fidelity to a ruined patron. "For his honest behaviour in his master's cause he was esteemed the most faithfullest servant, and was of all men greatly commended." Cromwell however had done more than save himself from ruin. The negotiations for Wolsey's pensions had given him access to the king, and "by his witty demeanour he grew continually in the King's favour." But the favour had been won by more than "witty demeanour." In a private interview with Henry Cromwell boldly advised him to cut the knot of the divorce by the simple exercise of his own supremacy. The advice struck the key-note of the later policy by which the daring counsellor was to change the whole face of Church and State; but Henry still clung to the hopes held out by the new ministers who had followed Wolsey, and shrank perhaps as yet from the bare absolutism to which Cromwell called him. The advice at any rate was concealed; and, though high in the king's favour, his new servant waited patiently the progress of events.

### **The Howards**

The first result of Wolsey's fall was a marked change in the system of administration. Both the Tudor kings had carried on their government mainly through the agency of great ecclesiastics. Archbishop Morton and Bishop Fox had been successively ministers of Henry the Seventh. Wolsey had been the minister of Henry the Eighth. But with the ruin of the Cardinal the rule of the churchmen ceased. The seals were given to Sir Thomas More. The real direction of affairs lay in the hands of two great nobles, of the Duke of Suffolk who was President of the Council, and of the Lord Treasurer, Thomas Howard, the Duke of Norfolk. From

this hour to the close of the age of the Tudors the Howards were to play a prominent part in English history. They had originally sprung from the circle of lawyers who rose to wealth and honour through their employment by the Crown. Their earliest known ancestor was a judge under Edward the First; and his descendants remained wealthy landowners in the eastern counties till early in the fifteenth century they were suddenly raised to distinction by the marriage of Sir Robert Howard with a wife who became heiress of the houses of Arundel and Norfolk, the Fitz-Alans and the Mowbrays. John Howard, the issue of this marriage, was a prominent Yorkist and stood high in the favour of the Yorkist kings. He was one of the councillors of Edward the Fourth, and received from Richard the Third the old dignities of the house of Mowbray, the office of Earl Marshal and the Dukedom of Norfolk. But he had hardly risen to greatness when he fell fighting by Richard's side at Bosworth Field. His son was taken prisoner in the same battle and remained for three years in the Tower. But his refusal to join in the rising of the Earl of Lincoln was rewarded by Henry the Seventh with his release, his restoration to the Earldom of Surrey, and his employment in the service of the crown where he soon took rank among the king's most trusted councillors. His military abilities were seen in campaigns against the Scots which won back for him the office of Earl Marshal, and in the victory of Flodden which restored to him the Dukedom of Norfolk. The son of this victor of Flodden, Thomas, Earl of Surrey, had already served as lieutenant in Ireland and as general against Albany on the Scottish frontier before his succession to the dukedom in 1524. His coolness and tact had displayed themselves during the revolt against Benevolences, when his influence alone averted a rising in the Eastern Counties. Since Buckingham's death his house stood at the head of the English nobility: his office of Lord Treasurer placed him high at the royal council board; and Henry's love for his niece, Anne Boleyn, gave a fresh spur to the duke's ambition. But his influence had till now been overshadowed by the greatness of Wolsey. With the Cardinal's fall however he at once came to the front. Though he had bowed to the royal policy, he was known as the leader of the party which clung to alliance with the Emperor, and now that such an alliance was needful Henry counted on Norfolk to renew the friendship with Charles.

### **The Parliament**

An even greater revolution was seen in the summons of a Parliament which met in November 1529. Its assembly was no doubt prompted in part by the actual needs of the Crown, for Henry was not only penniless but overwhelmed with debts and Parliament alone could give him freedom from these embarrassments. But the importance of the questions brought before the Houses, and their repeated assembly throughout the rest of Henry's reign, point to a definite change in the royal system. The policy of Edward the Fourth, of Henry the Seventh, and of Wolsey was abandoned. Instead of looking on Parliament as a danger the monarchy now felt itself strong enough to use it as a tool. The obedience of the Commons was seen in the readiness with which they at once passed a bill to release the crown from its debts. But Henry counted on more than obedience. He counted, and justly counted, on the warm support of the Houses in his actual strife with Rome. The plan of a divorce was no doubt unpopular. So violent was the indignation against Anne Boleyn that she hardly dared to stir abroad. But popular feeling ran almost as bitterly against the Papacy. The sight of an English king and an English queen pleading before a foreign tribunal revived the old resentment against the subjection of Englishmen to Papal courts. The helplessness of Clement in the grasp of the Emperor recalled the helplessness of the Popes at Avignon in the grasp of the kings of France. That Henry should sue for justice to Rome was galling enough, but the hottest adherent of the Papacy was outraged when the suit of his king was granted or refused at the will of Charles. It was against this degradation of the Crown that the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire had been long since aimed. The need of Papal support to their disputed title which had been felt by the Houses of Lancaster and York had held these statutes in suspense, and the Legatine Court of Wolsey had openly defied them. They were still however legally in force; they were part of the Parliamentary tradition; and it was certain that Parliament would be as ready as ever to enforce the independent jurisdiction of the Crown.

### **Hopes of the New Learning**

Not less significant was the attitude of the New Learning. On Wolsey's fall the seals had been offered to Warham, and it was probably at his counsel that they were finally given to Sir Thomas More. The chancellor's dream, if we may judge it from the acts of his brief ministry, seems to have been that of carrying out the religious reformation which

had been demanded by Colet and Erasmus while checking the spirit of revolt against the unity of the Church. His severities against the Protestants, exaggerated as they have been by polemic rancour, remain the one stain on a memory that knows no other. But it was only by a rigid severance of the cause of reform from what seemed to him the cause of revolution that More could hope for a successful issue to the projects of reform which the council laid before Parliament. The Petition of the Commons sounded like an echo of Colet's famous address to the Convocation. It attributed the growth of heresy not more to "frantic and seditious books published in the English tongue contrary to the very true Catholic and Christian faith" than to "the extreme and uncharitable behaviour of divers ordinaries." It remonstrated against the legislation of the clergy in Convocation without the king's assent or that of his subjects, the oppressive procedure of the Church Courts, the abuses of ecclesiastical patronage, and the excessive number of holydays. Henry referred the Petition to the bishops, but they could devise no means of redress, and the ministry persisted in pushing through the Houses their bills for ecclesiastical reform. The importance of the new measures lay really in the action of Parliament. They were an explicit announcement that church-reform was now to be undertaken, not by the clergy, but by the people at large. On the other hand it was clear that it would be carried out in a spirit of loyalty to the church. The Commons forced from Bishop Fisher an apology for words which were taken as a doubt thrown on their orthodoxy. Henry forbade the circulation of Tyndale's translation of the Bible as executed in a Protestant spirit. The reforming measures however were pushed resolutely on. Though the questions of Convocation and the Bishops' courts were adjourned for further consideration, the fees of the courts were curtailed, the clergy restricted from lay employments, pluralities restrained, and residence enforced. In spite of a dogged opposition from the bishops the bills received the assent of the House of Lords, "to the great rejoicing of lay people, and the great displeasure of spiritual persons."

### **Death of Wolsey**

Not less characteristic of the New Learning was the intellectual pressure it strove to bring to bear on the wavering Pope. Cranmer was still active in the cause of Anne Boleyn; he had just published a book in favour of the divorce; and he now urged on the ministry an appeal to the

learned opinion of Christendom by calling for the judgement of the chief universities of Europe. His counsel was adopted; but Norfolk trusted to coarser means of attaining his end. Like most of the English nobles and the whole of the merchant class, his sympathies were with the House of Burgundy; he looked upon Wolsey as the real hindrance to the divorce through the French policy which had driven Charles into a hostile attitude; and he counted on the Cardinal's fall to bring about a renewal of friendship with the Emperor and to ensure his support. The father of Anne Boleyn, now created Earl of Wiltshire, was sent in 1530 on this errand to the Imperial Court. But Charles remained firm to Catharine's cause, and Clement would do nothing in defiance of the Emperor. Nor was the appeal to the learned world more successful. In France the profuse bribery of the English agents would have failed with the university of Paris but for the interference of Francis himself, eager to regain Henry's goodwill by this office of friendship. As shameless an exercise of the king's own authority was needed to wring an approval of his cause from Oxford and Cambridge. In Germany the very Protestants, then in the fervour of their moral revival and hoping little from a proclaimed opponent of Luther, were dead against the king. So far as could be seen from Cranmer's test every learned man in Christendom but for bribery and threats would have condemned the royal cause. Henry was embittered by failures which he attributed to the unskilful diplomacy of his new counsellors; and it was rumoured that he had been heard to regret the loss of the more dexterous statesman whom they had overthrown. Wolsey, who since the beginning of the year had remained at York, though busy in appearance with the duties of his see, was hoping more and more as the months passed by for his recall. But the jealousy of his political enemies was roused by the king's regrets, and the pitiless hand of Norfolk was seen in the quick and deadly blow which he dealt at his fallen rival. On the fourth of November, on the eve of his installation feast, the Cardinal was arrested on a charge of high treason and conducted by the Lieutenant of the Tower towards London. Already broken by his enormous labours, by internal disease, and the sense of his fall, Wolsey accepted the arrest as a sentence of death. An attack of dysentery forced him to rest at the abbey of Leicester, and as he reached the gate he said feebly to the brethren who met him, "I am come to lay my bones among you." On his death-bed his thoughts still clung to the prince whom he had served. "Had I but served God as diligently as I

have served the king,” murmured the dying man, “He would not have given me over in my grey hairs. But this is my due reward for my pains and study, not regarding my service to God, but only my duty to my prince.”

### **Cromwell's Policy**

No words could paint with so terrible a truthfulness the spirit of the new despotism which Wolsey had done more than any of those who went before him to build up. From tempers like his all sense of loyalty to England, to its freedom, to its institutions, had utterly passed away, and the one duty which the statesman owned was a duty to his “prince.” To what issues such a conception of a statesman's duty might lead was now to be seen in the career of a greater than Wolsey. The two dukes had struck down the Cardinal only to set up another master in his room. Since his interview with Henry Cromwell had remained in the king's service, where his steady advance in the royal favour was marked by his elevation to the post of Secretary of State. His patience was at last rewarded by the failure of the policy for which his own had been set aside. At the close of 1530 the college of cardinals formally rejected the king's request for leave to decide the whole matter in his own spiritual courts; and the defeat of Norfolk's project drove Henry nearer and nearer to the bold plan from which he had shrunk at Wolsey's fall. Cromwell was again ready with his suggestion that the king should disavow the Papal jurisdiction, declare himself Head of the Church within his realm, and obtain a divorce from his own Ecclesiastical Courts. But he looked on the divorce as simply the prelude to a series of changes which the new minister was bent upon accomplishing. In all his chequered life what had left its deepest stamp on him was Italy. Not only in the rapidity and ruthlessness of his designs, but in their larger scope, their clearer purpose, and their admirable combination, the Italian state-craft entered with Cromwell into English politics. He is in fact the first English minister in whom we can trace through the whole period of his rule the steady working out of a great and definite aim, that of raising the king to absolute authority on the ruins of every rival power within the realm. It was not that Cromwell was a mere slave of tyranny. Whether we may trust the tale that carries him in his youth to Florence or no, his statesmanship was closely modelled on the ideal of the Florentine thinker whose book was constantly in his hand. Even as a servant of Wolsey he

startled the future Cardinal, Reginald Pole, by bidding him take for his manual in politics the “Prince” of Machiavelli. Machiavelli hoped to find in Cæsar Borgia or in the later Lorenzo de’ Medici a tyrant who after crushing all rival tyrannies might unite and regenerate Italy; and terrible and ruthless as his policy was, the final aim of Cromwell seems to have been that of Machiavelli, an aim of securing enlightenment and order for England by the concentration of all authority in the crown.

### **The Headship of the Church**

The first step towards such an end was the freeing the monarchy from its spiritual obedience to Rome. What the first of the Tudors had done for the political independence of the kingdom, the second was to do for its ecclesiastical independence. Henry the Seventh had freed England from the interference of France or the House of Burgundy; and in the question of the divorce Cromwell saw the means of bringing Henry the Eighth to free it from the interference of the Papacy. In such an effort resistance could be looked for only from the clergy. But their resistance was what Cromwell desired. The last check on royal absolutism which had survived the Wars of the Roses lay in the wealth, the independent synods and jurisdiction, and the religious claims of the church; and for the success of the new policy it was necessary to reduce the great ecclesiastical body to a mere department of the State in which all authority should flow from the sovereign alone, his will be the only law, his decision the only test of truth. Such a change however was hardly to be wrought without a struggle; and the question of national independence in all ecclesiastical matters furnished ground on which the crown could conduct this struggle to the best advantage. The secretary’s first blow showed how unscrupulously the struggle was to be waged. A year had passed since Wolsey had been convicted of a breach of the Statute of Præmunire. The pedantry of the judges declared the whole nation to have been formally involved in the same charge by its acceptance of his authority. The legal absurdity was now redressed by a general pardon, but from this pardon the clergy found themselves omitted. In the spring of 1531 Convocation was assembled to be told that forgiveness could be bought at no less a price than the payment of a fine amounting to a million of our present money, and the acknowledgement of the king as “the chief protector, the only and supreme lord, and Head of the Church and Clergy of England.” Unjust as was the first demand, they at once

submitted to it; against the second they struggled hard. But their appeals to Henry and Cromwell met only with demands for instant obedience. A compromise was at last arrived at by the insertion of a qualifying phrase "So far as the law of Christ will allow"; and with this addition the words were again submitted by Warham to the Convocation. There was a general silence. "Whoever is silent seems to consent," said the Archbishop. "Then are we all silent," replied a voice from among the crowd.

### **Catharine put away**

There is no ground for thinking that the "Headship of the Church" which Henry claimed in this submission was more than a warning addressed to the independent spirit of the clergy, or that it bore as yet the meaning which was afterwards attached to it. It certainly implied no independence of Rome, for negotiations were still being carried on with the Papal Court. But it told Clement plainly that in any strife that might come between himself and Henry the clergy were in the king's hand, and that he must look for no aid from them in any struggle with the crown. The warning was backed by an address to the Pope from the Lords and some of the Commons who assembled after a fresh prorogation of the Houses in the spring. "The cause of his Majesty," the Peers were made to say, "is the cause of each of ourselves." They laid before the Pope what they represented as the judgement of the Universities in favour of the divorce; but they faced boldly the event of its rejection. "Our condition," they ended, "will not be wholly irremediable. Extreme remedies are ever harsh of application; but he that is sick will by all means be rid of his distemper." In the summer the banishment of Catharine from the king's palace to a house at Ampthill showed the firmness of Henry's resolve. Each of these acts was no doubt intended to tell on the Pope's decision, for Henry still clung to the hope of extorting from Clement a favourable answer, and at the close of the year a fresh embassy with Gardiner, now Bishop of Winchester, at its head was despatched to the Papal court. But the embassy failed like its predecessors, and at the opening of 1532 Cromwell was free to take more decisive steps in the course on which he had entered.

### **More's withdrawal**

What the nature of his policy was to be had already been detected by eyes as keen as his own. More had seen in Wolsey's fall an opening for the realization of those schemes of religious and even of political reform on which the scholars of the New Learning had long been brooding. The substitution of the Lords of the Council for the autocratic rule of the Cardinal-minister, the break-up of the great mass of powers which had been gathered into a single hand, the summons of a Parliament, the ecclesiastical reforms which it at once sanctioned, were measures which promised a more legal and constitutional system of government. The question of the divorce presented to More no serious difficulty. Untenable as Henry's claim seemed to the now Chancellor, his faith in the omnipotence of Parliament would have enabled him to submit to any statute which named a new spouse as queen and her children as heirs to the crown. But as Cromwell's policy unfolded itself he saw that more than this was impending. The Catholic instinct of his mind, the dread of a rent Christendom and of the wars and bigotry that must come of its rending, united with More's theological convictions to resist any spiritual severance of England from the Papacy. His love for freedom, his revolt against the growing autocracy of the crown, the very height and grandeur of his own spiritual convictions, all bent him to withstand a system which would concentrate in the king the whole power of Church as of State, would leave him without the one check that remained on his despotism, and make him arbiter of the religious faith of his subjects. The later revolt of the Puritans against the king-worship which Cromwell established proved the justice of the prevision which forced More in the spring of 1532 to resign the post of Chancellor.

### **England and Rome**

But the revolution from which he shrank was an inevitable one. Till now every Englishman had practically owned a double life and a double allegiance. As citizen of a temporal state his life was bounded by English shores and his loyalty due exclusively to his English king. But as citizen of the state spiritual he belonged not to England but to Christendom. The law which governed him was not a national law but a law that embraced every European nation, and the ordinary course of judicial appeals in ecclesiastical cases proved to him that the sovereignty in all matters of conscience or religion lay not at Westminster but at Rome. Such a distinction could scarcely fail to bring embarrassment with it as the sense

of national life and national pride waxed stronger; and from the reign of the Edwards the problem of reconciling the spiritual and temporal relations of the realm grew daily more difficult. Parliament had hardly risen into life when it became the organ of the national jealousy whether of any Papal jurisdiction without the realm or of the separate life and separate jurisdiction of the clergy within it. The movement was long arrested by religious reaction and civil war. But the fresh sense of national greatness which sprang from the policy of Henry the Eighth, the fresh sense of national unity as the Monarchy gathered all power into its single hand, would have itself revived the contest even without the spur of the divorce. What the question of the divorce really did was to stimulate the movement by bringing into clearer view the wreck of the great Christian commonwealth of which England had till now formed a part and the impossibility of any real exercise of a spiritual sovereignty over it by the weakened Papacy, as well as by outraging the national pride through the summons of the king to a foreign bar and the submission of English interests to the will of a foreign Emperor.

### **Act of Appeals**

With such a spur as this the movement which More dreaded moved forward as quickly as Cromwell desired. The time had come when England was to claim for herself the fulness of power, ecclesiastical as well as temporal, within her bounds; and in the concentration of all authority within the hands of the sovereign which was the political characteristic of the time to claim this power for the nation was to claim it for the king. The import of that headship of the Church which Henry had assumed in the preceding year was brought fully out in one of the propositions laid before the Convocation of 1532. "The King's Majesty," runs this memorable clause, "hath as well the care of the souls of his subjects as their bodies; and may by the law of God by his Parliament make laws touching and concerning as well the one as the other." The principle embodied in these words was carried out in a series of decisive measures. Under strong pressure the Convocation was brought to pray that the power of independent legislation till now exercised by the Church should come to an end, and to promise "that from henceforth we shall forbear to enact, promulge, or put into execution any such constitutions and ordinances so by us to be made in time coming, unless your Highness by your royal assent shall license us to make, promulge,

and execute them, and the same so made be approved by your Highness's authority." Rome was dealt with in the same unsparing fashion. The Parliament forbade by statute any further appeals to the Papal Court; and on a petition from the clergy in Convocation the Houses granted power to the king to suspend the payments of first-fruits, or the year's revenue which each bishop paid to Rome on his election to a see. All judicial, all financial connexion with the Papacy was broken by these two measures. The last indeed was as yet but a menace which Henry might use in his negotiations with Clement. The hope which had been entertained of aid from Charles was now abandoned; and the overthrow of Norfolk and his policy of alliance with the Empire was seen at the midsummer of 1532 in the conclusion of a league with France. Cromwell had fallen back on Wolsey's system; and the divorce was now to be looked for from the united pressure of the French and English kings on the Papal court.

### **Marriage of Anne Boleyn**

But the pressure was as unsuccessful as before. In November Clement threatened the king with excommunication if he did not restore Catharine to her place as queen and abstain from all intercourse with Anne Boleyn till the case was tried. But Henry still refused to submit to the judgement of any court outside his realm; and the Pope, ready as he was with evasion and delay, dared not alienate Charles by consenting to a trial within it. The lavish pledges which Francis had given in an interview during the preceding summer may have aided to spur the king to a decisive step which closed the long debate. At the opening of 1533 Henry was privately married to Anne Boleyn. The match however was carefully kept secret while the Papal sanction was being gained for the appointment of Cranmer to the See of Canterbury which had become vacant by Archbishop Warham's death in the preceding year. But Cranmer's consecration at the close of March was the signal for more open action, and Cromwell's policy was at last brought fairly into play. The new primate at once laid the question of the king's marriage before the two Houses of Convocation, and both voted that the licence of Pope Julius had been beyond the Papal powers and that the marriage which it authorized was void. In May the king's suit was brought before the Archbishop in his court at Dunstable; his judgement annulled the marriage with Catharine as void from the beginning, and pronounced the marriage with Anne Boleyn, which her pregnancy had forced Henry to

reveal, a lawful marriage. A week later the hand of Cranmer placed upon Anne's brow the crown which she had coveted so long.

### **Act of Supremacy**

“There was much murmuring” at measures such as these. Many thought “that the Bishop of Rome would curse all Englishmen, and that the Emperor and he would destroy all the people.” Fears of the overthrow of religion told on the clergy; the merchants dreaded an interruption of the trade with Flanders, Italy, and Spain. But Charles, though still loyal to his aunt's cause, had no mind to incur risks for her; and Clement, though he annulled Cranmer's proceedings, hesitated as yet to take sterner action. Henry on the other hand, conscious that the die was thrown, moved rapidly forward in the path that Cromwell had opened. The Pope's reversal of the primate's judgement was answered by an appeal to a General Council. The decision of the cardinals to whom the case was referred in the spring of 1534, a decision which asserted the lawfulness of Catharine's marriage, was met by the enforcement of the long-suspended statute forbidding the payment of first-fruits to the Pope. Though the King was still firm in his resistance to Lutheran opinions and at this moment endeavoured to prevent by statute the importation of Lutheran books, the less scrupulous hand of his minister was seen already striving to find a counterpoise to the hostility of the Emperor in an alliance with the Lutheran princes of North Germany. Cromwell was now fast rising to a power which rivalled Wolsey's. His elevation to the post of Lord Privy Seal placed him on a level with the great nobles of the Council board; and Norfolk, constant in his hopes of reconciliation with Charles and the Papacy, saw his plans set aside for the wider and more daring projects of “the blacksmith's son.” Cromwell still clung to the political engine whose powers he had turned to the service of the Crown. The Parliament which had been summoned at Wolsey's fall met steadily year after year; and measure after measure had shown its accordance with the royal will in the strife with Rome. It was now called to deal a final blow. Step by step the ground had been cleared for the great Statute by which the new character of the English Church was defined in the session of 1534. By the Act of Supremacy authority in all matters ecclesiastical was vested solely in the Crown. The courts spiritual became as thoroughly the king's courts as the temporal courts at Westminster. The Statute ordered that the king “shall be taken, accepted,

and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the Imperial Crown of this realm as well the title and state thereof as all the honours, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity belonging, with full power to visit, repress, redress, reform, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction might or may lawfully be reformed.”

### **The Vicar-General**

The full import of the Act of Supremacy was only seen in the following year. At the opening of 1535 Henry formally took the title of “on earth Supreme Head of the Church of England,” and some months later Cromwell was raised to the post of Vicar-General or Vicegerent of the king in all matters ecclesiastical. His title, like his office, recalled the system of Wolsey. It was not only as Legate but in later years as Vicar-General of the Pope that Wolsey had brought all spiritual causes in England to an English court. The supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the realm passed into the hands of a minister who as Chancellor already exercised its supreme civil jurisdiction. The Papal power had therefore long seemed transferred to the Crown before the legislative measures which followed the divorce actually transferred it. It was in fact the system of Catholicism itself that trained men to look without surprise on the concentration of all spiritual and secular authority in Cromwell. Successor to Wolsey as Keeper of the Great Seal, it seemed natural enough that Cromwell should succeed him also as Vicar-General of the Church and that the union of the two powers should be restored in the hands of a minister of the king. But the mere fact that these powers were united in the hands not of a priest but of a layman showed the new drift of the royal policy. The Church was no longer to be brought indirectly under the royal power; in the policy of Cromwell it was to be openly laid prostrate at the foot of the throne.

### **Subjection of the Bishops**

And this policy his position enabled him to carry out with a terrible thoroughness. One great step towards its realization had already been taken in the statute which annihilated the free legislative powers of the convocations of the Clergy. Another followed in an act which under the

pretext of restoring the free election of bishops turned every prelate into a nominee of the king. The election of bishops by the chapters of their cathedral churches had long become formal, and their appointment had since the time of the Edwards been practically made by the Papacy on the nomination of the Crown. The privilege of free election was now with bitter irony restored to the chapters, but they were compelled on pain of *præmunire* to choose whatever candidate was recommended by the king. This strange expedient has lasted till the present time, though its character has wholly changed with the development of constitutional rule. The nomination of bishops has ever since the accession of the Georges passed from the King in person to the Minister who represents the will of the people. Practically therefore an English prelate, alone among all the prelates of the world, is now raised to his episcopal throne by the same popular election which raised Ambrose to his episcopal chair at Milan. But at the moment of the change Cromwell's measure reduced the English bishops to absolute dependence on the Crown. Their dependence would have been complete had his policy been thoroughly carried out and the royal power of deposition put in force as well as that of appointment. As it was Henry could warn the Archbishop of Dublin that if he persevered in his "proud folly, we be able to remove you again and to put another man of more virtue and honesty in your place." By the more ardent partizans of the Reformation this dependence of the bishops on the Crown was fully recognized. On the death of Henry the Eighth Cranmer took out a new commission from Edward for the exercise of his office. Latimer, when the royal policy clashed with his belief, felt bound to resign the See of Worcester. If the power of deposition was quietly abandoned by Elizabeth, the abandonment was due not so much to any deference for the religious instincts of the nation as to the fact that the steady servility of the bishops rendered its exercise unnecessary.

### **The Religious Houses**

A second step in Cromwell's policy followed hard on this enslavement of the episcopate. Master of Convocation, absolute master of the bishops, Henry had become master of the monastic orders through the right of visitation over them which had been transferred by the Act of Supremacy from the Papacy to the Crown. The monks were soon to know what this right of visitation implied in the hands of the Vicar-General. As an outlet for religious enthusiasm monasticism was

practically dead. The friar, now that his fervour of devotion and his intellectual energy had passed away, had sunk into a mere beggar. The monks had become mere land-owners. Most of the religious houses were anxious only to enlarge their revenues and to diminish the number of those who shared them. In the general carelessness which prevailed as to the spiritual objects of their trust, in the wasteful management of their estates, in the indolence and self-indulgence which for the most part characterized them, the monastic establishments simply exhibited the faults of all corporate bodies that have outlived the work which they were created to perform. They were no more unpopular however than such corporate bodies generally are. The Lollard cry for their suppression had died away. In the north, where some of the greatest abbeys were situated, the monks were on good terms with the country gentry and their houses served as schools for their children; nor is there any sign of a different feeling elsewhere.

### **Suppression of the Lesser Monasteries**

But they had drawn on themselves at once the hatred of the New Learning and of the Monarchy. In the early days of the revival of letters Popes and bishops had joined with princes and scholars in welcoming the diffusion of culture and the hopes of religious reform. But though an abbot or a prior here or there might be found among the supporters of the movement, the monastic orders as a whole repelled it with unswerving obstinacy. The quarrel only became more bitter as years went on. The keen sarcasms of Erasmus, the insolent buffoonery of Hutten, were lavished on the “lovers of darkness” and of the cloister. In England Colet and More echoed with greater reserve the scorn and invective of their friends. The Monarchy had other causes for its hate. In Cromwell’s system there was no room for either the virtues or the vices of monasticism, for its indolence and superstition, or for its independence of the throne. The bold stand which the monastic orders had made against benevolences had never been forgiven, while the revenues of their foundations offered spoil vast enough to fill the royal treasury and secure a host of friends for the new reforms. Two royal commissioners therefore were despatched on a general visitation of the religious houses, and their reports formed a “Black Book” which was laid before Parliament in 1536. It was acknowledged that about a third of the houses, including the bulk of the larger abbeys, were fairly and decently

conducted. The rest were charged with drunkenness, with simony, and with the foulest and most revolting crimes. The character of the visitors, the sweeping nature of their report, and the long debate which followed on its reception, leaves little doubt that these charges were grossly exaggerated. But the want of any effective discipline which had resulted from their exemption from all but Papal supervision told fatally against monastic morality even in abbeys like St. Albans; and the acknowledgement of Warham, as well as a partial measure of suppression begun by Wolsey, go some way to prove that in the smaller houses at least indolence had passed into crime. A cry of "Down with them" broke from the Commons as the report was read. The country however was still far from desiring the utter downfall of the monastic system, and a long and bitter debate was followed by a compromise which suppressed all houses whose income fell below £200 a year. Of the thousand religious houses which then existed in England nearly four hundred were dissolved under this Act and their revenues granted to the Crown.

### **Enslavement of the Clergy**

The secular clergy alone remained; and injunction after injunction from the Vicar-General taught rector and vicar that they must learn to regard themselves as mere mouthpieces of the royal will. The Church was gagged. With the instinct of genius Cromwell discerned the part which the pulpit, as the one means which then existed of speaking to the people at large, was to play in the religious and political struggle that was at hand; and he resolved to turn it to the profit of the Monarchy. The restriction of the right of preaching to priests who received licenses from the Crown silenced every voice of opposition. Even to those who received these licenses theological controversy was forbidden; and a high-handed process of "tuning the pulpits" by express directions as to the subject and tenor of each special discourse made the preachers at every crisis mere means of diffusing the royal will. As a first step in this process every bishop, abbot, and parish priest was required by the new Vicar-General to preach against the usurpation of the Papacy and to proclaim the king as supreme Head of the Church on earth. The very topics of the sermon were carefully prescribed; the bishops were held responsible for the compliance of the clergy with these orders; and the sheriffs were held responsible for the obedience of the bishops.

## **The Terror**

While the great revolution which struck down the Church was in progress England looked silently on. In all the earlier ecclesiastical changes, in the contest over the Papal jurisdiction and Papal exactions, in the reform of the Church courts, even in the curtailment of the legislative independence of the clergy, the nation as a whole had gone with the king. But from the enslavement of the priesthood, from the gagging of the pulpits, from the suppression of the monasteries, the bulk of the nation stood aloof. There were few voices indeed of protest. As the royal policy disclosed itself, as the Monarchy trampled under foot the tradition and reverence of ages gone by, as its figure rose bare and terrible out of the wreck of old institutions, England simply held her breath. It is only through the stray depositions of royal spies that we catch a glimpse of the wrath and hate which lay seething under this silence of the people. For the silence was a silence of terror. Before Cromwell's rise and after his fall from power the reign of Henry the Eighth witnessed no more than the common tyranny and bloodshed of the time. But the years of Cromwell's administration form the one period in our history which deserves the name that men have given to the rule of Robespierre. It was the English Terror. It was by terror that Cromwell mastered the king. Cranmer could plead for him at a later time with Henry as "one whose surety was only by your Majesty, who loved your Majesty, as I ever thought, no less than God." But the attitude of Cromwell towards the king was something more than that of absolute dependence and unquestioning devotion. He was "so vigilant to preserve your Majesty from all treasons," adds the Primate, "that few could be so secretly conceived but he detected the same from the beginning." Henry, like every Tudor, was fearless of open danger, but tremulously sensitive to the lightest breath of hidden disloyalty; and it was on this dread that Cromwell based the fabric of his power. He was hardly secretary before spies were scattered broadcast over the land. Secret denunciations poured into the open ear of the minister. The air was thick with tales of plots and conspiracies, and with the detection and suppression of each Cromwell tightened his hold on the king.

As it was by terror that he mastered the king, so it was by terror that he mastered the people. Men felt in England, to use the figure by which Erasmus paints the time, "as if a scorpion lay sleeping under every

stone.” The confessional had no secrets for Cromwell. Men’s talk with their closest friends found its way to his ear. “Words idly spoken,” the murmurs of a petulant abbot, the ravings of a moon-struck nun, were, as the nobles cried passionately at his fall, “tortured into treason.” The only chance of safety lay in silence. “Friends who used to write and send me presents,” Erasmus tells us, “now send neither letter nor gifts, nor receive any from any one, and this through fear.” But even the refuge of silence was closed by a law more infamous than any that has ever blotted the Statute-book of England. Not only was thought made treason, but men were forced to reveal their thoughts on pain of their very silence being punished with the penalties of treason. All trust in the older bulwarks of liberty was destroyed by a policy as daring as it was unscrupulous. The noblest institutions were degraded into instruments of terror. Though Wolsey had strained the law to the utmost he had made no open attack on the freedom of justice. If he shrank from assembling Parliaments it was from his sense that they were the bulwarks of liberty. But under Cromwell the coercion of juries and the management of judges rendered the courts mere mouthpieces of the royal will: and where even this shadow of justice proved an obstacle to bloodshed, Parliament was brought into play to pass bill after bill of attainder. “He shall be judged by the bloody laws he has himself made,” was the cry of the Council at the moment of his fall, and by a singular retribution the crowning injustice which he sought to introduce even into the practice of attainder, the condemnation of a man without hearing his defence, was only practised on himself.

### **Cromwell’s Temper**

But ruthless as was the Terror of Cromwell it was of a nobler type than the Terror of France. He never struck uselessly or capriciously, or stooped to the meaner victims of the guillotine. His blows were effective just because he chose his victims from among the noblest and the best. If he struck at the Church, it was through the Carthusians, the holiest and the most renowned of English Churchmen. If he struck at the baronage, it was through Lady Salisbury, in whose veins flowed the blood of kings. If he struck at the New Learning, it was through the murder of Sir Thomas More. But no personal vindictiveness mingled with his crime. In temper indeed, so far as we can judge from the few stories which lingered among his friends, he was a generous, kindly-hearted man, with pleasant

and winning manners which atoned for a certain awkwardness of person, and with a constancy of friendship which won him a host of devoted adherents. But no touch either of love or hate swayed him from his course. The student of Machiavelli had not studied the "Prince" in vain. He had reduced bloodshed to a system. Fragments of his papers still show us with what a business-like brevity he ticked off human lives among the casual "remembrances" of the day. "Item, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be tried and executed at Reading." "Item, to know the King's pleasure touching Master More." "Item, when Master Fisher shall go to his execution, and the other." It is indeed this utter absence of all passion, of all personal feeling, that makes the figure of Cromwell the most terrible in our history. He has an absolute faith in the end he is pursuing, and he simply hews his way to it as a woodman hews his way through the forest, axe in hand.

### **Cromwell and More**

The choice of his first victim showed the ruthless precision with which Cromwell was to strike. In the general opinion of Europe the foremost Englishman of the time was Sir Thomas More. As the policy of the divorce ended in an open rupture with Rome he had withdrawn silently from the ministry, but his silent disapproval of the new policy was more telling than the opposition of obscurer foes. To Cromwell there must have been something specially galling in More's attitude of reserve. The religious reforms of the New Learning were being rapidly carried out, but it was plain that the man who represented the very life of the New Learning believed that the sacrifice of liberty and justice was too dear a price to pay even for religious reform. In the actual changes which the divorce brought about there was nothing to move More to active or open opposition. Though he looked on the divorce and re-marriage as without religious warrant, he found no difficulty in accepting an Act of Succession passed in 1534 which declared the marriage of Anne Boleyn valid, annulled the title of Catharine's child, Mary, and declared the children of Anne the only lawful heirs to the crown. His faith in the power of Parliament over all civil matters was too complete to admit a doubt of its competence to regulate the succession to the throne. But by the same Act an oath recognizing the succession as then arranged was ordered to be taken by all persons; and this oath contained an acknowledgement that the marriage with Catharine was against Scripture

and invalid from the beginning. Henry had long known More's belief on this point; and the summons to take this oath was simply a summons to death. More was at his house at Chelsea when the summons called him to Lambeth, to the house where he had bandied fun with Warham and Erasmus or bent over the easel of Holbein. For a moment there may have been some passing impulse to yield. But it was soon over. Triumphant in all else, the monarchy was to find its power stop short at the conscience of man. The great battle of spiritual freedom, the battle of the Protestant against Mary, of the Catholic against Elizabeth, of the Puritan against Charles, of the Independent against the Presbyterian, began at the moment when More refused to bend or to deny his convictions at a king's bidding.

### **More sent to the Tower**

"I thank the Lord," More said with a sudden start as the boat dropped silently down the river from his garden steps in the early morning, "I thank the Lord that the field is won." At Lambeth Cranmer and his fellow-commissioners tendered to him the new oath of allegiance; but, as they expected, it was refused. They bade him walk in the garden that he might reconsider his reply. The day was hot and More seated himself in a window from which he could look down into the crowded court. Even in the presence of death the quick sympathy of his nature could enjoy the humour and life of the throng below. "I saw," he said afterwards, "Master Latimer very merry in the court, for he laughed and took one or twain by the neck so handsomely that if they had been women I should have weened that he waxed wanton." The crowd below was chiefly of priests, rectors, and vicars, pressing to take the oath that More found harder than death. He bore them no grudge for it. When he heard the voice of one who was known to have boggled hard at the oath a little while before calling loudly and ostentatiously for drink, he only noted him with his peculiar humour. "He drank," More supposed, "either from dryness or from gladness" or "to show quod ille notus erat Pontifici." He was called in again at last, but only repeated his refusal. It was in vain that Cranmer plied him with distinctions which perplexed even the subtle wit of the ex-chancellor; More remained unshaken and passed to the Tower. He was followed there by Bishop Fisher of Rochester, the most aged and venerable of the English prelates, who was charged with countenancing treason by listening to the prophecies of a religious fanatic called "The

Nun of Kent.” But for the moment even Cromwell shrank from their blood. They remained prisoners while a new and more terrible engine was devised to crush out the silent but widespread opposition to the religious changes.

### **Death of More**

By a statute passed at the close of 1534 a new treason was created in the denial of the king’s titles; and in the opening of 1535 Henry assumed as we have seen the title of “on earth supreme head of the Church of England.” The measure was at once followed up by a blow at victims hardly less venerable than More. In the general relaxation of the religious life the charity and devotion of the brethren of the Charter-house had won the reverence even of those who condemned monasticism. After a stubborn resistance they had acknowledged the royal Supremacy and taken the oath of submission prescribed by the Act. But by an infamous construction of the statute which made the denial of the Supremacy treason, the refusal of satisfactory answers to official questions as to a conscientious belief in it was held to be equivalent to open denial. The aim of the new measure was well known, and the brethren prepared to die. In the agony of waiting enthusiasm brought its imaginative consolations; “when the Host was lifted up there came as it were a whisper of air which breathed upon our faces as we knelt; and there came a sweet soft sound of music.” They had not long however to wait, for their refusal to answer was the signal for their doom. Three of the brethren went to the gallows; the rest were flung into Newgate, chained to posts in a noisome dungeon where, “tied and not able to stir,” they were left to perish of gaol-fever and starvation. In a fortnight five were dead and the rest at the point of death, “almost despatched,” Cromwell’s envoy wrote to him, “by the hand of God, of which, considering their behaviour, I am not sorry.” Their death was soon followed by that of More. The interval of imprisonment had failed to break his resolution, and the new statute sufficed to bring him to the block. With Fisher he was convicted of denying the king’s title as only supreme head of the Church. The old Bishop approached the scaffold with a book of the New Testament in his hand. He opened it at a venture ere he knelt, and read, “This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God.” In July More followed his fellow-prisoner to the block. Just before the fatal blow he moved his beard carefully from the reach of the doomsman’s axe. “Pity

that should be cut," he was heard to mutter with a touch of the old sad irony, "that has never committed treason."

### **Cromwell and the Nobles**

Cromwell had at last reached his aim. England lay panic-stricken at the feet of the "low-born knave," as the nobles called him, who represented the omnipotence of the crown. Like Wolsey he concentrated in his hands the whole administration of the state; he was at once foreign minister and home minister, and vicar-general of the Church, the creator of a new fleet, the organizer of armies, the president of the terrible Star Chamber. His Italian indifference to the mere show of power stood out in strong contrast with the pomp of the Cardinal. Cromwell's personal habits were simple and unostentatious; if he clutched at money, it was to feed the army of spies whom he maintained at his own expense, and whose work he surveyed with a ceaseless vigilance. For his activity was boundless. More than fifty volumes remain of the gigantic mass of his correspondence. Thousands of letters from "poor bedesmen," from outraged wives and wronged labourers and persecuted heretics flowed in to the all-powerful minister whose system of personal government turned him into the universal court of appeal. But powerful as he was, and mighty as was the work which he had accomplished, he knew that harder blows had to be struck before his position was secure. The new changes, above all the irritation which had been caused by the outrages with which the dissolution of the monasteries was accompanied, gave point to the mutinous temper that prevailed throughout the country; for the revolution in agriculture was still going on, and evictions furnished embittered outcasts to swell the ranks of any rising. Nor did it seem as though revolt, if it once broke out, would want leaders to head it. The nobles who had writhed under the rule of the Cardinal, writhed yet more bitterly under the rule of one whom they looked upon not only as Wolsey's tool, but as a low-born upstart. "The world will never mend," Lord Hussey had been heard to say, "till we fight for it." "Knaves rule about the king!" cried Lord Exeter, "I trust some day to give them a buffet." At this moment too the hopes of political reaction were stirred by the fate of one whom the friends of the old order looked upon as the source of all their troubles. In the spring of 1536, while the dissolution of the monasteries was marking the triumph of the new policy, Anne Boleyn was suddenly charged with adultery, and sent to the Tower. A few days later she was

tried, condemned, and brought to the block. The queen's ruin was everywhere taken as an omen of ruin to the cause which had become identified with her own, and the old nobility mustered courage to face the minister who held them at his feet.

### **Pilgrimage of Grace**

They found their opportunity in the discontent of the north, where the monasteries had been popular, and where the rougher mood of the people turned easily to resistance. In the autumn of 1536 a rising broke out in Lincolnshire, and this was hardly quelled when all Yorkshire rose in arms. From every parish the farmers marched with the parish priest at their head upon York, and the surrender of this city determined the waverers. In a few days Skipton Castle, where the Earl of Cumberland held out with a handful of men, was the only spot north of the Humber which remained true to the king. Durham rose at the call of the chiefs of the house of Neville, Lords Westmoreland and Latimer. Though the Earl of Northumberland feigned sickness, the Percies joined the revolt. Lord Darcy, the chief of the Yorkshire nobles, surrendered Pomfret, and was acknowledged as their chief by the insurgents. The whole nobility of the north were now enlisted in the "Pilgrimage of Grace," as the rising called itself, and thirty thousand "tall men and well horsed" moved on the Don demanding the reversal of the royal policy, a reunion with Rome, the restoration of Catharine's daughter, Mary, to her rights as heiress of the Crown, redress for the wrongs done to the Church, and above all the driving away of base-born councillors, or in other words, the fall of Cromwell. Though their advance was checked by negotiation, the organization of the revolt went steadily on throughout the winter, and a Parliament of the North which gathered at Pomfret formally adopted the demands of the insurgents. Only six thousand men under Norfolk barred their way southward, and the Midland counties were known to be disaffected.

### **Its Suppression**

But Cromwell remained undaunted by the peril. He suffered indeed Norfolk to negotiate; and allowed Henry under pressure from his Council to promise pardon and a free Parliament at York, a pledge which Norfolk and Darcy alike construed into an acceptance of the demands made by the insurgents. Their leaders at once flung aside the badge of the Five

Wounds which they had worn with a cry, "We will wear no badge but that of our Lord the King," and nobles and farmers dispersed to their homes in triumph. But the towns of the North were no sooner garrisoned and Norfolk's army in the heart of Yorkshire than the veil was flung aside. A few isolated outbreaks in the spring of 1537 gave a pretext for the withdrawal of every concession. The arrest of the leaders of the "Pilgrimage of Grace" was followed by ruthless severities. The country was covered with gibbets. Whole districts were given up to military execution. But it was on the leaders of the rising that Cromwell's hand fell heaviest. He seized his opportunity for dealing at the northern nobles a fatal blow. "Cromwell," one of the chief among them broke fiercely out as he stood at the Council board, "it is thou that art the very special and chief cause of all this rebellion and wickedness, and dost daily travail to bring us to our ends and strike off our heads. I trust that ere thou die, though thou wouldst procure all the noblest heads within the realm to be stricken off, yet there shall one head remain that shall strike off thy head." But the warning was unheeded. Lord Darcy, who stood first among the nobles of Yorkshire, and Lord Hussey, who stood first among the nobles of Lincolnshire, went alike to the block. The Abbot of Barlings, who had ridden into Lincoln with his canons in full armour, swung with his brother Abbots of Whalley, Woburn, and Sawley from the gallows. The Abbots of Fountains and of Jervaulx were hanged at Tyburn side by side with the representative of the great line of Percy. Lady Bulmer was burned at the stake. Sir Robert Constable was hanged in chains before the gate of Hull.

### **Ireland**

The defeat of the northern revolt showed the immense force which the monarchy had gained. Even among the rebels themselves not a voice had threatened Henry's throne. It was not at the king that they aimed these blows, but at the "low-born knaves" who stood about the king. At this moment too Henry's position was strengthened by the birth of an heir. On the death of Anne Boleyn he had married Jane Seymour, the daughter of a Wiltshire knight; and in 1537 this queen died in giving birth to a boy, the future Edward the Sixth. The triumph of the Crown at home was doubled by its triumph in the great dependency which had so long held the English authority at bay, across St. George's Channel. Though Henry the Seventh had begun the work of bridling Ireland he

had no strength for exacting a real submission; and the great Norman lords of the Pale, the Butlers and Geraldines, the De la Poers and the Fitzpatricks, though subjects in name, remained in fact defiant of the royal authority. In manners and outer seeming they had sunk into mere natives; their feuds were as incessant as those of the Irish sept; and their despotism combined the horrors of feudal oppression with those of Celtic anarchy. Crushed by taxation, by oppression, by misgovernment, plundered alike by native marauders and by the troops levied to disperse them, the wretched descendants of the first English settlers preferred even Irish misrule to English "order," and the border of the Pale retreated steadily towards Dublin. The towns of the seaboard, sheltered by their walls and their municipal self-government, formed the only exceptions to the general chaos; elsewhere throughout its dominions the English Government, though still strong enough to break down any open revolt, was a mere phantom of rule. From the Celtic tribes without the Pale even the remnant of civilization and of native union which had lingered on to the time of Strongbow had vanished away. The feuds of the Irish sept were as bitter as their hatred of the stranger; and the Government at Dublin found it easy to maintain a strife which saved it the necessity of self-defence among a people whose "nature is such that for money one shall have the son to war against the father, and the father against his child." During the first thirty years of the sixteenth century the annals of the country which remained under native rule record more than a hundred raids and battles between clans of the north alone.

### **Ireland and Cromwell**

But the time came at last for a vigorous attempt on the part of England to introduce order into this chaos of turbulence and misrule. To Henry the Eighth the policy of forbearance, of ruling Ireland through the great Irish lords, was utterly hateful. His purpose was to rule in Ireland as thoroughly and effectively as he ruled in England, and during the latter half of his reign he bent his whole energies to accomplish this aim. From the first hour of his accession indeed the Irish lords felt the heavier hand of a master. The Geraldines, who had been suffered under the preceding reign to govern Ireland in the name of the Crown, were quick to discover that the Crown would no longer stoop to be their tool. Their head, the Earl of Kildare, was called to England and thrown into the Tower. The great house resolved to frighten England again into a conviction of its

helplessness; and a rising of Lord Thomas Fitzgerald in 1534 followed the usual fashion of Irish revolts. A murder of the Archbishop of Dublin, a capture of the city, a repulse before its castle, a harrying of the Pale, ended in a sudden disappearance of the rebels among the bogs and forests of the border on the advance of the English forces. It had been usual to meet such an onset as this by a raid of the same character, by a corresponding failure before the castle of the rebellious noble, and a retreat like his own which served as a preliminary to negotiations and a compromise. Unluckily for the Fitzgeralds Henry resolved to take Ireland seriously in hand, and he had Cromwell to execute his will. Skeffington, a new Lord Deputy who was sent over in 1535, brought with him a train of artillery which worked a startling change in the political aspect of the island. The castles that had hitherto sheltered rebellion were battered into ruins. Maynooth, a stronghold from which the Geraldines threatened Dublin and ruled the Pale at their will, was beaten down in a fortnight. So crushing and unforeseen was the blow that resistance was at once at an end. Not only was the power of the great Norman house which had towered over Ireland utterly broken, but only a single boy was left to preserve its name.

### **Conquest of Ireland**

With the fall of the Fitzgeralds Ireland felt itself in a master's grasp. "Irishmen," wrote one of the Lord Justices to Cromwell, "were never in such fear as now. The king's sessions are being kept in five shires more than formerly." Not only were the Englishmen of the Pale at Henry's feet but the kerns of Wicklow and Wexford sent in their submission; and for the first time in men's memory an English army appeared in Munster and reduced the south to obedience. The border of the Pale was crossed, and the wide territory where the Celtic tribes had preserved their independence since the days of the Angevins was trampled into subjection. A castle of the O'Briens which guarded the passage of the Shannon was taken by assault, and its fall carried with it the submission of Clare. The capture of Athlone brought about the reduction of Connaught, and assured the loyalty of the great Norman house of the De Burghs or Bourkes who had assumed an almost royal authority in the west. The resistance of the tribes of the north was broken in a victory at Bellahoe. In seven years, partly through the vigour of Skeffington's successor, Lord Leonard Grey, and still more through the resolute will of

Henry and Cromwell, the power of the Crown, which had been limited to the walls of Dublin, was acknowledged over the length and breadth of the land.

### **Henry's Irish Government**

But submission was far from being all that Henry desired. His aim was to civilize the people whom he had conquered—to rule not by force but by law. But the only conception of law which the king or his ministers could frame was that of English law. The customary law which prevailed without the Pale, the native system of clan government and common tenure of land by the tribe, as well as the poetry and literature which threw their lustre over the Irish tongue, were either unknown to the English statesmen or despised by them as barbarous. The one mode of civilizing Ireland and redressing its chaotic misrule which presented itself to their minds was that of destroying the whole Celtic tradition of the Irish people—that of “making Ireland English” in manners, in law, and in tongue. The Deputy, Parliament, Judges, Sheriffs, which already existed within the Pale, furnished a faint copy of English institutions; and it was hoped that these might be gradually extended over the whole island. The English language and mode of life would follow, it was believed, the English law. The one effectual way of bringing about such a change as this lay in a complete conquest of the island, and in its colonization by English settlers; but from this course, pressed on him as it was by his own lieutenants and by the settlers of the Pale, even the iron will of Cromwell shrank. It was at once too bloody and too expensive. To win over the chiefs, to turn them by policy and a patient generosity into English nobles, to use the traditional devotion of their tribal dependence as a means of diffusing the new civilization of their chiefs, to trust to time and steady government for the gradual reformation of the country, was a policy safer, cheaper, more humane, and more statesmanlike.

It was this system which, even before the fall of the Geraldines, Henry had resolved to adopt; and it was this that he pressed on Ireland when the conquest laid it at his feet. The chiefs were to be persuaded of the advantages of justice and legal rule. Their fear of any purpose to “expel them from their lands and dominions lawfully possessed” was to be dispelled by a promise “to conserve them as their own.” Even their remonstrances against the introduction of English law were to be regarded, and the course of justice to be enforced or mitigated according

to the circumstances of the country. In the resumption of lands or rights which clearly belonged to the Crown “sober ways, politic shifts, and amiable persuasions” were to be preferred to rigorous dealing. It was this system of conciliation which was in the main carried out by the English Government under Henry and his two successors. Chieftain after chieftain was won over to the acceptance of the indenture which guaranteed him in the possession of his lands and left his authority over his tribesmen untouched on condition of a pledge of loyalty, of abstinence from illegal wars and exactions on his fellow-subjects, and of rendering a fixed tribute and service in war-time to the Crown. The sole test of loyalty demanded was the acceptance of an English title and the education of a son at the English court; though in some cases, like that of the O’Neills, a promise was exacted to use the English language and dress, and to encourage tillage and husbandry. Compliance with conditions such as these was procured not merely by the terror of the royal name but by heavy bribes. The chieftains in fact profited greatly by the change. Not only were the lands of the suppressed abbeys granted to them on their assumption of their new titles, but the English law-courts, ignoring the Irish custom by which the land belonged to the tribe at large, regarded the chiefs as the sole proprietors of the soil. The merits of the system were unquestionable; its faults were such as a statesman of that day could hardly be expected to perceive. The Tudor politicians held that the one hope for the regeneration of Ireland lay in its absorbing the civilization of England. The prohibition of the national dress, customs, laws, and language must have seemed to them merely the suppression of a barbarism which stood in the way of all improvement.

### **Cromwell’s Reform of Religion**

With England and Ireland alike at his feet Cromwell could venture on a last and crowning change. He could claim for the monarchy the right of dictating at its pleasure the form of faith and doctrine to be taught throughout the land. Henry had remained true to the standpoint of the New Learning; and the sympathies of Cromwell were mainly with those of his master. They had no wish for any violent break with the ecclesiastical forms of the past. They desired religious reform rather than religious revolution, a simplification of doctrine rather than any radical change in it, the purification of worship rather than the introduction of any wholly new ritual. Their theology remained, as they believed, a

Catholic theology, but a theology cleared of the superstitious growths which obscured the true Catholicism of the early Church. In a word their dream was the dream of Erasmus and Colet. The spirit of Erasmus was seen in the Articles of religion which were laid before Convocation in 1536, in the acknowledgement of Justification by Faith, a doctrine for which the founders of the New Learning, such as Contarini and Pole, were struggling at Rome itself, in the condemnation of purgatory, of pardons, and of masses for the dead, as it was seen in the admission of prayers for the dead and in the retention of the ceremonies of the church without material change. A series of royal injunctions which followed carried out the same policy of reform. Pilgrimages were suppressed; the excessive number of holy days was curtailed; the worship of images and relics was discouraged in words which seem almost copied from the protest of Erasmus. His appeal for a translation of the Bible which weavers might repeat at their shuttle and ploughmen sing at their plough received at last a reply. At the outset of the ministry of Norfolk and More the king had promised an English version of the scriptures, while prohibiting the circulation of Tyndale's Lutheran translation. The work however lagged in the hands of the bishops; and as a preliminary measure the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments were now rendered into English, and ordered to be taught by every schoolmaster and father of a family to his children and pupils. But the bishops' version still hung on hand; till in despair of its appearance a friend of Archbishop Cranmer, Miles Coverdale, was employed to correct and revise the translation of Tyndale; and the Bible which he edited was published in 1538 under the avowed patronage of Henry himself.

### **The Lutheran Alliance**

But the force of events was already carrying England far from the standpoint of Erasmus or More. The dream of the New Learning was to be wrought out through the progress of education and piety. In the policy of Cromwell reform was to be brought about by the brute force of the Monarchy. The story of the royal supremacy was graven even on the titlepage of the new Bible. It is Henry on his throne who gives the sacred volume to Cranmer, ere Cranmer and Cromwell can distribute it to the throng of priests and laymen below. Hitherto men had looked on religious truth as a gift from the Church. They were now to look on it as

a gift from the king. The very gratitude of Englishmen for fresh spiritual enlightenment was to tell to the profit of the royal power. No conception could be further from that of the New Learning, from the plea for intellectual freedom which runs through the life of Erasmus or the craving for political liberty which gives nobleness to the speculations of More. Nor was it possible for Henry himself to avoid drifting from the standpoint he had chosen. He had written against Luther; he had persisted in opposing Lutheran doctrine; he had passed new laws to hinder the circulation of Lutheran books in his realm. But influences from without as from within drove him nearer to Lutheranism. If the encouragement of Francis had done somewhat to bring about his final breach with the Papacy, he soon found little will in the French king to follow him in any course of separation from Rome; and the French alliance threatened to become useless as a shelter against the wrath of the Emperor. Charles was goaded into action by the bill annulling Mary's right of succession; and in 1535 he proposed to unite his house with that of Francis by close intermarriage and to sanction Mary's marriage with a son of the French king, if Francis would join in an attack on England. Whether such a proposal was serious or no, Henry had to dread attack from Charles himself and to look for new allies against it. He was driven to offer his alliance to the Lutheran princes of North Germany, who dreaded like himself the power of the Emperor, and who were now gathering in the League of Schmalkald.

### **The Articles of 1536**

But the German Princes made agreement as to doctrine a condition of their alliance; and their pressure was backed by Henry's partizans among the clergy at home. In Cromwell's scheme for mastering the priesthood it had been needful to place men on whom the king could rely at their head. Cranmer became Primate, Latimer became Bishop of Worcester, Shaxton and Barlow were raised to the sees of Salisbury and St. David's, Hilsey to that of Rochester, Goodrich to that of Ely, Fox to that of Hereford. But it was hard to find men among the clergy who paused at Henry's theological resting-place; and of these prelates all except Latimer were known to sympathize with Lutheranism, though Cranmer lagged far behind his fellows in their zeal for reform. The influence of these men as well as of an attempt to comply at least partly with the demand of the German Princes left its stamp on the Articles of 1536. For the principle

of Catholicism, of a universal form of faith overspreading all temporal dominions, the Lutheran states had substituted the principle of territorial religion, of the right of each sovereign or people to determine the form of belief which should be held within their bounds. The severance from Rome had already brought Henry to this principle; and the Act of Supremacy was its emphatic assertion. In England too, as in North Germany, the repudiation of the Papal authority as a ground of faith, of the voice of the Pope as a declaration of truth, had driven men to find such a ground and declaration in the Bible; and the Articles expressly based the faith of the Church of England on the Bible and the three Creeds. With such fundamental principles of agreement it was possible to borrow from the Augsburg Confession five of the ten articles which Henry laid before the Convocation. If penance was still retained as a sacrament, baptism and the Lord's Supper were alone maintained to be sacraments with it; the doctrine of Transubstantiation which Henry stubbornly maintained differed so little from the doctrine maintained by Luther that the words of Lutheran formularies were borrowed to explain it; Confession was admitted by the Lutheran Churches as well as by the English. The veneration of saints and the doctrine of prayer to them, though still retained, was so modified as to present little difficulty even to a Lutheran.

### **The Irish Churches**

However disguised in form, the doctrinal advance made in the Articles of 1536 was an immense one; and a vehement opposition might have been looked for from those of the bishops like Gardiner, who while they agreed with Henry's policy of establishing a national Church remained opposed to any change in faith. But the Articles had been drawn up by Henry's own hand, and all whisper of opposition was hushed. Bishops, abbots, clergy, not only subscribed to them, but carried out with implicit obedience the injunctions which put their doctrine roughly into practice; and the failure of the Pilgrimage of Grace in the following autumn ended all thought of resistance among the laity. But Cromwell found a different reception for his reforms when he turned to extend them to the sister island. The religious aspect of Ireland was hardly less chaotic than its political aspect had been. Ever since Strongbow's landing there had been no one Irish Church, simply because there had been no one Irish nation. There was not the slightest difference

in doctrine or discipline between the Church without the Pale and the Church within it. But within the Pale the clergy were exclusively of English blood and speech, and without it they were exclusively of Irish. Irishmen were shut out by law from abbeys and churches within the English boundary, and the ill-will of the natives shut out Englishmen from churches and abbeys outside it. As to the religious state of the country, it was much on a level with its political condition. Feuds and misrule told fatally on ecclesiastical discipline. The bishops were political officers, or hard fighters like the chiefs around them; their sees were neglected, their cathedrals abandoned to decay. Through whole dioceses the churches lay in ruins and without priests. The only preaching done in the country was done by the begging friars, and the results of the friars' preaching were small. "If the King do not provide a remedy," it was said in 1525, "there will be no more Christentie than in the middle of Turkey."

### **Ireland and the Supremacy**

Unfortunately the remedy which Henry provided was worse than the disease. Politically Ireland was one with England, and the great revolution which was severing the one country from the Papacy extended itself naturally to the other. The results of it indeed at first seemed small enough. The Supremacy, a question which had convulsed England, passed over into Ireland to meet its only obstacle in a general indifference. Everybody was ready to accept it without a thought of the consequences. The bishops and clergy within the Pale bent to the king's will as easily as their fellows in England, and their example was followed by at least four prelates of dioceses without the Pale. The native chieftains made no more scruple than the Lords of the Council in renouncing obedience to the Bishop of Rome, and in acknowledging Henry as the "Supreme Head of the Church of England and Ireland under Christ." There was none of the resistance to the dissolution of the abbeys which had been witnessed on the other side of the Channel, and the greedy chieftains showed themselves perfectly willing to share the plunder of the Church. But the results of the measure were fatal to the little culture and religion which even the past centuries of disorder had spared. Such as they were, the religious houses were the only schools that Ireland contained. The system of vicars, so general in England, was rare in Ireland; churches in the patronage of the abbeys were for the most

part served by the religious themselves, and the dissolution of their houses suspended public worship over large districts of the country. The friars, hitherto the only preachers, and who continued to labour and teach in spite of the efforts of the Government, were thrown necessarily into a position of antagonism to the English rule.

### **Ireland and the Religious Changes**

Had the ecclesiastical changes which were forced on the country ended here however, in the end little harm would have been done. But in England the breach with Rome, the destruction of the monastic orders, and the establishment of the Supremacy, had roused in a portion of the people itself a desire for theological change which Henry shared and was cautiously satisfying. In Ireland the spirit of the Reformation never existed among the people at all. They accepted the legislative measures passed in the English Parliament without any dream of theological consequences or of any change in the doctrine or ceremonies of the Church. Not a single voice demanded the abolition of pilgrimages, or the destruction of images, or the reform of public worship. The mission of Archbishop Browne in 1535 “for the plucking down of idols and extinguishing of idolatry” was a first step in the long effort of the English Government to force a new faith on a people who to a man clung passionately to their old religion. Browne’s attempts at “tuning the pulpits” were met by a sullen and significant opposition. “Neither by gentle exhortation,” the Archbishop wrote to Cromwell, “nor by evangelical instruction, neither by oath of them solemnly taken, nor yet by threats of sharp correction may I persuade or induce any whether religious or secular since my coming over once to preach the Word of God nor the just title of our illustrious Prince.” Even the acceptance of the Supremacy, which had been so quietly effected, was brought into question when its results became clear. The bishops abstained from compliance with the order to erase the Pope’s name out of their mass-books. The pulpits remained steadily silent. When Browne ordered the destruction of the images and relics in his own cathedral, he had to report that the prior and canons “find them so sweet for their gain that they heed not my words.” Cromwell however was resolute for a religious uniformity between the two islands, and the Primate borrowed some of his patron’s vigour. Recalcitrant priests were thrown into prison, images were plucked down from the rood-loft, and the most venerable of Irish

relics, the staff of St. Patrick, was burned in the market-place. But he found no support in his vigour save from across the Channel. The Irish Council looked coldly on; even the Lord Deputy still knelt to say prayers before an image at Trim. A sullen dogged opposition baffled Cromwell's efforts, and their only result was to unite all Ireland against the Crown.

### **The English Protestants**

But Cromwell found it easier to deal with Irish inaction than with the feverish activity which his reforms stirred in England itself. It was impossible to strike blow after blow at the Church without rousing wild hopes in the party who sympathized with the work which Luther was doing over-sea. Few as these "Lutherans" or "Protestants" still were in numbers, their new hopes made them a formidable force; and in the school of persecution they had learned a violence which delighted in outrages on the faith which had so long trampled them under foot. At the very outset of Cromwell's changes four Suffolk youths broke into a church at Dovercourt, tore down a wonder-working crucifix, and burned it in the fields. The suppression of the lesser monasteries was the signal for a new outburst of ribald insult to the old religion. The roughness, insolence, and extortion of the Commissioners sent to effect it drove the whole monastic body to despair. Their servants rode along the road with copes for doublets or tunics for saddle-cloths, and scattered panic among the larger houses which were left. Some sold their jewels and relics to provide for the evil day they saw approaching. Some begged of their own will for dissolution. It was worse when fresh ordinances of the Vicar-General ordered the removal of objects of superstitious veneration. Their removal, bitter enough to those whose religion twined itself around the image or the relic which was taken away, was embittered yet more by the insults with which it was accompanied. A miraculous rood at Boxley, which bowed its head and stirred its eyes, was paraded from market to market and exhibited as a juggle before the Court. Images of the Virgin were stripped of their costly vestments and sent to be publicly burned at London. Latimer forwarded to the capital the figure of Our Lady, which he had thrust out of his cathedral church at Worcester, with rough words of scorn: "She with her old sister of Walsingham, her younger sister of Ipswich, and their two other sisters of Doncaster and Penrice, would make a jolly muster at Smithfield." Fresh orders were given to fling all relics from their reliquaries, and to level every shrine with the ground. In

1538 the bones of St. Thomas of Canterbury were torn from the stately shrine which had been the glory of his metropolitan church, and his name was erased from the service-books as that of a traitor.

The introduction of the English Bible into churches gave a new opening for the zeal of the Protestants. In spite of royal injunctions that it should be read decently and without comment, the young zealots of the party prided themselves on shouting it out to a circle of excited hearers during the service of mass, and accompanied their reading with violent expositions. Protestant maidens took the new English primer to church with them and studied it ostentatiously during matins. Insult passed into open violence when the Bishops' Courts were invaded and broken up by Protestant mobs; and law and public opinion were outraged at once when priests who favoured the new doctrines began openly to bring home wives to their vicarages. A fiery outburst of popular discussion compensated for the silence of the pulpits. The new Scriptures, in Henry's bitter words of complaint, were "disputed, rimed, sung, and jangled in every tavern and alehouse." The articles which dictated the belief of the English Church roused a furious controversy. Above all, the Sacrament of the Mass, the centre of the Catholic system of faith and worship, and which still remained sacred to the bulk of Englishmen, was attacked with a scurrility and profaneness which passes belief. The doctrine of Transubstantiation, which was as yet recognized by law, was held up to scorn in ballads and mystery plays. In one church a Protestant lawyer raised a dog in his hands when the priest elevated the Host. The most sacred words of the old worship, the words of consecration, "Hoc est corpus," were travestied into a nickname for jugglery as "Hocus-pocus."

### **The Six Articles**

It was by this attack on the Mass, even more than by the other outrages, that the temper both of Henry and the nation was stirred to a deep resentment. With the Protestants Henry had no sympathy whatever. He was a man of the New Learning; he was proud of his orthodoxy and of his title of Defender of the Faith. And above all he shared to the utmost his people's love of order, their clinging to the past, their hatred of extravagance and excess. The first sign of reaction was seen in the Parliament of 1539. Never had the Houses shown so little care for political liberty. The Monarchy seemed to free itself from all

parliamentary restrictions whatever when a formal statute gave the king's proclamations the force of parliamentary laws. Nor did the Church find favour with them. No word of the old opposition was heard when a bill was introduced granting to the king the greater monasteries which had been saved in 1536. More than six hundred religious houses fell at a blow, and so great was the spoil that the king promised never again to call on his people for subsidies. But the Houses were equally at one in withstanding the new innovations in religion, and an act for "abolishing diversity of opinions in certain articles concerning Christian religion" passed with general assent. On the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which was reasserted by the first of six Articles to which the Act owes its usual name, there was no difference of feeling or belief between the men of the New Learning and the older Catholics. But the road to a further instalment of even moderate reform seemed closed by the five other articles which sanctioned communion in one kind, the celibacy of the clergy, monastic vows, private masses, and auricular confession. A more terrible feature of the reaction was the revival of persecution. Burning was denounced as the penalty for a denial of transubstantiation; on a second offence it became the penalty for an infraction of the other five doctrines. A refusal to confess or to attend Mass was made felony. It was in vain that Cranmer, with the five bishops who partially sympathized with the Protestants, struggled against the bill in the Lords: the Commons were "all of one opinion," and Henry himself acted as spokesman on the side of the articles. In London alone five hundred Protestants were indicted under the new act. Latimer and Shaxton were imprisoned, and the former forced into a resignation of his see. Cranmer himself was only saved by Henry's personal favour.

### **Cromwell's last Struggle**

But the first burst of triumph was no sooner spent than the hand of Cromwell made itself felt. Though his opinions remained those of the New Learning and differed little from the general sentiment which found itself represented in the act, he leaned instinctively to the one party which did not long for his fall. His wish was to restrain the Protestant excesses, but he had no mind to ruin the Protestants. In a little time therefore the bishops were quietly released. The London indictments were quashed. The magistrates were checked in their enforcement of the law, while a general pardon cleared the prisons of the heretics who had

been arrested under its provisions. A few months after the enactment of the Six Articles we find from a Protestant letter that persecution had wholly ceased, "the Word is powerfully preached and books of every kind may safely be exposed for sale." Never indeed had Cromwell shown such greatness as in his last struggle against Fate. "Beknaved" by the king, whose confidence in him waned as he discerned the full meaning of the religious changes which Cromwell had brought about, met too by a growing opposition in the Council as his favour declined, the temper of the man remained indomitable as ever. He stood absolutely alone. Wolsey, hated as he had been by the nobles, had been supported by the Church; but Churchmen hated Cromwell with an even fiercer hate than the nobles themselves. His only friends were the Protestants, and their friendship was more fatal than the hatred of his foes. But he showed no signs of fear or of halting in the course he had entered on. So long as Henry supported him, however reluctant his support might be, he was more than a match for his foes. He was strong enough to expel his chief opponent, Bishop Gardiner of Winchester, from the royal Council. He met the hostility of the nobles with a threat which marked his power. "If the lords would handle him so, he would give them such a breakfast as never was made in England, and that the proudest of them should know."

### **The Courtenays and the Poles**

He soon gave a terrible earnest of the way in which he could fulfil his threat. The opposition to his system gathered above all round two houses which represented what yet lingered of the Yorkist tradition, the Courtenays and the Poles. Courtenay, the Marquis of Exeter, was of royal blood, a grandson through his mother of Edward the Fourth. He was known to have bitterly denounced the "knaves that ruled about the King"; and his threats to "give them some day a buffet" were formidable in the mouth of one whose influence in the western counties was supreme. Margaret, the Countess of Salisbury, a daughter of the Duke of Clarence by the heiress of the Earl of Warwick, and a niece of Edward the Fourth, had married Sir Richard Pole, and became mother of Lord Montacute as of Sir Geoffry and Reginald Pole. The temper of her house might be guessed from the conduct of the younger of the three brothers. After refusing the highest favours from Henry as the price of his approval of the divorce, Reginald Pole had taken refuge at Rome, where he had bitterly attacked the king in a book on "The Unity of the Church."

“There may be found ways enough in Italy,” Cromwell wrote to him in significant words, “to rid a treacherous subject. When Justice can take no place by process of law at home, sometimes she may be enforced to take new means abroad.” But he had left hostages in Henry’s hands. “Pity that the folly of one witless fool,” Cromwell wrote ominously, “should be the ruin of so great a family. Let him follow ambition as fast as he can, those that little have offended (saving that he is of their kin), were it not for the great mercy and benignity of the prince, should and might feel what it is to have such a traitor as their kinsman.” The “great mercy and benignity of the prince” was no longer to shelter them. In 1538 the Pope, Paul the Third, published a bull of excommunication and deposition against Henry, and Pole pressed the Emperor vigorously though ineffectually to carry the bull into execution. His efforts only brought about, as Cromwell had threatened, the ruin of his house. His brother Lord Montacute and the Marquis of Exeter, with other friends of the two great families, were arrested on a charge of treason and executed in the opening of 1539, while the Countess of Salisbury was attainted in Parliament and sent to the Tower.

### **The Lutheran Marriage**

Almost as terrible an act of bloodshed closed the year. The abbots of Glastonbury, Reading, and Colchester, men who had sate as mitred abbots among the lords, were charged with a denial of the king’s supremacy and hanged as traitors. But Cromwell relied for success on more than terror. His single will forced on a scheme of foreign policy whose aim was to bind England to the cause of the Reformation while it bound Henry helplessly to his minister. The daring boast which his enemies laid afterwards to Cromwell’s charge, whether uttered or not, is but the expression of his system, “In brief time he would bring things to such a pass that the King with all his power should not be able to hinder him.” His plans rested, like the plan which proved fatal to Wolsey, on a fresh marriage of his master. Henry’s third wife, Jane Seymour, had died in childbirth; and in the opening of 1540 Cromwell replaced her by a German consort, Anne of Cleves, a sister-in-law of the Lutheran Elector of Saxony. He dared even to resist Henry’s caprice when the king revolted on their first interview from the coarse features and unwieldy form of his new bride. For the moment Cromwell had brought matters “to such a pass” that it was impossible to recoil from the marriage, and

the minister's elevation to the Earldom of Essex seemed to proclaim his success. The marriage of Anne of Cleves however was but the first step in a policy which, had it been carried out as he designed it, would have anticipated the triumphs of Richelieu. Charles and the House of Austria could alone bring about a Catholic reaction strong enough to arrest and roll back the Reformation; and Cromwell was no sooner united with the princes of North Germany than he sought to league them with France for the overthrow of the Emperor.

### **Fall of Cromwell**

Had he succeeded, the whole face of Europe would have been changed, Southern Germany would have been secured for Protestantism, and the Thirty Years War averted. But he failed as men failed who stand ahead of their age. The German princes shrank from a contest with the Emperor, France from a struggle which would be fatal to Catholicism; and Henry, left alone to bear the resentment of the House of Austria and chained to a wife he loathed, turned savagely on his minister. In June the long struggle came to an end. The nobles sprang on Cromwell with a fierceness that told of their long-hoarded hate. Taunts and execrations burst from the Lords at the Council table as the Duke of Norfolk, who had been entrusted with the minister's arrest, tore the ensign of the Garter from his neck. At the charge of treason Cromwell flung his cap on the ground with a passionate cry of despair. "This then," he exclaimed, "is my guerdon for the services I have done! On your consciences, I ask you, am I a traitor?" Then with a sudden sense that all was over he bade his foes make quick work, and not leave him to languish in prison. Quick work was made. A few days after his arrest he was attainted in Parliament, and at the close of July a burst of popular applause hailed his death on the scaffold.

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**END OF VOL. III**

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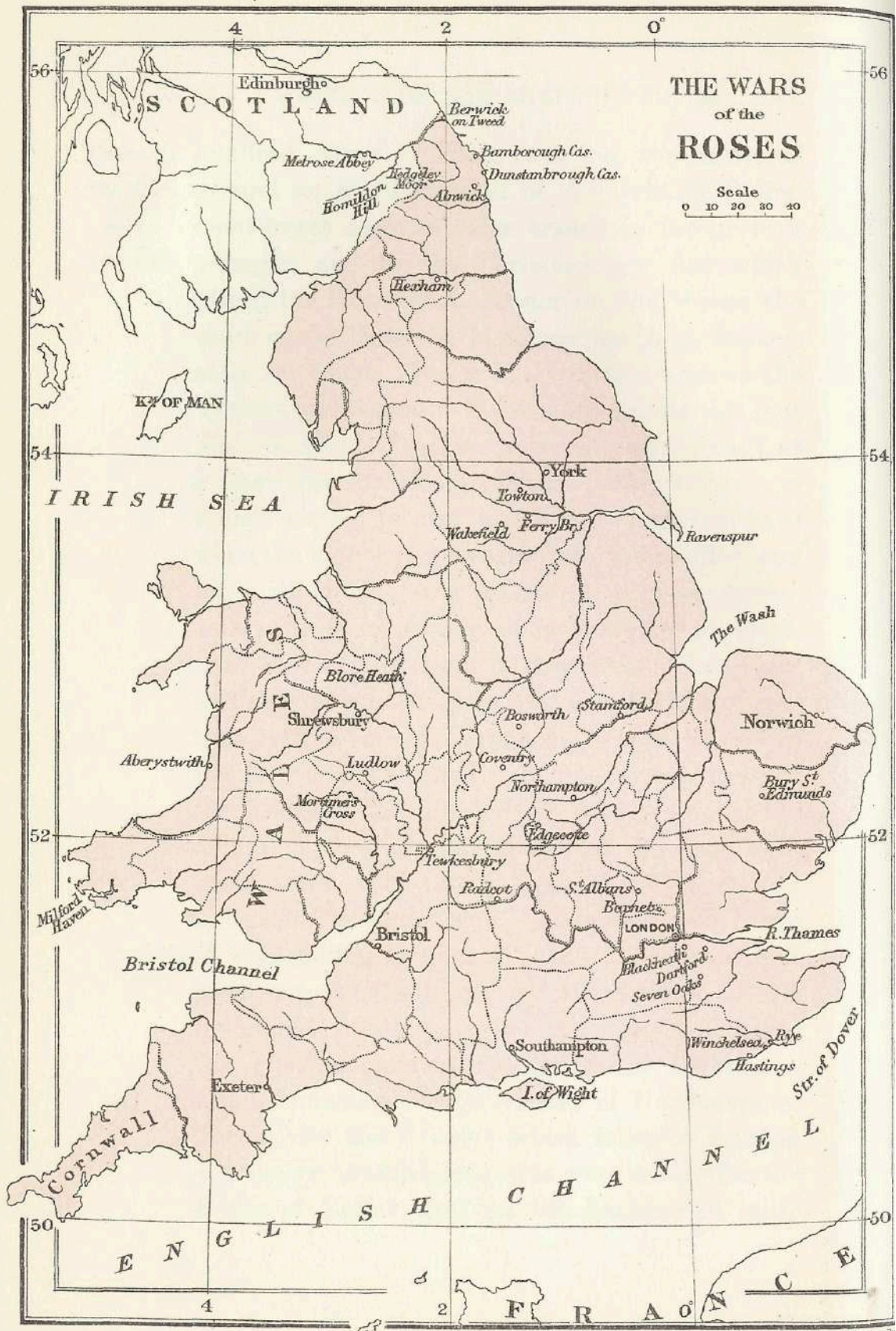
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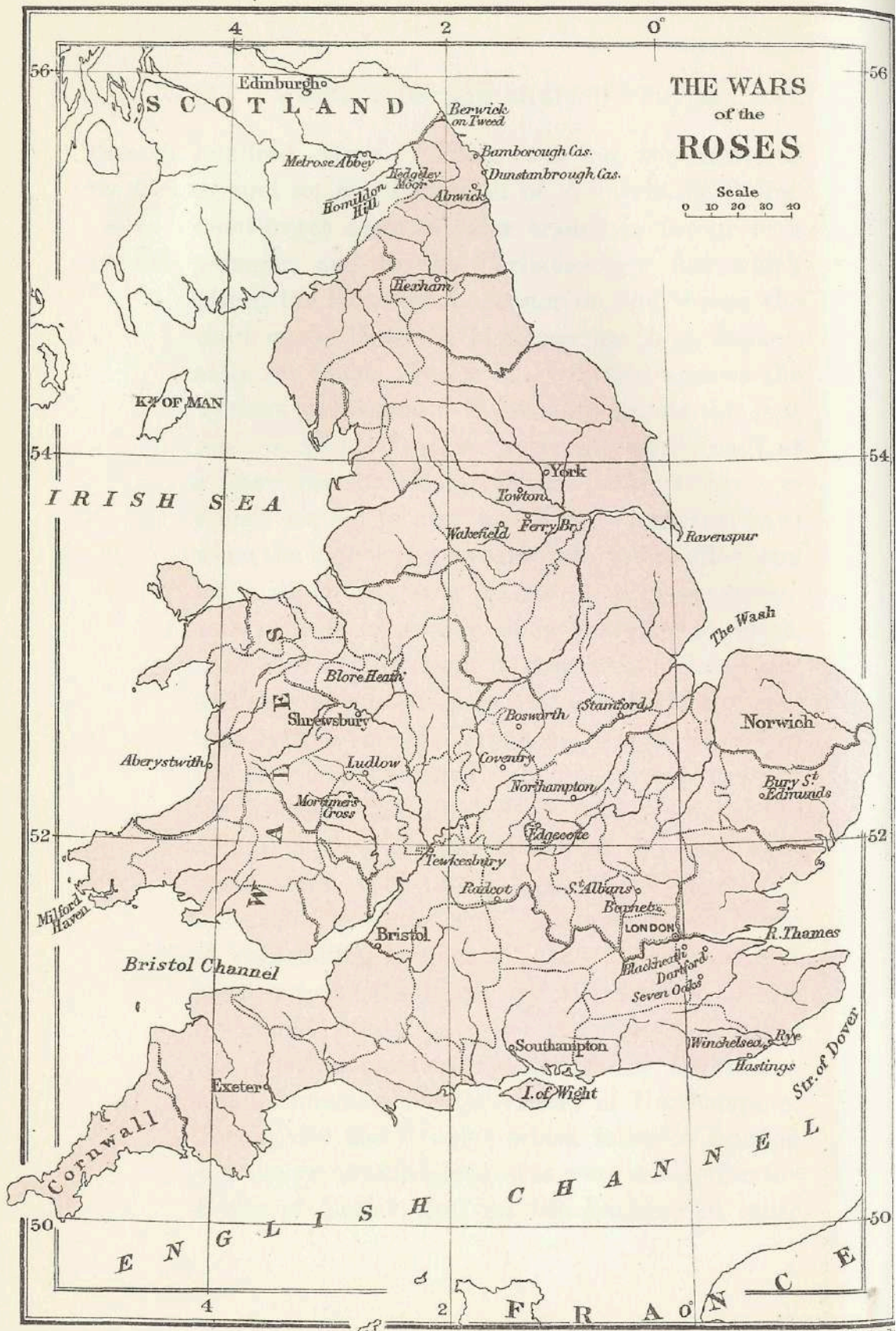
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