

**The Comic History
Of England
part (8)**

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The Comic History Of England

Gilbert Abbott A'Beckett



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CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

NATIONAL INDUSTRY.

LET us now turn from the turmoil of war, and apply our eyeglass to the pursuits of peace; for, having been surfeited for the present with royal rapacity, it will be refreshing to take a glance at national industry, London was at a very early period famous for the abundance of its wool, and it has been ingeniously suggested that the great quantity of wool may account for a sort of natural shyness or sheepishness among our fellow-countrymen. The Bill of Exchange was a luxury introduced in the beginning of the thirteenth century, for the accommodation of our forefathers, who had learned the value of a good name, and perhaps occasionally experienced the inconveniences of a bad one.

There is nothing very interesting in the history of Commerce until the time of Whittington, whose cat, we have already said, was a fabulous animal, though it has taken its place by the side of the British Lion in our English annals, We are inclined to believe that there is some analogy between these two brutes, and that both are meant to be the types respectively of our political and commercial prosperity.

We have sometimes thought that the British Lion, from its plurality of lives, ought rather to be called the British Cat, especially from its readiness to come to the scratch when the altar or the throne may seem to be in jeopardy. Whatever may be the exact nature of the beast, it is certainly a very highly-trained and somewhat harmless animal, for any statesman may place his head in the British Lion's mouth, and remove it again without suffering the slightest injury. The creature will roar loudly enough and show an ample expanse of jaw, but it is frequently *vox et prateria nihil* with the noisy brute, whose grumbling is often indicative of his extreme emptiness.

Whittington was certainly three times Lord Mayor of London, and we find him "doing a bill" for Henry the Fourth to the tune of a

thousand pounds, and taking the subsidy on wool—out of which the sovereign generally fleeced the people as collateral security. In the reign of Henry the Fifth considerable advance was made in the art of ship-building, though from the pictures of the period it would seem that the craft exhibited very little of the workman's cunning. One of the ships of war of the fifteenth century, described in the Harleian MS., has all the appearance of a raft constructed of a few planks, with a sort of sentry-box at one end for the accommodation of the steersman. In the larger vessels the entire crew will be found always crowding the deck in a dense mass; for the rules against taking more than the number were not enforced, and an ancient ship, like a modern carpet bag, was never so full but something additional could be always crammed into it. In this age commerce was so highly respectable that even kings carried it on; and the highest ecclesiastics were in business for themselves as tradesmen of the humblest character. Matthew Paris tells us of an abbot of St. Alban's who did a good deal in the fish line, under the name of William of Trumpington.



His chief transactions were in Yarmouth herrings, and the worthy abbot undertook to put upon every breakfast table as good a bloater as money could procure, at a very moderate figure. The benevolent dignitary had come to the conclusion that the cure of herrings would pay him better than the cure of souls, and he accordingly added the former lucrative branch to the latter employment, with a pompous declaration that the two might be considered analogous. This habit among the churchmen, of making all fish that came to their net, was by no means popular and it was said in a lampoon of the day, that the (chap. viii.) next thing to be done would be the conversion of a prebendal stall into an oyster stall.

Among the other disreputable sources of revenue to which the ecclesiastics devoted themselves we must not omit to mention smuggling, which they carried on to an alarming extent in wool; for after going wool-gathering in all directions, they padded themselves with it and stuffed it under their gowns for the purpose of eluding the Customs' regulations, to which the article was subjected.

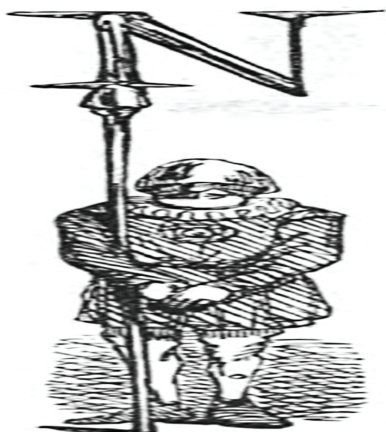
Edward the Fourth was a true tradesman at heart, and, had he been a general dealer instead of a king, he would have been quite in his proper station. Nature had fitted him for the counter, though Fortune had placed him on the throne; but even in his commercial transactions he was guilty of acts that were quite unworthy of the high character of the British tradesman. The butt of Malmsey in which he caused his brother to be drowned was, it is believed, actually sold as a full fruity wine with "plenty of body in it," after poor Clarence had been in soak till death relieved him from his drenching. Edward the Fourth had also the disagreeable habit of enriching himself by money which he borrowed from the merchants, and never thought proper to return to them himself; but if he paid them at all, he, by laying on taxes, took it out of the people. It was also a fraudulent propensity of some of our early kings, to depreciate the coin of the realm, and Edward the Third

managed to squeeze two hundred and seventy pennies, instead of two hundred and forty, out of a pound, which enabled him to put the odd half-crown into his own pocket. Henry the Fourth carried the sweating process still further, by diluting a pound into thirty shillings, a trick he excused by alleging the scarcity of money; though the expedient was as bad as that of the housewife who, when the strength of the tea was gone, filled up the pot with water for the purpose of making more of it. Edward the Fourth, considering that his predecessors had not subjected the pound to all the compound division of which it was capable, smashed it into four hundred pennies, which was certainly proving that he could make a pound go as far as anyone.

In speaking of the industry of the people, we may fairly allude to what was regarded at the time as a great drag upon it in the shape of a fearful increase of attorneys, who in 1455 had grown to such an extent in Norfolk and Suffolk, that those places were literally swarming with the black fraternity.

In the city of Norwich the attorneys were so plentiful that the evil began to correct itself, for they commenced preying on each other, like the water-lion “Ya-ah! Macker !” water-tiger in the drop of stagnant fluid viewed through the solar microscope. They were in the habit of attending markets and fairs where they worked people up into bringing and defending actions against each other, without the smallest legal ground for proceedings on either side. A salutary statute cut down the exuberance of the attorneys by limiting their numbers, and six were appointed as a necessary evil for Suffolk; six as a standing nuisance in Norfolk; while two were apportioned under the head of things that, as they “can’t be cured must be endured,” to the city of Norwich. Such was the state of national industry up to the period at which we have arrived in our history.

CHAPTER THE NINTH. OF THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.



OTWITHSTANDING that in a previous book we brought down the fashions and furniture of our forefathers to the fourteenth century, in the present chapter we shall have the pleasure of laying before our readers some considerably later intelligence.

We left our ancestors lying upon very uncomfortable beds, but the year 1415 introduces us to some luxuries in the way of curtains and counterpanes. The Duke of York set forth his bedding in his will, which bears the date we have named, and he seems to have died worth some thousands of pounds—of superior goose feathers.

At a somewhat later period the sheet burst upon the page of history, and a blank is supplied by the sudden appearance of the blanket.

It was about the same period that clocks with strings and weights began to have a striking influence on the time, and Edward the Fourth used to carry one about with him wherever he went, but we do not believe that he wore it in a watchpocket, from which, instead of key and seals, there hung a couple of weights and a pendulum. Costume seems to have been curtailed of very little of its exuberant absurdity in the reigns of Henry the Fourth and Fifth, though

reform was carried to extremes, for it cut off the surplus hair from the head, and took away at least half a yard from the foot by relieving the shoes of their long points, a fashion which had always been remarkable for extreme pointlessness.

In the reign of Edward the Fourth there appears to have been a practice prevalent of making a shift to go without a shirt, when those who had such a thing to their backs were seized with a spirit of self-assertion, and began to slash open their sleeves for the purpose of showing their possession of that very useful article.

The desire to prove the plenteousness and perhaps also the *propreté* of the under linen, led to a further ripping up of other parts of the dress, and the fops of the day began to outslash each other by opening the seams of their clothes in the most unseemly fashion.

Richard the Third and his "cousin of Buckingham" were notorious for their love of finery, and the term "buck," which is used at the present day, is evidently an abbreviation of Buckingham, Richard, probably, invented the Dicky or false front, which gave him the appearance of having always a clean breast, though the fact is that he was reduced to the expedient of wearing a false front, because the stains of guilt upon his bosom were utterly indelible.

The appetite of the fifteenth century seems to have been uncommonly good, for we find our ancestors eating four meals a day, beginning with breakfast at seven, dinner at ten, supper at four, and a collation taken in bed—oh, the cormorants!—between eight and nine in the evening. The meal taken in bed may have consisted of a *blanquette de veau*, or perhaps now and then a *bolster pudding*, while the ladies may have indulged themselves with a *côtelette en papillotes*. Earl Percy and his countess used to absorb between them a gallon of beer and a quart of wine, and before being tucked up for the night would tuck in a loaf of household bread, with other trifles to follow. A dinner in the days to which we are reverting generally lasted three hours, but tumblers and dancers were employed to amuse the feasters, so that a kind of caper sauce was served out with every dish that came to table.

Nothing in the whole annals of ancient and modern gluttony can exceed the dinner said to have been given by George Neville, the brother of the King-maker, on his induction to the Archbishopric of York, in the fifteenth century. It opened with a hundred and four oxen (au naturel), six wild bulls (a la ménagère), three hundred and four calves (en surprise), with innumerable entrées of pigs, bucks, stags, and roes, to an extent that is not only almost but quite incredible.

The pictures of the period represent a very inconvenient mode of laying the table, for we find a fish served up in a slop-basin, or rather laid across the top of that article of china-ware, which was much too small to admit the body of the animal. As far as we can discern the intention of the artist, we fancy we recognise in one of his pictures of a feast a duck lying on its back in a sort of sugar-basin or salt-cellar. This and a kind of mustard-pot, with an empty plate and half of a dinner-roll, may be said to constitute the entire provision made for a party of seven, who are standing up huddled together on one side of the table, in an existing representation of a dinner of the period. The sports of the people were very numerous in the fifteenth century; but if we may judge by the pictures we have seen of the games, there was more labour than fun in the frolics of our forefathers.

The contortions into which they seem to have thrown themselves while playing at bowls are quite painful to contemplate; and the well-known game of quarter-staff consisted of a mutual battering of shins and skulls, with a pole about six feet in length and some inches in circumference. Tennis was introduced at this early date, and it is therefore erroneous to assign its invention to Archbishop Tennison, a report which has been spread by some unprincipled person, whose career of crime commencing in a pun has ended in a falsehood. The professional fool was a highly respectable character in the middle ages; and the court jester was a most influential personage, who was allowed to criticise all the measures of the ministry. He was a sort of supplementary premier; but, in later administrations the present always excepted—the office of fool has merged among the members of the Government. It is a curious fact, that, judging

from the portraits which have been preserved, the fools seem to have been the most sensible-looking persons of their own time; and the proverb, that "it takes a wise man to make a fool," was, no doubt, continually realised. The practical jokes of the jester were sometimes exceedingly disagreeable, for they consisted chiefly of blows and buffets, administered by a short wand, called a bauble, which he was in the habit of carrying. It was all very well when the fool's sallies happened to be taken in good part, but a witicism coming mal-a-propos, would often prove no joke to the joker, who would get soundly thrashed' for his impertinence.

An ancient writer * describes the functions of a fool to have consisted chiefly of "making mouths, dancing about the house, leaping over the tables, outskipping men's heads, tripping up his companions' heels," and indulging in other similar facetio, which, though falling under the head of fun for the fool himself, might have been death to the victims of his exuberant gaiety. His life must have been one unbroken pantomime; though its last scene was seldom so brilliant as those bowers of bliss and realms of delight in the island of felicity, which owe their existence to the combined ingenuity of the painter and the machinist.

* Lodge, author of the *Wit's Miserie*, 4to, 1599.

The spirit of chivalry had already begun to decline, or rather chivalry had lost its spirit altogether, for when it once became diluted it took very little time to evaporate. The few real combats that were fought referred chiefly to judicial proceedings, in which points of law were decided by the points of lances. The combatants probably thought they might as well bleed each other as allow themselves to be bled by the hands of the lawyers. The tournaments had dwindled down into the most contemptible exhibitions, for the spears used were entirely headless, and an encounter generally ended in the clashing together of a couple of blunted swords or the flourishing in the air of a brace of huge choppers, so that as the antagonists kept turning about,

they might be said to revolve round each others' axes.

Before concluding our chapter on the manners and customs of the people at the date to which our history has arrived we may notice some regulations for apparel, by which it was ordered, not only that every man should cut his coat according to his cloth, but should select his cloth according to the means he had of buying it. Apparel was not the only thing with which the law interfered, but some Acts were passed, fixing the rate of meals to be allowed to servants, and thus ameliorating their condition.

Articles of dress were subjected to the most stringent legislation, and tailors were of necessity guided by Parliamentary measures; carters and ploughmen were limited by law to a blanket, so that the lightness of the restrictions permitted a looseness of attire, which was highly convenient.

Persons not of noble rank were prohibited from wearing garments of undue brevity; and it was only those of the highest standing to whom the shortest dresses were permitted.

It was in the period to which the present chapter refers, that English pauperism first became the subject of legislation; and it was an acknowledged principle, that the land must provide the poor with food and shelter, for civilization had not yet required the suppression of destitution by starvation and imprisonment.

We have now brought down our account of the condition of the people, from the highest to the lowest, from the king on his throne to the pauper on his parish, from the royal robber in the palace to the sturdy beggar in the public thoroughfare. We have seen how England was torn to pieces by the thorns belonging to the Roses, and how, after fighting about the difference between white and red, the union of both taught those who had been particular to a shade, the folly of observing so much nicety. Future chapters must develop the influence which this union produced, and will show the effect of that junction between the damask and the cabbage roses, which had only been brought about by dyeing them in the blood

BOOK V. FROM THE ACCESSION OF HENRY THE SEVENTH TO THE END OF THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH.

CHAPTER THE FIRST. HENRY THE SEVENTH.



THOUGH Henry had got the crown upon his head, he did not feel quite sure of being able to keep it there, for he knew there was nothing so difficult to balance on the top of a human pole as a regal diadem. He felt that what had been won by the sword must be sustained by that dangerous weapon, though he was not insensible to the fact that edged tools are frequently hurtful to the hand that uses them. He became jealous of Edward Plantagenet, a boy of fifteen, the heir of the Duke of York, and grandson of Warwick, the king-maker. This unhappy lad was sent to the Tower, lest his superior right might prove mightier than the might which Henry had displayed on the field of Bosworth. The Princess Elizabeth, daughter of the Queen Dowager, who

was known by the humbler name of Mrs. E. Woodville, was let out of prison, to which she had been consigned by Richard the Third, who kept her closely under lock and key from the moment when he found it impossible to unite her to him in wedlock. Henry came up to London five days after the battle of Bosworth, and was met at Hornsey by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, all dressed in violet, which caused the new king to exclaim, "Ha! gentlemen, you wish me to take a hint. Your privileges shall be, like yourselves, in-violate!" He then proceeded in a close chariot to St. Paul's, where he deposited his three standards; and it has been suggested, that the celebrated Standard at Cornhill was one of those alluded to. The festivities in London were so numerous at the accession, that the city became crowded to suffocation, and the "sweating sickness," which will be remembered as Stanley's old complaint, broke out among the inhabitants.



When it had abated Henry began to think about his coronation, and he took an early dinner at Lambeth with the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Bouchier to talk the matter over. The king and the prelate soon came to terms over their chop for the performance of the ceremony, which took place on the 30th of October, 1485, in the usual style of elegance. The good archbishop was an

old and experienced hand: for he had crowned Richard the Third only two years before, and indeed the system of the prelate was, to ask no questions that he might hear no falsehoods; but he was always ready to perform a coronation for anyone who could find his own crown, and pay the fees that were usual.

A Parliament was now summoned, but when the Commons came together, it turned out that several of them had been attainted and outlawed in previous reigns without the attainders having been since reversed, and Henry himself was in the same doubtful predicament. The opinion of the judges was required in this disagreeable dilemma, but the intention in consulting them was only to get these accommodating interpreters of the law to twist it into a shape that would meet existing contingencies. With the usual pliability of the judges of those days, the parties whose opinion was asked gave it in favour of the strongest side, and Henry's having got the crown was declared to have cured all deficiencies of title. The Commons were obliged to have bills passed to reverse their attainders, but the king, like one of those patent fire-places which are advertised to consume their own smoke, was alleged to have cured the defects of his own title by the bare fact of his having got possession of the royal dignity.

Having settled all matters concerning his claim to the throne, he began to think about his intended wife, Elizabeth. "I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting," said he to Miss Woodville; "but, really I have been detained by other engagements." The young lady, who had sometimes feared that her case was one of breach of promise, was glad to disguise her real annoyance, and saying that "It did not at all signify," she prepared for the much retarded nuptials. They were solemnised on the 18th of January, 1486, and they were no sooner over than Henry exclaimed, "Now, Madam, recollect I have married you, but have not married your family." This uncourteous speech had reference to old Mrs. Woodville, who had already written to know what her new son-in-law would do for her. "I will not have her in the house," roared Henry, with savage earnestness; but he settled a small annuity upon her, which he

enabled himself to pay by pocketing the whole of her dower.

The queen became anxious for her coronation, as any woman might reasonably be; but Henry put her off day after day, by exclaiming, "Don't be in a hurry; there's time enough for that nonsense." In this heartless manner he succeeded in adjourning the pageant for an indefinite period, Henry's new project was to get up his popularity by a tour in the provinces. Happening to put up at Lincoln, he heard that Lord Lovel, with Humphrey and Thomas Stafford "had gone with dangerous intentions no man knew whither.

"They had much better have remained where they were; for Lord Lovel, after collecting a large body of insurgents, found himself quite unable to pay their wages, and at once disbanded them. He flew into Flanders; but the two Staffords were taken in the very act of concocting an insurrection, for which Humphrey, the elder, was hanged, while Thomas, on account of his youth, was pardoned.

Henry arrived on the 26th of April, 1486, at York, where Richard the Third, though killed on Bosworth Field, was still living in some of the people's memories. The marking-ink, in which the tyrant's name was written on their hearts, being by no means indelible, Henry determined to sponge it out as quickly as possible. He tried soft soap upon some and golden ointment upon others; both of which specifics had so much effect that in less than a month the city rang with cries of "Long live King Henry!"

On the 20th of September, the Court newsman of the day announced the interesting fact that the happiness of the king's domestic circle had been increased by the birth of a son; or, rather, the royal circle had been turned into a triangle by the arrival of an infant heir, who was named Arthur.

We must now request the reader to throw the luggage of his imagination on board the boat, and accompany us to Ireland, where, on landing, we will introduce him, ideally, to a priest and a boy who have just arrived in Dublin. The priest describes his young charge as Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, which will astonish us not a little, inasmuch as our friend, the reader, will re-

member that we left the little fellow not long ago a close prisoner in the Tower, How he got out is the question which we first ask ourselves, which we answer by intimating, that he did not get out at all, but he was only “a boy dressed up” to represent the young earl, and he played his part so well that many believed his story to be genuine. He had studied the character he represented, and had got by heart all the adventures of the young prince, together with a fund of anecdote that appeared quite inexhaustible.

The juvenile impostor scarcely spoke a sentence that did not begin with “When I was a prisoner in the Tower,” which made everyone believe that he had really been an inmate of that gloomy jail; and the trick succeeded to a miracle.

The urchin was proclaimed as Edward the Sixth, King of England and France and Lord of Ireland; for such was the credulity of the Hibernians that they believed every word of the tale that had been told to them.



Henry, desirous of exposing the fraud, had the real Plantagenet taken out of the Tower, for exhibition in the London streets; but the Irish declared that the real thing was a mere imposition, and the mock duke the genuine article. They, in fact, illustrated that

instructive fable, in which an actor, having been applauded for his imitation of a pig, was succeeded by a rival who went the whole hog and concealed in the folds of his dress a rear brute, whose squeak was pronounced very far less natural than that of the original representative of the porcine character.

Henry becoming a little alarmed at these proceedings, began rushing into the extremes of levity and severity; now pardoning a host of political offenders, and the next day, packing off the Queen Dowager marked "Carriage paid, with care," to the monks at Bermondsey Lambert Simnel, for so the impostor was called, held out as long as he could, and even got up, by subscription, one coronation during the season; but upon Henry's taking measures to chastise him he soon shrunk into insignificance. After a battle at Stoke, the pretender and his friend, the priest, were taken into custody, when the latter was handed over to the church for trial, and the former received a contemptuous pardon, including the place of scullion, to wash up the dishes and run for the beer in the royal household.

He was at once placed in the kitchen, where his perquisites, probably in the way of kitchen stuff, enabled him to save a little money, and, in order to better himself, he subsequently sought and obtained the office of superintendent of the poultry yard, under the imposing title of the king's falconer.

The priest, his tutor, seems to have dropped down one of those gratings of the past which lead to the common sewer of obscurity, in which it is quite impossible to follow him. We hear of him last looking through the bars of a prison, where he was left till called for, and, as nobody ever called, he never seems to have emerged from his captivity.

The friends of the house of York now became clamorous at the treatment of the Queen Elizabeth, who had been kept in obscurity, and had urged "that little matter of the coronation" over and over again upon the attention of her selfish husband. "How you bother!" he would sometimes exclaim to his unhappy consort, whom he

would endeavour to quiet by the philosophical inquiry of "What are the odds, so long as you're happy?"

a question which, as Elizabeth was not happy, she found some difficulty in answering. At length, one morning at breakfast, he said sulkily, "Well, I suppose I shall never have any peace till that affair comes off;" and the necessary orders for the coronation of the queen were immediately given. Henry himself behaved in a very ungentlemanly manner during the entire ceremony, for he viewed it from behind a screen, * which was afterwards brought into the hall, to enable him to sit at his ease out of sight, and take occasional peeps at the dinner. He had refused to honour the proceedings with his presence, having declared the ceremony to be "slow," and alleged the impossibility of his sitting it out after having once suffered the infliction.

It was at about this period of the reign of Henry the Seventh that the court of Star Chamber was established; and though it, ultimately, "became odious by the tyrannical exercise of its powers," its intentions were originally as honourable as the most scrupulous of its suitors could have desired. It was founded in consequence of the inefficiency of the ordinary tribunals to do complete justice in criminal matters and other offences of an extraordinary and dangerous character, and to supply a sort of criminal equity if we may be allowed the term—which should reach the offences of great men, whom the inferior judges and juries of the ordinary tribunals might have been afraid to visit with their merited punishment.

The old chroniclers affirm that he looked on "from behind a lattice," A modern authority has it that the king looked on at the dinner from behind a lettuce spelt lattice and had a magnificent salad before him during the proceedings.

Vide the valuable work on the Equitable Jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery» comprising its Rise, Progress, and

Final Establishment. By George Spence, Esq.,

It has been suggested with some plausibility that the court of Star Chamber derived its name from the decorations of the room in

which it was held, though it is, perhaps, a more ingenious supposition of a modern authority that the word "Star" was applied to the court in question because within its walls justice was administered in a twinkling. It might, with as much reason, be suggested that the name had reference to the constellation of legal talent of which the tribunal was composed; for those stars of the first magnitude the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer, the Lord Privy Seal, and the President of the Council, were all of them judges of the court.

We must not, however, detain the reader any longer in a dull court of law, for we find ourselves served, in imagination, with a writ of Habeas Corpus, commanding us to bring him up for the purpose of inquiring by what right we hold him in the disagreeable duress of dry legal detail.

In returning to Henry, we find him offering to act as mediator between Charles of France and the Duke of Bretagne, when, like every meddler in the disputes of others, he is unable to emerge from the position in which he has placed himself without that nasal tweak which is the due reward of impertinence. The taxes he was obliged to impose for the purpose of interference, undertaken, as he alleged, to curb the ambition of the French court, were very exorbitant, and particularly so on account of Henry's avarice, which induced him to put about ten per cent, of every levy into his own pocket. The people were, of course, dissatisfied, and the harshness used in collecting the subsidy irritated them so much in the north, that they took their change out of the unfortunate Duke of Northumberland, whom they killed, because he had the ill-luck to be employed in the invidious office of tax-gatherer.

In 1490 Parliament liberally granted some more money to carry on the war with France, but Henry pocketed the cash, and sent some priests to try and compromise the matter with the enemy. It was not until four years afterwards, in the course of 1494, that he really went to work against the French, but he contrived to make it pay him exceedingly well, for he not only grabbed

the subsidies voted for the purpose, but he converted them into so much clear profit, by getting his knights and nobles to bear their own expenses out of their own pockets. He kindly gave them permission to sell their estates without the ordinary fines, and many a gallant fellow sold himself completely up, in the hope of indemnifying himself by what he should be able to take from the French in battle.

Henry had, however, completely humbugged his gallant knights and nobles, for he never intended them to have the chance of gaining anything in France by conquest, and had, in fact, settled the whole matter at a very early period. He had made up his mind not to spend more than he could help, and had been putting away the subsidies in a couple of huge portmanteaus, which served him for coffers. Under the pretence of doing something, he passed over with his army to France, and "sat down" before Boulogne; but his sitting down proved that he had no intention of making any stand, and a truce was very soon agreed upon. Two treaties were drawn up, one of which was to be made public, for the purpose of misleading the people, and the other was a private transaction between the two sovereigns. The first only stipulated for peace, but the second secured the sum of £149,000 to be paid by instalments to Henry, who must have been under the necessity of ordering another coffer to receive the additional wealth that was thus poured in upon him. New troubles were, however, commencing to disturb the mind of the king, who received one morning, at breakfast, a despatch announcing the arrival, at the Cove of Cork, of another pretender to the Crown of England. "There seems to be no end to these vagabonds," he mentally exclaimed, as he read the document announcing that a handsome young man had been giving himself out as Richard, Duke of York, second son of Edward the Fourth, and legitimate heir to the monarchy. "Pooh, pooh!" ejaculated Henry; "the fellow was disposed of in the Tower long ago." But on perusing further, he found that the young man had met this objection by alleging that he had escaped, and had been for seven years a

wanderer. It was exceedingly improbable that the royal youth had been so long upon the tramp, but his story was not very rigidly criticised by Henry's enemies. The wanderer introduced himself to the Duchess of Burgundy, who, after some enquiry, pronounced him to be genuine, and embraced him as the undoubted son of her dear brother Edward. She gave him the poetical name of the White Rose of England, but Henry, knowing that "the rose by any other name" would not "smell as sweet" in the nostrils of the English, gave out that the "White Rose" was a Jew boy of the name of Peterkin or Perkin Warbeck. It was further alleged that the lad had been recently a footman in the family of Lady Brompton, with whom he had been travelling. Peterkin was materially damaged in public opinion by getting the character of a mere "flunkey," and he was afraid to do more than hover about the coast without venturing to effect a landing. Though Henry had held the pretender up to ridicule, Perkin Warbeck's opposition was in reality no joke, and the king bribed a few of the party to betray their colleagues. Several were at once informed against, among whom were the two Ratcliffes, who denied their guilt in the usual Ratcliffe highway; but their repudiation had no effect, for one of them was at once beheaded. Sir William Stanley, a very old friend of the Richmond family, whose brother, Lord Stanley, had put the battered crown on Henry's brow in the field of Bosworth, became an object of suspicion; and thinking he should get off by a confession, he acknowledged everything he had been guilty of, with a supplement containing a catalogue of offences he had never committed.

Thus, by denying too much for confession and owning enough for condemnation, he fell between two stools, one of which was the stool of repentance, and lost his head at the moment he fancied he was upon a safe footing.

The party of Perkin Warbeck being discouraged by these events, and the people of Flanders having grown tired of the pretender's long visit, he felt that "now or never" was the time

for his descent on England. The White Rose having torn himself away by the force of sheer pluck, attempted to transplant himself to the coast of Deal, but he found a Kentish knight ready to repel the Rose, and by a cry of "Go it, my tulips!" encouraging his followers to resist all oppression.

The White Rose and his companions mournfully took their leaves, and as many as could escape returned with press of sail to Flanders. Henry sent a vote of thanks to the men of Kent, with a promise of gold, but the remittance never came to hand from that day to the present. Mr. P. Warbeck was now becoming such a nuisance in Flanders, that he was told he must really suit himself with another situation immediately. He tried Ireland, but the dry announcement of "no such person known" was almost the only answer to his overtures.

As a last resource, and a proof of the desperate nature of his fortune, he actually threw himself upon the generosity of the Scotch, which was almost as hopeless as running his head against a stone wall; but as it was just possible that Perkin Warbeck might be turned to profitable account against England, the Scotch opened their hearts where there is never any admission except on business to the adventurous wanderer. James the Third, king of Scotland, chiefly out of spite to Henry, not only received Perkin as the genuine Duke of York, but married him to Lady Catherine Gordon, the lovely and accomplished daughter of the Earl of Huntley, a relative of the royal house of Stuart. An agreement was drawn up between James of Scotland, of the one part, and Perkin Warbeck, of the other, by virtue of which Perkin was to be pitchforked on to the English throne, and was to make over the town of Berwick-on-Tweed—when he got it—as an acknowledgment to King James for his valuable services. After some little delay, the Scotch crossed the border to enforce Perkin's demand; but when that individual arrived in England, he found himself so thoroughly snubbed that he sneaked back again.

Notwithstanding the utter failure of this enterprise, which had cost Henry not a penny to resist, he sent in a bill as long as his arm for the equipment of his army. The people who had not been called upon to strike a single blow, and always liked to have, what they called "their whack for their money," were enraged at being asked to pay for a battle that had never happened. The men of Cornwall were particularly angry at having to give any of their tin, and came up to Blackheath, under Lord Audley, whose inexperience was so great that he might have furnished the original for the sign of the "Green Man," which so long remained the distinguishing feature of the neighbourhood. The battle of Blackheath was fought on the 22nd of June, 1497, with a good deal of superfluous strength on one side, and consummate bad management on the other. On the side of the insurgents, one Flammock or Flummock, an attorney, was a principal leader, but he would gladly have taken out a summons to stay proceedings, had such practice been allowable. It is probable that this "gentleman one, &c." had been persuaded by some noble client who had an interest in the fight to appear as his attorney in this memorable action. Henry having gained every advantage in his recent transactions was desirous of completing his arrangements, by purchasing Warbeck, if anyone could be found base enough to sell that unfortunate individual. James of Scotland was too honourable for such a shameful bargain, though he was greatly embarrassed in assisting Warbeck, for whom he had melted down his plate an act worthy of the most fiddle-headed spoon besides raising money on a gold chain he used to wear, and to which he was so attached, that he compared it to "Linked sweetness long drawn out," as he drew it forth from his pocket to put it into the hands of the pawnbroker. It was now intimated to Perkin Warbeck that he "had better go," for his presence had become exceedingly costly and embarrassing. "I've nothing more for you, my good man," were the considerate words of James as he despatched his guest to seek his fortune else-

where, attended by a few trusty retainers, who stuck to him “through thick and thin,” an attachment which, as he could hardly pay his own way, must have been very embarrassing. His wife’s fidelity to him in his ill-fortune was a beautiful as well as a gratifying fact, for she had, really, seen much better days, and the sacrifices she made in sharing the fate of a Pretender “out of luck” was quite undeniable.

Perkin Warbeck made first for Cork in the hope of raising the Irish, but as he could not raise the Spanish, the former would have nothing to do with him. He next tried Cornwall, and marching inland he soon found himself at the head of a party of discontented ragamuffins, who happened to be ready for a row, without any ulterior views of a very definite character. He called himself Richard the Fourth, and penetrated into England as far as Taunton Dean, where Henry’s forces had already collected.



Warbeck was admirable in all his preliminary arrangements, and it was “quite a picture” to see him reviewing his troops; but picture as he was, the idea of fighting put him into such a fright, that he always lost his colour. He was first-rate on parade, but quite unequal to the business of a battle, and, indeed, to use an illustration founded on a fact of our own times, he would have been invaluable

in the Astley's version of Waterloo, though utterly contemptible in the original performance of that tremendous action.

No sooner had Perkin Warbeck ascertained the propinquity of the enemy than he recommended that his forces should all go to bed in good time to be fresh for action early in the morning. Having first ascertained that all were asleep, he stole off to the stable, saddled his horse, and having mounted the poor brute, stuck spurs into its side until he reached the sanctuary of Beaulieu in the New Forest. When this disgraceful desertion of their leader was discovered the rebels set up a piteous howl and threw themselves on the mercy of Henry, who ordered some to hang, and sent others to starve, by dismissing them without food or clothing. Lady Catherine Gordon, alias Mrs. P. Warbeck, who had been sojourning for safety at St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, was brought before the king, who, touched by her beauty and her tears, experienced in his heart that truly English sentiment which declares, that "the man who would basely injure a lovely woman in distress, is unworthy of the name of a—a—British officer." He therefore sent her on a visit to the queen, who paid every attention to the fallen heroine.



The next thing to be done was to rout Perkin Warbeck out of

the hole into which cowardice had driven him. Henry was unwilling to disturb the sanctuary, but he sent his agents to parley with Perkin, who, finding himself regularly hemmed in, thought it better to come out on the best terms he could, and he accordingly emerged on the promise of a pardon. Henry was anxious to get a peep at the individual who had caused so much trouble, but thought it *infra dig.* to admit the rebel into the royal presence. The king, therefore, reverted to his old practice of getting behind a screen, an article he must have carried about with him wherever he went, that he might, unseen, indulge his curiosity. This paltry practice should have obtained for him the name of Peeping Harry, for we find him, at more than one period of his reign, skulking behind a screen, in the most ignoble manner. Perkin was made to ride up to London, behind Henry, at a little distance, and on getting to town he was sent on horseback through Cheapside and Cornhill, as a show for the citizens.

There were the usual demonstrations of popular criticism on this occasion, and there is no doubt that amid the gibes and scoffs addressed to the captive the significant interrogatory of “

Who ran away from Taunton Dean?” was not forgotten.

After taking a turn to the Tower and back for the accommodation of the inhabitants at the East End, who desired to be gratified with a sight of the Pretender, Perkin was lodged in the palace at Westminster, where a good deal of liberty seems to have been allowed him. He however chose to run away, and being caught again, he was made to stand in the stocks a whole day before the door of Westminster Hall, where he was made to read a written confession, which was interrupted by an occasional egg in his eye, or cabbage leaf over his mouth, for such are the voluntary contributions which a British public has always been ready to offer to helpless impotence.



The next day the same ceremony with the same accessories was repeated at Cheapside, in order to give the East End an opportunity of enjoying the sport which the West End had already revelled in. Perkin Warbeck was then committed to the Tower, where he and the unfortunate Earl of Warwick became what may be termed fast friends, for they were bound tightly together in the same prison. Warbeck, who was in every sense of the word an accomplished swindler, succeeded in winning the good opinion, not only of his fellow captive but of the keepers of the jail, three of whom, it is said, had actually undertaken to murder Sir John Digby, the governor, for the sake of getting hold of the keys, and releasing the two captives. It was now evident that Warbeck would never be quiet, and Henry, feeling him to be a troublesome fellow,

determined to get rid of him. On the 16th of November, 1499, Warbeck was arraigned at Westminster Hall, and being found guilty as a matter of course, was executed on the 23rd of the same month at Tyburn, where, cowardly to the last, he asked the forgiveness of the king, even on the scaffold.

Walpole, in his "Historic Doubts"—a work that throws everything

into uncertainty and settles nothing—gives it as his opinion that Perkin Warbeck was really the Duke of York; but had Walpole been able to tell “a sheep’s head from a carrot,” he would never have been guilty of such a piece of confounding and confounded blundering. We who give no encouragement whatever to Historic Doubts are tolerably sure that Perkin Warbeck was merely a fashionable swindler, for he had none of that personal courage or true dignity which would have redeemed his imposture from the character of mere quackery. He contrived to ruin poor Warwick, or at all events to hasten his destruction by implicating him in a conspiracy, which of his own accord he never would have dreamed of. When put upon his trial, the hapless earl who, though only twenty-nine years of age, was from long seclusion in a state of second childhood, if indeed he had ever got out of his first—confessed with piteous simplicity all that had been alleged against him. He was beheaded on Tower Hill the 24th * of November, 1499; and it was said that his death was the most merciful that could be conceived, for in losing his head he was deprived of that which he never knew how to use, and of the possession of which he did not at any time seem sensible. Warbeck’s widow continued to go by the name of the White Rose, when Sir Mathew Cradoc, thinking it a pity that she should be “left blooming alone,” offered to graft her on his family tree, and the White Rose consented to this arrangement. * Hume says the 21st. Another authority says the 28th.

It is not with a mere wish to “split the difference” that we adopt the medium date of the 24th, but we have good reasons for stating that to be the exact day, and Mr. Charles Macfarlane, in his admirable “Cabinet History of England” has likewise named the 24th of November as the precise time of Warwick’s execution.

Henry had long been anxious to marry his daughter Margaret to James of Scotland, and he sent a cunning bishop, most appropriately named Fox, to act the part of a match-maker. The sly old dog brought the matter so cleverly about that the marriage was agreed upon, and this union led to the peaceful union of the two

countries about a century afterwards.

The young lady got but a small portion from her stingy father, and her husband made a settlement upon her of £2000 a year, but he got her to accept a paltry compromise. The meanness of the arrangements may be judged of by the ridiculous fact that King James and his young bride rode into Edinburgh on the same palfrey.

Henry's eldest son, Arthur Prince of Wales, had been already married to Catherine, fourth daughter of Ferdinand of Spain, who promised two hundred thousand crowns, half of which he paid down, as a wedding portion. The young husband died soon after, and Ferdinand naturally asked for his money and his child back again. The English king had pocketed the greater part of the cash, which he was not only quite unwilling to refund, but he had serious thoughts of proceeding for the balance of his daughter-in-law's dowry.

He therefore consented to affiance her to his second son, Henry, in compliance with the only condition upon which Ferdinand agreed to waive his claim to the cash already in hand, and he even promised to pay the rest of the portion at his "earliest convenience."

Henry himself, or as we may call him for the sake of distinction, the "old gentleman," had lately lost his wife, and he went at once into the matrimonial market to see whether there was anything upon which it might be safe to speculate. He however wanted to conduct his operations with such extraordinary profit to himself that nothing seemed to tempt his avarice. His ruling passion was for "cash down," and to obtain this he fleeced his subjects most unmercifully, though he employed the disreputable firm of Empson and Dudley to collect the amount of the various extortions he was continually practising. These two men were little better than swindlers, though as lawyers they adhered to the rules of law, and indeed they kept a rabble always in the house to sit as jurymen. They had trials in their own office, and would often ring the bell to order up a jury from downstairs, just as anyone in the present day would order up his dinner. Dudley got the name of the Leech, from his power of drawing, and indeed he would have got the blood out

of a blood-stone if the opportunity had been afforded him.

Empson has been described by Hume as a man of "mean birth and brutal temper," who of course, did all the bullying of this disreputable firm, while Dudley, who was "better born, better educated, and better bred," acted in the capacity of what may be termed the decoy duck of the concern; or, in other words, the latter snared the game which the former savagely butchered.

Henry had now but one formidable enemy left, in the person of young Edmund de la Pole, the nephew of Edward the Fourth, and son and heir to the Duke of Suffolk. This turbulent individual reeved the cry in favour of the "White Rose," which was said by a wag of the day to be raised on a pole, after the fashion of the frozen-out gardeners. Suffolk soon had the mortification of finding that he had not the suffrages of the people, for the rush to the Pole was anything but encouraging. "Ye Pole they reformed," says Comines, "dydde cutte his sty eke," and became a penniless fugitive in Flanders.

He was ultimately surrendered by Philip, the archduke, who had received Suffolk as a visitor, but gave him up with a lot of sundries he was transferring to Henry, who promised to spare the prisoner's life, and did so, though he left word in his will that his successor had better kill the earl, as he would otherwise prove troublesome. In the course of the year 1509, Henry's health became very indifferent, and he had repeated attacks of the gout, every one of which put him in ill-humour with himself in particular, and the world in general. Every fresh twinge was paid with interest upon one or more of his unfortunate subjects; and when he got very bad he would be most indiscriminate in his cruelty. He fixed upon a poor old alderman named Harris, who died of sheer vexation at his ill-treatment before his indictment came on; and at this remote period we hope we shall not be accused of injuring the feelings of any of the posterity of poor Harris by saying, that he was literally harassed to death through the unkindness of his sovereign. During

his illness Henry would do justice occasionally between man and man, but a favourable turn in his malady, a quiet night, or a refreshing nap, would bury all his good resolutions in oblivion. At length on the night of the 21st of April, 1509, he died at Richmond, leaving behind him a will in which he bequeathed to his son and heir the delightful task of repairing all his father's errors.

However easy it may be for an executor to pay the pecuniary debts of a testator with plenty of assets in hand, the moral responsibilities which have been left unsatisfied, are not so soon provided for. It is true that a good son frequently makes atonement to society for the mischief done by a bad parent; but this, though it strikes a sort of balance with the world, does not prevent the father from being still held accountable for his deficiencies.

Henry died in the fifty-third year of his age, and had he lived a day longer, he would have reigned twenty-three years and eight months, or as Cocker has it, in the simplicity of his heart, "had he been alive in the year 1700, he would have reigned upwards of two centuries." Our business, however, is not with what he might have done, but what he actually did, and we therefore record the fact, that he died on the 21st of April, 1509, and was buried in the magnificent chapel of Westminster Abbey, which he built, and which is called after him to this very day and hour that we now write upon. *

* A quarter to one, A.M., April 13th, 1847.

It is often the most painful part of our labours to give characters of some of the sovereigns who pass under our review in the course of this history. To those who have only known Henry the Seventh as the chivalrous and high-minded prince that fought so gallantly with Richard the Third on the field of Bosworth, it will be distressing to hear that the Richmond of their dramatic recollections is nothing like a true portrait of the actual character. At all events, if he had virtues in his youth they were not made to wear, they be-

came sufficiently threadbare to be seen be seen through. Even his ambition seems to have been little more than a medium he had adopted for gratifying his avarice, and it is now pretty clear that he rather wanted the crown for what it was worth in a pecuniary point of view, than for the honourable gratification which power when rightly used is capable of conferring on its possessor. Hume tells us that "Henry loved peace without fearing war," which is true enough; for war afforded him a pretext for raising money, while peace, which he generally managed to arrange, gave him an opportunity of pocketing the cash he had collected. War, therefore, was never formidable to him, for he usually manoeuvred to keep out of it; but he made the rumour of it serve as an excuse for taxing his people.

He was decidedly clever as a practical man, though exceedingly unprincipled, but several salutary laws were passed in his reign; one of the best of which was an act allowing the poor to sue in *forma pauperis*. Considering how often the law reduces its suitors to poverty, it is only fair that those who are brought to such a condition should still be allowed to go on, for it is like ruining a man and then turning him out of doors to say that the courts shall be closed against such as are penniless.

Another important and useful measure of Henry's reign was that by which the nobility and gentry could alienate their estates, or cut mouth an occupant of the throne of England off the tail, which limited everything to the head of a family. This apparently liberal act was passed for the benefit of the king himself, who wished his nobles to be able to sell everything they had got for the sake of paying the expenses of the wars, which otherwise must have been prosecuted partly out of Henry's own pocket.

He owed more to fortune than to his own merit, and even the conspiracies that were got up against him from time to time helped to sustain him in his high position, as the shuttlecock is kept in a state of elevation by constant blows from the battledore.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

HENRY THE EIGHTH.



HENRY the EIGHTH, only surviving son and successor of Henry the Seventh, took to his father's crown and sceptre on the 22nd of April, 1509, amid general rejoicing, for he was an exceedingly gentlemanly youth of eighteen when he came to the throne, of which his parent had recently been but a bearish occupant. If young Harry had never lived to play old Harry, his popularity might have survived him, for the people had become disgusted with the conduct of his father, and there never was a finer chance for a young man than that which offered itself to the new sovereign.

Nothing could exceed the grossness of the adulation which was poured out upon him at his accession, and the perfection of the art of puffing in England may, perhaps, be ascribed to this period of our history. His countenance was likened to that of Apollo—a falsehood for which, in his features, no apology can be found; his chest was declared to be that of Mars, though it was evidently his pa's, for in early youth his resemblance to his father was remarkable. Clemency was declared to be seated on his ample forehead, equity was pronounced to be balancing itself on the bridge of his nose, intelligence was recognised lurking in ambush among his bushy hair; and even

Erasmus attributes to him the acuteness of the needle, with other intellectual qualities of an exalted character.

We are indebted to Mr. Tytler, who is generally correct to a tittle, for these interesting particulars.—See his “Life of Henry the Eighth,” p. 16 of the 2nd edition., It is sad to reflect that the philosopher, when he takes the paintbrush in hand to dash off the portrait of a king, is apt to become a mere parasite, and will not abstain from staining his own character by daubing with false colours the canvas of history.

Thus, even Erasmus used hues his friends would be glad to erase, and has covered over the black spots in Henry’s character with that pink of perfection which makes *couleur de rose* of everything. It is not to be wondered at, that in setting out upon the voyage of government, Henry received “one turn a-head” if we may be allowed a nautical expression while the engines of flattery were at work on all sides of him. It is to be regretted, for the sake of himself as well as for the good of his subjects, that truth was not at hand to give him that friendly “shove astern” which has saved many from precipitating themselves on the rocks that always lie in the course of greatness and power. As if determined to begin as he intended to go on, Henry looked out at once for a wife, and, considering how often he was destined to undergo the marriage ceremony in the course of his reign, it was as well that he should lose no time in commencing the career that lay before him. In his first matrimonial adventure he appears to have let others choose for him, instead of making a selection for himself, and Catherine of Aragon, the widow of his elder brother Arthur, was pointed out to him as an eligible *parti* for nuptial purposes.

This marriage was strongly recommended by the political faculty as a saving of expense, for the lady would have been entitled to a large pension as widow of Prince Arthur, and her friends in Spain, had she been returned upon their hands, would have

wanted to know something about the 150,000 crowns she had received as a marriage portion. Of course, the whole of it was gone, and it was thought that Henry would be killing a whole covey of birds with one stone if he would consent to take her as his wife, inasmuch as he would thus extinguish her claims to a pension, and prevent any awkward questions being asked in Spain as to the portion she had brought with her to England. Henry, feeling a sort of intuitive consciousness that he should have plenty of opportunities to select a wife for himself, agreed to take, as a beginning, the one that had been chosen for him by others, and accordingly, on the 3rd of June, 1509, the lady, who was eight years older than himself, became his wife, at Greenwich. The royal couple were not destined to roll down the hill together in after life, whatever they may have done on the day of their union, which was doubtless marked by all those sports of which the locality was susceptible.

Catherine, though a little *passée*, looked exceedingly well, for, in order to render her appearance more attractive, she was dressed in white, and "all Greenwich," says Lord Herbert, "did not, on that day, contain a daintier dish of whitebait than the Lady of Aragon." The royal pair were crowned on the 24th of June, 1509, being exactly three weeks after marriage, up to which period, at least, there was no indication of that Bluebeardism which subsequently broke out with so much fury in the royal character.

Henry had on his accession thrown himself into the arms of his grandmother, the old Countess of Richmond, upon whose advice he acted in the selection of his ministers.

The old lady died in the same month in which her grandson was married and crowned, at the respectable age of sixty-eight; and it is a curious fact that she had been married three times, so that in his multiplicity of wives, Henry the Eighth may be said to have simply improved upon the example set him by his grandmother** Her friend and counsellor, Jack Fisher, Bishop

of Rochester, says of her, that “a reddy witte she had to conceive all thyngs, albeit they were ryghte derke.”



The first political act of Henry the Eighth's reign, was to lay the heads of Empson and Dudley upon the scaffold.

These rapacious extortioners had been the tools of his father's avarice, but had contrived to feather their own nests tolerably well; and Henry kept them in prison for the purpose of getting out of them the wealth they had acquired by their rapacity.

He detained them in the Tower a whole year before he beheaded them, and continued to squeeze out of them everything they possessed, for he was one of those who never threw an orange away without thoroughly sucking it, Having drained it at length completely dry by about the 17th of August, 1510, he, on that day—to pursue the allegory of the orange—declined allowing them any quarter, but sent them to Tower Hill, where execution was done upon both of them.

Henry finding everything going smoothly in England, fell into the common error of those who having every comfort at home must needs look abroad for the elements of discord. He entered into a league against Louis the Twelfth of France, in favour of Pope Julius the Second and his father-in-law, Ferdinand of Aragon; but the latter kept helping himself to large slices of ter-

ritory, and made use of his allies for the purpose of furthering his own interests. Henry's troops were therefore compelled to play an ignoble part, being cooped up in a French town, while the other soldiers overran Navarre, and appropriated everything they could lay their hands upon. Amazed at their moderate success upon land they attempted to retrieve themselves by a sea-fight, but the ruler was not then found by which Britannia subsequently learned to rule the waves, and the French fleet escaping into Brest, found shelter in their country's bosom.

In 1513, Henry being anxious to obtain ascendancy over the seas, appointed Sir Edward Howard, one of the sons of the Earl of Surrey, to accomplish the grand object. Howard was so exceedingly confident of success that he sent a private note requesting the king to come and see how beautifully he (Howard) would "spifflicate"—for such was the word—the presumptuous enemy. Henry by no means relished the invitation, and replied to it by desiring Howard to "mind his own business" as admiral. This nettled the naval commander, who, during the engagement, jumped into one of the enemy's ships, and could not jump back again; while Sir John Wallop, upon whom he had relied, exhibited little of that usefulness which his name seems to indicate. Poor Howard was, accordingly, killed; and Henry, flattered by his parasites, came to the resolution that no good would be done till he himself set out for France at the head of an army.

In a few days he arrived off Boulogne, where he instructed the artillery to make as much noise as they could with their guns, in order that he might intimidate the foe, and encourage himself by the roaring of his own cannon.

His object was undoubtedly to insinuate to the enemy, "We are coming in tremendous force, and so you had better keep out of the way for fear of accidents."

Henry, who had various other great guns on board besides his artillery, was accompanied by Thomas Wolsey, his almoner, lately risen into favour, together with the celebrated Bishop

Fox, and a number of courtiers. He passed his time very pleasantly at Calais for about three months, when he heard that the celebrated Bayard—the chevalier sans peur et sans reproche—was moving forward.

The English king bounded on to his horse with the elasticity of indiarubber, and advanced at the head of fifteen thousand men—Bishop Fox, with characteristic cunning, keeping in the rear, and Wolsey following the Fox at a prudent distance.

Twelve hundred French approached under the cover of a regular English fog, which with a most anti-national spirit favoured the enemies of the country to which it owed its origin. Bayard would have commenced an attack, but he was overruled by some of his companions; and Henry, thinking the foe afraid to “come on,” sat himself down in a pavilion made of silk damask, foolishly believing that the art of the upholsterer could uphold the dignity of a sovereign.



Thus he sat, like the proprietor of a gingerbread stall at a fair, until a terrific shower came on, and the silk streamers were streaming with wet, and the satin chairs could no longer be sat-in with comfort or convenience, The tent was turned literally inside out by the wind, like an umbrella in a storm, and Henry

was glad to exchange his gaudy booth for a substantial wooden caravan, that was speedily knocked together for his reception. Though the two armies did not fight they commenced operations by mining and countermining, but instead of making receptacles for gunpowder, they were only making gutters for the rain, which took advantage of every opening. The Count of Angoulême (afterwards Francis the First) now arrived at headquarters, and scoured the country, which he was the better able to do from the quantity of water which had fallen on many parts of it, Henry now received a visit from the Emperor Maximilian, and the English king made the most magnificent preparations for the interview; he equipped himself and some of his nobles in gold and silver tissue—though it was said the latter wore a tissue of falsehoods, for their finery was all sham—and he borrowed every bit of jewellery in his camp for his own personal bedizenment. He had a garniture of garnets in his hat, and even his watch, a tremendous turnip, had a diamond, weighing several carats, on its face, while a magnificent ruby matched with the rubicundity of his forehead, over which the gem was gracefully disposed. The nobles were sprinkled all over with paste, and looked effective enough at the price which Henry had given for their embellishment. Maximilian, who was in mourning, presented a dismal contrast to all this finery, for he wore nothing but a suit of serge, which, however, turned out for more serviceable than the fancy costume of Henry and his courtiers. The rain came on so furiously that unless the silks were washing silks they must have been fearfully damaged by the wet, while the running of the hues one into the other, caused Henry's party to come off with—in one sense—flying colours. It was at length determined to make an attack upon the French, and the Emperor Maximilian having got his old serge doublet trimmed up with a red cross, and pinned an artificial flower in his hat, directed the operations of the English. The French cavalry began pretty well; but whether Maximilian looked so great a guy as to terrify

the horses, or through any other cause, it is certain that a panic ran through the ranks, and they commenced a retreat at full gallop, using their spurs with tremendous vehemence.

One of the fugitives, a venerable marshal, broke his baton in beating a retreat over the back of his charger; and Bayard, who had refused to run, seeing the baton of his comrade broken, exclaimed, "Ha! he has cut his stick!" which afterwards became a by-word to describe the act of a fugitive. The illustrious chevalier sans peur et sans reproche became a prisoner, but thoroughly enjoyed the joke of his countrymen having run away, and laughingly called it the battle of the spurs, from the energy with which they had plunged their rowels into the flanks of their chargers.

A meeting between Bayard, Maximilian, and Henry, has been described very graphically in the *Histoire de Bon Chevalier*; and it appears from this authority that the two latter bantered their prisoner in a somewhat uncourteous manner. Bayard contended that he had become captive by a voluntary surrender; upon which the emperor and the king burst out into a fit of rude laughter, as if they would have said, "That's a capital joke;" but Bayard protested that he might have got away had he chosen to run for it. They only

replied to him by saying "Well, well, my fine fellow, we've got you, and it matters little whether you took yourself into custody or now else you came here; but here you unquestionably are, and there's

an end of the discussion."

After taking Tournay, where he held a number of tournaments, and which was actually sacrificed by the inhabitants for the sake of a bad pun worse even than the accidental one in the text Henry returned to England, and arrived on the 24th of October, 1513, at Richmond.

Thus ended the expedition to France; but important events had been happening at home, for the Earl of Surrey had been cheviotting the Scotch over the Cheviot Hills, and at last fought them

at Flodden, where James the Fourth unfortunately fell; and the English queen, making a parcel of his coat, hat, and gloves, sent them to Henry as a proof of the dressing the Scotch had experienced.

It had been intended to resume the war with France, but Louis the Twelfth suggested a compromise, by which he married Mary, the sister of the English king, and Mary thus had the honour of mollifying the asperity of the feelings that the two monarchs had hitherto indulged, We have already mentioned the name of Wolsey, who accompanied Henry abroad in the capacity of almoner; and it is now time that we give some particulars of a person who played one of the most important parts in the drama of history.

Thomas Wolsey was born at Ipswich, in March, 1471, of humble parents; but the popular story of his father having been a butcher is probably a fable, to which the fact of his having had a stake in the country has perhaps given some likelihood. It is doubtful whether he was brought up to the block, though he might have been obliged to give his head to it at a later period of his life, when he incurred his master's displeasure. It has been said that Wolsey senior could not have been a butcher, because he left money to his son by will; but business must have been bad indeed if he could not bequeath a couple of legacies of thirteen-and-fourpence each, with one of six-and-sevenpence, and another of eleven shillings, in addition to a sura of ten marks, which constitute altogether the entire amount of cash that was actually disposed of by the old gentleman to his wife, his son, and his executors, ** If the elder Wolsey was really a butcher, it is certain that he had not a sharper blade in his establishment than his son Tom, who was sent early to school, and having proceeded to the University of Oxford, got on so well as to acquire the name of the Boy Bachelor. He soon became a fellow, and was one of the cleverest young fellows in the college, where he was intrusted to educate the three sons of the Duke of Dorset. In

this capacity, by the application of a great deal of flattery—or, as some would have termed it, Dorset Butter—while at home with the young gentlemen for the Christmas holidays, he got the patronage of their noble father, who presented him with the rectory of Lymington. Here he is said to have disgraced himself by getting into a row at a fair, but we can scarcely believe that the clergyman of the parish would have forgotten himself so far as to give his love of gaiety full swing, and allow him to carry absurdity to the height which such a proceeding seems to indicate. He could not have very far compromised his character, or he would not have been employed by Henry the Seventh, on delicate and important missions which a parson fresh from “the fun of the fair” would never have been allowed to execute.

Some of his detractors have broadly asserted that Wolsey was inebriated, and fled in shame from his cure, but we really believe that he was never at any period of his life intoxicated with

anything but ambition, which undoubtedly is quicker in turning the head than the strongest juice that ever dropped from the ripest juniper. Fox, the Bishop of Winchester, strongly recommended Wolsey to Henry the Eighth, who, already knowing something of the young man, made him King’s Almoner; and on taking Tournay, in France, hesitated whether he should burn it down, or make Wolsey its bishop.

The latter of the two evils fell upon the town, which was placed under the ambitious churchman’s ecclesiastical cognizance.

He rose rapidly to the sees of Lincoln and York, became Lord High Chancellor of England, and, on the 7th of September, 1515, received his crowning honour, in the hat of a cardinal. The pun alluded to was couched in these words, which were used by the Citizens: “Que Tournay n’avoit jamais tourné niencore ne tournerait.” His will was published by Dr. Fiddes, from the Registry, at Norwich, “We must now put Wolsey by for a little bit, though we shall have to bring him out again and again, for we must not keep others waiting by lingering too

long in the accomplished churchman's company. We left the Princess Mary just married to Louis the Twelfth, though her heart had long been given to Charles Brandon, Viscount Lisle, who retained the principal of her affections, though the French king got for a time the interest.

He however enjoyed it for only two months when he died, and Brandon, the remainder-man, became the tenant in possession, by marrying Mary after three months' widowhood, Henry was at first very angry with the match, but the young couple rushing into his presence like two repentant lovers in a farce, and Wolsey interceding with all the air of the "smart servant," the king was persuaded to give that cheapest of all donations his blessing.



Brandon's good sense and modesty went some way in reconciling Henry, for Viscount Lisle never presumed upon his connection with the family of royalty.

He did not talk continually of "My brother-in-law the king," as he might have done; but he took the following motto, in which there is a strong indication of his "knowing his place," and being determined on keeping it, Cloth of gold do not despise, Though thou be match'd with cloth of frize; Cloth of frize be not too bold, Though thou be match'd with cloth of

gold. "Granger's Biog. Hist.," Francis the First had succeeded to the French throne and the Archduke Charles of Austria had come in for the whole of the Spanish monarchy by the death of his maternal grandfather, Ferdinand of Aragon. He was a maternal grandfather in a double sense, for he had grown very old womanish, and the adjectivematernal was by no means inappropriate. Francis and Charles became competitors for the empire just vacant by the death of Maximilian, and the countenance of Henry was eagerly sought by both of the disputants. Henry had formerly hoped to have been himself a successful candidate, but finding he had no chance, he wrote to Charles, saying he "wished he might get it," which were the genuine sentiments no doubt of the English sovereign. The election fell upon Charles, and Francis affected to take the consequence as if it had been of no consequence at all, though it was clearly otherwise.

The election for the rank and dignity of Emperor was one of the most disgracefully corrupt proceedings that was ever witnessed, even in the palmiest days of the boroughmongering system in England, some centuries afterwards. The candidates were Francis the First of France, Charles the Fifth, king of Castile, Henry the Eighth of England, and the Elector Frederic of Saxony. The bribery was on a scale of vastness never before heard of, and it is said that Charles scattered his—or his people's—money among the independent electors with frightful prodigality. The electors of Cologne, which was not then in such good odour as might have been expected from the pleasant purity of its Eau, pocketed no less than 200,000 crowns; but the mother of Francis the First declared, that "the electors, among them all, had not received from the king, her son, more than 100,000 crowns," * so that the loss of his election is very easily accounted for. Francis, nevertheless, imagined he had secured five electors out of the seven; but those worthies, who were dishonestly receiving bribes from both parties at once, eventually gave to Charles, who paid them

best, the benefit of their suffrages. Poor Saxony, expecting in a contest with such powerful opponents that he might get "double milled," resigned in favour of Charles; and Henry, whose committee had been sitting to conduct his election, until it was clear there would be nothing to conduct, threw his influence into the same scale. ,Ellis's Letters,

On the 28th of June, 1519, the polling commenced, and each elector as he came up to give his vote was, no doubt, received with the shouts and salutations that are usual on all similar occasions. When the Elector of Cologne appeared to plump for Charles, after having quite as plumply promised his support to Francis, the jeers of the

populace were tremendous, and an egg was even thrown for the purpose of egging on the crowd to acts of violence.

The unprincipled elector looked contemptuously on the oval missile, as if he would have said that he did not care about submitting to the yolk, after the extensive "shelling out" that had already taken place for his benefit.

The countenance of Henry was still the object of both their wishes, and Francis asked the English king for an interview, which was arranged to take place in France in the ensuing summer.

Upon the appointment having been made, Charles ran over to England, to be the first to get Henry's ear, and seeing Wolsey's influence, did his utmost to win over that wary individual.

The latter secretly aspired to the papal chair, and it may perhaps be said that his origin is proved to have been that of a butcher's son, because he began to look at everything with a pope's eye, and hoped to eat his mutton in the Vatican. Such frivolous reasoning is so unworthy the dignity of history, that we reject it at once, and confine ourselves to the simple fact, that the triple crown of Rome was always running in or about the head of the ambitious churchman.



The time now drew near for Henry to meet Francis the First, who, thinking to flatter Wolsey, requested that the management of the gorgeous scene might be left entirely to the taste of the cardinal. Wolsey's reputation as a getter-up of spectacles was exceedingly well deserved, for even when at home, he lived in a style of gorgeous magnificence. Every apartment in his house at Hampton was a set scene of itself, with decorations and properties of the most costly character.

He kept eight hundred supernumeraries always about him as servants, "of whom nine or ten were noblemen, fifteen knights, and forty esquires" * Not contented with an ordinary chair, he always sat with a canopy over his head, and he allowed no one to approach him except in a kneeling attitude.

His dress matched his furniture, for he wore a crimson satin sur-tout, with hat and gloves of scarlet, and even his shoes were silver-gilt—like a pair of electrotyped high-lows His liveries surpassed even those of the sheriffs of London; and his cook positively wore satin or velvet, so that this functionary was dressed more daintily and delicately than the most *recherché* of his own dinners. Wolsey, when he appeared in public, carried an orange, stuffed with scents, in his hand; for he used to say affectedly that there was always an exhalation from a

vulgar crowd, which gave him the vapours. Fiddes' "Life of Wolsey," The preparations for the interview between Francis and Henry having been entrusted to such a master of all ceremonies as Cardinal Wolsey, could not fail to be made on a scale of unprecedented grandeur; and the place where the two monarchs met acquired the name of the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," from the extreme gorgeousness of the scene in which they acted.

The arrangements were nearly complete, and Henry had removed to Canterbury, for the convenience of the journey to France, when Charles of Spain, being jealous of the anticipated meeting, ran over to the Kentish coast, to say a few words to the English king before he left for the Continent.

Charles was received in a most amicable manner, but happening to see the late Queen Dowager of France, then Duchess of Suffolk, who might, could, would, or should have been his own wife, he turned so spoony and sentimental, that he could take no pleasure in the festivities prepared for him. "No, thank you, none for me!" was his almost uniform answer to every inquiry whether he would have a little of this, that, or the other, that was placed before him. He lost first his spirits, then his appetite, and ultimately his time, for he was fit neither for *négociation* nor anything else during his stay in England.

Having remained four days, he went home with a "worm in the bud" of his affections, and as he looked at the sea before him, he was overheard muttering that he "should never get over it."

His courtiers thought he was alluding to the ocean but he was in reality soliloquising on the loss of his heart, which he left behind him; but happily this is a sort of parcel that can without much difficulty be recovered. On the day he re-embarked for Flanders, Henry set sail for France, having only put off his putting off out of compliment to his illustrious visitor.

A plot of ground between Guisnes and Ardres was fixed upon as

the place of meeting, and a temporary palace of wood, covered with sailcloth was erected there, for the person and the suite of the English sovereign. Cunning workmen had painted the sacking at the top to look like square stones; but it was sacking, nevertheless, as the inmates found out in rainy weather.

The walls glittered with jewels, like the gingerbread stalls at a fair, and the tables groaned, or rather creaked, under massive plate, which proves that the wood must have been rather green which had been used in making the furniture. Francis, making up his mind not to be outdone, got an enormous mast, and throwing an immense rickcloth over the top, stuck it up umbrella-ways in the part of the field he intended to occupy.

A whirlwind having come on, the old rickcloth got inflated with the height of its position, and was soon carried away by the puffing it experienced. The whole apparatus took, for a moment, the form of a balloon; and the workmen, seeing it was all up, ran away just in time to avoid the consequences of a collapse, which almost instantly happened. Francis was glad to find more substantial lodgings in an old castle near the town of Ardres, where Wolsey speedily paid him a morning visit.

The cardinal, who had only intended to make a short call; remained two days, in which he arranged an additional treaty with the French king, who agreed to pay a large sum for the neutrality of England in Continental matters, and "as to Scotland," said Francis, "you and my mother shall settle that between you!" "I?" exclaimed Louisa of Savoy, with surprise, "I don't know anything about diplomatic affairs!" but the cardinal flattered the old lady that she did; and by blandly remarking "he was positive that they should not fall out," he persuaded her to join him in the arbitration, for he felt pretty sure he should get the best of the bargain.

Business being concluded, Henry took out of his portmanteau a new dress of silver damask, ribbed with cloth of gold, and in this splendid suit of stripes he went forth to meet his brother

Francis. The 7th of June, 1520, and the valley of Andren, were the time and place of their first coming together, when, according to previous arrangement, they saluted and embraced on horseback, Had one waited for the other to dismount and advance, they might have been standing there to this day, but by a clever act of equestrianism, they contrived to go through the form of introduction on the backs of two highly-trained steeds, to the great admiration of the circle in the midst of which they exhibited. Francis spoke first, but confined himself to a commonplace observation on the length of the distance he had come, and an allusion to the extent of his possessions and power, Henry replied somewhat cleverly, that "the power and possessions of Francis were matters quite secondary in importance to Francis himself, whom he, Henry, had come a long way to see," and thus contempt was adroitly blended with compliment.

The royal couple then dismounted, and took a turn arm-in-arm, as if in friendly conversation, after which they went together into a tent and partook of a very sumptuous banquet.

Spice and wine were served out in great profusion, in a spirit of liberality equivalent to that which dispenses "hot elder, with a rusk included, a penny a glass," from many modern refectories. There was plenty of a sort of stuff called "ipocras," given to the people outside; but as we never tasted any "ipocras" and strongly suspect that it is a decoction from ipecacuanha, we cannot answer for the quality of the article in which the people "outside" were allowed to luxuriate.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

HENRY THE EIGHTH (CONTINUED).

uction to the sports, and the overture was echoed by braying of a more animated character. Each king fought five battles every day, and, of course, came off victoriously in every one; for the nobles and gentlemen of those times were most complacent in submitting their heads as dummies to aid the amusements of royalty. The season of the Field of the Cloth of Gold terminated with a fancy dress ball, in which Henry made himself very conspicuous by the character and richness of his disguises. The vastness of his wardrobe enabled him to astonish everyone by the effectiveness of his "making-up" and two or three of his masks were models of quaint ugliness.

At the end of a fortnight of foolery and feasting the two monarchs separated, and the memorable meeting of the Field of the Cloth of Gold passed from the hands of the costumier, the carpenter, and the cook, into those of the historian. Its chief result was to beggar many of the French and English nobles who had taken part in it, and gone to expense they could not support to outdo each other in magnificence. Thus did the Field of the Cloth of Gold prepare the way for a sort of threadbare seediness, into which many belonging to both nations were plunged by their having done themselves up in an insane attempt to outdo each other.

Our account of the great meeting on the Field of the Cloth of Gold would not be complete without the following anecdote. Francis rose very early one morning, and made his way to the quarters of Henry, who was in bed and fast asleep on the arrival of his illustrious visitor. The French king shook the English monarch cordially by the whipcord tassel on the top of his nightcap, when the latter, springing out of bed, responded to the playful summons. "You see," said Francis, "I am up with the lark," to which Henry added, "And I am ready for the bird you

have specified.” The English king then expressed himself much obliged for such a mark of attention, and cast over the neck of Francis “a splendid collar,” being, no doubt, the “false one” taken off on the night previous.

It is believed by some that Henry, not knowing the object of the intrusion, collared the intruder at once; but the version of the story which we have already given appears to be the more probable. Francis, in his turn, clasped a bracelet on Henry’s arm, or rather, according to an ill-natured reading of the affair, one cuffed the other for the collaring he had experienced.

Henry rang his bell for his valet, but Francis would not permit the attendance of any servant, but laid out Henry’s clean things with his own hand, taking in his shaving water, putting out his highlows to be cleaned, and taking them in again. , The minuteness with which these particulars are detailed, may cause a doubt of their veracity, but we refer the reader to Mr. Fraser Tytler’s “Life of Henry the Eighth,”

of which the anecdote we have given is fully recorded.

Henry, on his return from the Field of the Cloth of Gold, took Gravelines in his way, and gave a look in upon Charles of Castile, who saw him home as far as Calais. This far-seeing prince saw that Wolsey had it all his own way with the English king, and the emperor took every possible opportunity of trying to “come over” the proud prelate. Charles promised his “vote and interest” to Wolsey, in the event of any vacancy occurring in the papal chair, and gratified his avarice by making him bishop of Placentia and Badajos.

Henry, after making a short stay at Calais, returned to Dover, and reached London, without a penny in his pocket, for both he and his courtiers were completely cleaned out by their recent extravagance. On the king’s arrival, Buckingham got himself into trouble by his impertinent remarks on the expedition to France, and the dreadful waste of money that it had occasioned.

He particularly pointed his sarcasms against Wolsey as the originator of all the expensive fooleries that had been committed, and he took every opportunity of gain saying all the fooleries that had been committed, and he took every opportunity of occasion, Buckingham had been holding a basin for Henry to wash his hands, when Wolsey, anxious to have a finger in everything belonging to the king, plunged his paws into the same water. The duke, desirous of administering a damper to the cardinal, spilt a quantity of the liquid over his shoes, when Wolsey becoming angry, threatened to "set upon his skirts," which meant in other words, that the cardinal would be down upon him.

There is no doubt that Wolsey took every opportunity of damaging Buckingham; but the duke himself was obnoxious to the king, and gave particular offence by hiring a servant who had been a member of the royal household. Buckingham had been leading the life of a country gentleman, at what he modestly called his "little place" in Gloucestershire, when he received an invitation to Court; and, foolishly flattering himself that this little attention was shown to him on account of his merits, he unsuspectingly obeyed the summons.

When he had proceeded some way on his journey, he found he was dodged by three disagreeable looking fellows in block tin, who turned out to be members of the king's body guard, and who were sure to be at his heels whenever he looked round over his own shoulder.

Having put up at Windsor for the night, he had no sooner been shown to his bedroom than he saw the same three fellows loitering in the yard of the inn he was stopping at.

Once or twice, after occasion, Buckingham retiring to rest, he looked out of his window and fancied he saw one of the three knights crouching in a corner beneath his lattice, and he called out to the figure to be off; but the approach of daylight revealed to him the outline of an innocent water-butt, which he had

during the hours of darkness imperatively desired to quit the premises, "I know you well," he cried several times to the tub, "and you had better go at once;" but his expostulations were of course disregarded in the quarter to which he was idly addressing them.



The Duke of Buckingham suspects that he is watched.

Declining to stop at Windsor, he determined to breakfast the next morning at Egham; but he had no sooner entered the coffee-room than he was insulted by one Thomas Ward, a creature of the Court, which completely took away the appetite of the duke, of whom it was cruelly said that he could eat neither egg nor ham in the hostel at Eg-ham. He then rode on to Westminster, where he got into his barge and 'pulled down with the tide as far as Greenwich, but stopped at Wolsey's house on the way, and sent in his card to the cardinal, who sent out word that he was indisposed, and declined seeing his visitor. "Umph," said the duke, "I'm sorry to hear that, but I'll step in, and take a glass of wine, if you've no objection!" After a good deal of whis-

pering among Wolsey's servants, Buckingham was shown into the cellar, where he took a draught of wine from the wood; but finding no preparations made for him, he changed colour—that is to say, he looked rather blue and proceeded on his journey. As he continued pulling along the river, a four-oared, manned by yeomen of the guard, whose

captain acted as coxswain, hailed Buckingham in his barge, which was instantly boarded by the crew of the cutter.

The duke having been towed ashore, was at once arrested, and marched in custody down Thames Street, with a mob at his heels, all the way to the Tower. There were a few cries of "Shame!" and other demonstrations of disapproval, but the sympathy of the bystanders having evaporated in a few yells and a mud shower of cabbage leaves, Buckingham was left in the hands of his captors. On the 13th of May, 1521, Buckingham was brought to trial on the charge of tempting Friar Hopkins to make traitorous prophecies. This Hopkins was an old fortune-telling impostor, who had predicted all sorts of good luck to poor Buckingham, none of which ever fell to his lot; so that he had the double mortification of having been cheated out of his cash, for promises that never came true, and being punished for them just as much as if they had all been literally verified. Buckingham defended himself with great courage; and on being convicted as a traitor, he solemnly declared that he was "never none:" an indignant mode of exculpation, in which grammar was sacrificed to emphasis. He died, very courageously, on the 17th of May, 1521, and the barbarous ceremony of his

execution created the greatest disgust among the populace.

Almost at the very moment that Henry was being guilty of the enormity we have described, he was putting himself forward as the champion of Religion. He professed the greatest horror of the errors and heresies of Luther, whom, in a letter to Louis of

Bavaria, he proposed to burn, books and all, in an early bonfire. Finding that the great Reformer was not to be thus made light of, Henry turned author, and by taking up the pen, he, instead of consigning his antagonist to the flames, regularly burnt his own fingers. There is no doubt that the royal scribbler had been thoroughly well crammed for the task he undertook; and Leo the Tenth having read the book, was good-natured enough to say, in the language of our old friend the Evening Paper, that "it ought to be on every gentleman's table." He published a sort of review of it in a special bull, and made the remark, that the author might fairly be called "The Defender of the Faith," a title which was not only adopted by Henry himself, but has been held, to this very day, by all subsequent English sovereigns.

Francis and Charles, the respective monarchs of France and Spain, had all this time continued their bickering, and they at length agreed to ask the arbitration of Henry. He declined interfering personally, but sent Wolsey in his stead, and the cardinal arrived at Calais on the 30th of July, 1521, with a magnificent retinue. His establishment consisted of lords, bishops, doctors, knights, squires, and gentlemen in crimson-velvet coats, with gold chains round their necks, which gave to the whole party an aspect of exceeding flashiness. Wolsey, notwithstanding the number and splendour of his followers, was at a very trifling expense, for he billeted the whole party at Bruges upon the unfortunate emperor, or rather upon his more unfortunate subjects, who were ordered by their sovereign to find everything that was wanted and put it all down to him in that doubtful document, the bill, which between a potentate and his people seldom meets with settlement. Rations of candles, wine, sugar *, were served out every evening to the whole of Wolsey's suite, so that all who wanted it had the ingredients of grog, while the candles enabled such as were so disposed to make a night of it.



After spending ten days in the enjoyment of every luxury, at the cost of the contending parties, thus showing that he understood how to make the very most of his position as an arbitrator, Wolsey suddenly declared that he saw no chance of Charles and Francis being reconciled.

The wily cardinal, having been regularly got hold of by Charles, drew up a treaty extremely favourable to the emperor, and even arranged that he should marry Henry's daughter Mary, though the young lady had been previously betrothed to the son of Francis. This alteration in the domestic arrangements of the parties concerned was simply declared to be "for the good of Christendom," and Henry agreed to the plan with a nonchalant assurance that he really thought it the best thing that could be done, for he did not see "how his said affairs might have been better handled." Pope Leo the Tenth, who was in league with Wolsey, the emperor, and Henry, in their joint arrangements for smashing France, agreed to give the dispensation for the proposed marriage; but Leo died before the nuptial treaty had been ratified., Cavendish.

Galt's "Life of Wolsey," book ii., State Papers.

On the death of Leo the Tenth, Wolsey lost no time in offering himself as a candidate for the vacant popedom. Secretary Pace was sent off at a slapping pace to Rome, to see the members of the conclave, and solicit their votes and interests for the English cardinal. Pace, however, seems to have been too slow to be of any use, and Adrian, Cardinal of Tortosa, who was put up almost in joke, and certainly to create a diversion against Giulio de Medici, one of the other candidates, was returned by a large majority. Wolsey's name does not appear to have been even mentioned on the occasion, and Pace took no step to further his employer's interests.

Francis having been thoroughly disgusted at the treatment he had experienced, tried, in the first place, to win Henry back to his cause by entreaties, and next by intimidation, in pursuance of which he shabbily stopped the pension of the English sovereign. When two kings fall out, their subjects are usually the sufferers; and accordingly, the English in France and the French in England became the objects of royal spitefulness. Francis stopped all the British vessels in his ports, and arrested the merchants, while Henry took his revenge by imprisoning the French ambassador and making a wholesale seizure of all property belonging to Frenchmen. At length, the English monarch became so angry, that he sent a challenge by the Clarencieux Herald, offering to fight Francis in single combat, that each might have the satisfaction of a gentleman; but whether one refused to go out, or the other drew in, we are not aware, for we only know that the dispute did not end in a duel. Doubts have been thrown upon the sincerity of Henry in thus inviting Francis to a personal encounter, but there is every reason to believe that, in the words of the Bell's Life of the period, "the British Pet meant business, though the Gallic Cock, having already won his spurs in other quarters, was not disposed to place them in jeopardy.

" Henry, with the customary determination of the English

character had, no doubt, put himself regularly into training for the event to come off, and it is not unlikely that he may have frequently amused himself by a little practice on the effigy of his intended antagonist.

The skill he thus acquired in planting his blows and putting in the necessary punishment at the proper points would have been highly serviceable had he ever been allowed to meet his man, and it is even said that a bottle of claret was placed in the middle of the head of the figure, so that Henry might fully realise the result of his sparring exercise.

We know not how far we may put faith in these ancient records, but we are justified in giving them to the reader, who will separate, no doubt, the wholesome corn of fact from the chaff of mere tradition.



In the meantime, Charles came over on a visit to his intended father-in-law, and was introduced to his infant bride, who was a child in arms, at his first interview.

Henry and Charles indulged in a succession of gaieties, for which neither possessed the means, and Charles even borrowed money of Henry, while the latter made up the deficiency by

running into debt to a frightful extent with his own people. The king now began to find that he "must have cash," and he at once applied to Wolsey to assist him in raising more money. On these occasions Henry spoke in the most flattering manner to the cardinal, calling him endearingly his "Linsey Wolsey," in a word, "his comforter." The prelate readily entered into his master's views, but candidly pointed out the difficulties of extracting anything more from the London merchants. They had lately advanced £20,000 in a forced loan, and it was determined to vary the demand upon them, by substituting direct taxation for the empty form of borrowing. Wolsey ordered the mayor, the aldermen, and the most substantial citizens of London to attend at his chambers, * when he announced to them the fact that the sovereign was hard up, and required pecuniary assistance. "What, again!" cried a voice which the cardinal pretended not to hear, but proceeded to say that he should require a return of the amount of their annual moneys from all of them . This proposition was the origin of that income-tax with which England has since been burdened; and the lovers of antiquity will feel some consolation in the knowledge that they suffer under a grievance which is hallowed by its ancient origin. There is to many a great comfort in being victimised under venerable institutions, and there are individuals who would rather be plundered in conformity with what are termed time-honoured principles, than be fairly dealt with upon any new system. While, however, we are talking of the simpletons of the present day, the dupes and victims of the period of Henry the Eighth are being kept waiting in the presence of Wolsey. "Gentlemen," said the cardinal, "the country is in danger, ana the king wants your hearts;" an announcement which was received with cheers of assent, until it was followed up by a declaration that he must also try the strength of their pockets. Murmurs of dissent

followed this intimation; but Wolsey went on boldly to say that the king would only require one-tenth of what they had, and if they could not live on the other nine-tenths, he did not know how they would ever be satisfied. "How will his majesty take the contribution?" at length exclaimed one of the aldermen.

"In money, plate, or jewels," cried the cardinal; "but at any rate the thing must be done, and therefore go about it." ** A promise was made that the money should be repaid out of the first subsidy, which would have been a sort of improvement upon the old practice of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, for it would have been picking Peter's two pockets at once, and ransacking one under the pretext of replenishing the other.

Supposed to have been over the gateway of Inner Temple Lane, where Henry and Wolsey shared the rooms now occupied by their successors, Honey and Skelton the hairdressers.

Hall, by the salient wit of More, who had a new joke for every new star, and appropriate puns for all the planets. He was the original author of that brilliant but ancient series of pleasantries on the "milky whey," which have since become so universally popular; and to him may perhaps be attributed the venerable but not sufficiently appreciated remark, that the music of the spheres must proceed from the band of Orion.

Henry certainly had the knack of making his people's money go a great way, for it went so far when it passed into his hands, that it never came back again.

The enormous sums he had extorted from the citizens soon melted away in dinner parties, pageants, and other expenses, so that he was at last, after a lapse of eight years, obliged to summon a Parliament. It was opened in person by the king, and the Commons elected Sir Thomas More as their speaker.

Sir Thomas More presented one of those rare unions of wisdom and wagghery which may occasionally be found, and he was often sent for to the palace to make jokes for his sovereign.

The king would often take him out on the leads at night, where after scrambling through the cock-loft, and getting out upon the tiles, Sir Thomas and his royal pupil would stand for an hour at a time, conversing on the subject of astronomy.

The king and Wolsey congratulated each other on having got Tom More as Speaker, for they thought he would act like one of themselves, and that he would soon laugh the people out of all the money they might be required to furnish. Henry and the cardinal foolishly imagined that the man who sometimes made a joke could never be serious; but they found out their mistake, for he proved himself an excellent man of business when occasion required. Wolsey thought to produce an effect by attending the House in person, and making a speech on that most unpromising topic the "crisis," though it was not such a threadbare subject in those days as in our own, when a "crisis" may almost be looked for as a quarterly occurrence. Happily, if we are remarkable for our rapidity in getting a "crisis" up, we have also a wonderful knack of putting it down again with equal promptitude.

The speech of Wolsey was listened to without reply; for, every member of the House considering the cardinal's intrusion a breach of privilege, remained mute and motionless. Irritated by their silence, the crafty churchman called up one of the members by name, and asked him for a speech; but the call might just as well have been for a song, since the individual indicated said nothing more than rise up and sit down again. Finding it impossible to get a good word, or indeed any word at all from the Commons, the cardinal lost his temper, and declared that, having come from the king, he should certainly wait for an answer; but Tom Moore, the Speaker—who, by-the-by, deserved the title, for he was the only one that spoke—began to show his wit by saying that the fact was, the Commons were too modest to open their mouths in the presence of so great a personage. Wolsey withdrew in dudgeon, and after a few days' debate, it

was at length agreed to give the money that had been asked, but to take five years to pay it in. Though Henry would no doubt have been perfectly willing to make a sacrifice for ready money, and allow a considerable discount on a cash transaction, his minister tried to accelerate the mode of payment without offering any equivalent for a restriction of the term of credit.

The autumn of the year 1525 was rendered remarkable by the confusion into which the Londoners were thrown, in consequence of the almanack-makers and astronomers

having tried to give an impetus to their trade by throwing into the market a parcel of very alarming prophecies.

It was predicted that the rains would be so tremendous as to convert the whole wealth of the metropolis into floating capital; and the merchants, fearing they might not be able to keep their heads above water, ran in crowds to the suburbs.

Several parted with everything they possessed, and their foolish conduct in making their arrangements for being swamped formed a precedent, no doubt, for a case of recent occurrence, in which an individual of average income, having been led away by a prophecy that the world had only two more years to run, invested the whole of his property in the largest possible annuity he could procure for two years, being under the firm impression that beyond that time neither he nor his heirs, executors, or assigns would have the opportunity of enjoying a farthing of any surplus.

As the world did not keep the appointment that had been made for it by the calculator of its final arrangements, he was left without a penny when the time he had assigned for its duration was up; and thus many had got rid of everything in 1525,

under the expectation that all their sorrows and possessions would be drowned in the inundation that did—not happen.—During the time the panic prevailed, a few of the tradesmen

and artificers did their best to put it to a profitable account, and a turner of the time, who was so clever at his business that he could turn a penny out of anything, constructed several thousand pairs of stilts, and, placing them in his window labelled "Stilts for the inundation," he obtained numerous customers.

Wolsey's attention was suddenly called off from matters at home by a fresh vacancy in the popedom, occasioned by the death of Adrian. The English cardinal immediately despatched a letter to his royal master, saying how unfit he was for the pontificate, when Henry, instantly taking the hint, and saying to himself, "Oh! ah! exactly! I see what Wolsey wants," wrote off strongly to Rome in favour of his election.

Powerful efforts were made to secure his return and push him to the top of the poll, but though he got several votes, he was completely beaten by Giulio de Medici, who was elected to the papal chair by a very large majority.

Wolsey bore his disappointment, to all appearances, exceedingly well, but the probability is that he saw the policy of keeping on good terms with the new pope, who made the cardinal his legate for life, and granted him a bull empowering him to suppress a number of monasteries, for the purpose of taking the money they possessed to endow his own colleges.

Henry and Wolsey declared that the cash should be devoted to "putting down" that "Monster Luther," as they sometimes called him, or that "fellow Luther," as they spoke of him now and then, by way of change, though his fellow did not exist at the period when the term was applied to him.

Among the many irons that Henry now had in the fire was an Italian iron, with which he stood a pretty fair chance of burning his fingers, for he had interfered in the disputes between Francis the First of France and the Emperor Charles, who



was at war in Italy. Francis had laid himself down on the pavement before Pavia, resolved to leave no stone unturned to place a curb on the foe and pave his own way to victory.

As he lay under the walls, the cream of the Imperial army was poured down upon him with a savage violence that causes the blood to curdle at the bare recital.

Thoroughly soured in his hopes, Francis plunged into the very thick of the Imperial cream, and beating around him with his sword in all directions, reduced seven men, with his own hand, to the inanimate condition of whipped syllabubs.

His valour availed him little, for he was removed—to adopt the spelling of the period—in custody.

He was kept in captivity in Spain, at the strong fortress of Piz-zichitone, from which he wrote home to his mother—probably for the means of replenishing his *sac de nuit*—and concluded his note with the memorable words, “*Tout est perdu hors l’honneur*,” which, for the benefit of that portion of the public who may have learnt their “French without a master,” and have, consequently, never mastered it at all, we translate into “All is lost, excepting honour.” Francis being now completely

down, Henry and Wolsey proposed to Charles that they should combine in making the very most of the helpless position of their prostrate enemy. Fortunately for the French king, his two opponents were not only deficient in funds, but had begun to quarrel; on the old principle, perhaps, that when Poverty stalks in at the door, Love hops out at the window.

The pay of Charles's forces had fallen fearfully into arrear, and they declared they would no longer go on fighting on half salaries. It was therefore determined to bring the military season to a close; and the grand ballet of action, having for its plot the invasion of France of which Henry had drawn out the scheme, and which was to have put forward the strength of a double company, comprising a powerful combination of the English and Imperial troupe was postponed for an indefinite period.

Henry, who was ready to sell himself to either party, finding Charles too poor to purchase him, offered himself without reserve to Francis. Terms were soon arranged, by which Henry was to receive by instalments two millions of crowns, with a permanent annuity when the chief sum was paid off; and Wolsey was also handsomely provided for at least in the shape of promises. While the agreement was most solemnly ratified by Francis himself and the chief of the French nobility, the Attorney and Solicitor-General of France privately popped a protest on to the file, in order that the king, who was particular about his honour, might not have his scruples shocked should he

subsequently feel disposed to break his word and fly off from his agreement. He found considerable difficulty in effecting his release without swearing to at least a dozen things he never intended to perform, and when the document was brought to him, full of concessions to Charles, he affixed his signature with the indifference of a man putting his name to a bill, regardless of the amount, which he does not mean to liquidate.

He had no sooner got out of custody, and found himself comfortably seated before his palace fire, than Sir Thomas Cheney

and Dr. Taylor walked in with a message from Henry the Eighth, to congratulate Francis on his delivery.

“If you’ll take my advice,” said one of the visitors, at the same time handing his card, with Dr. Taylor, Jurist.

upon it, to give weight to his words, “you will pay no attention to the liabilities you have entered into with regard to the Emperor.”

“Indeed, Doctor, I don’t mean to trouble myself upon the subject,” was the king’s reply; “and in fact I have kept up a running accompaniment of private protests to every obligation I have undertaken.” Dr. Taylor explained to him that he was on the safe side, for the bonds he had given were bad in law, having been executed while the king was under duress, and therefore not legally responsible. Thus did the chivalrous Francis, who had written so nobly about having lost everything except his honour, present an early instance, of which later times have furnished so many, of the largest talkers being the smallest doers, or perhaps rather the greatest dos in the universe.

We have now to relate a curious personal anecdote of Henry the Eighth, which might have caused a considerable abridgment of his reign, much in the same way that the want of strength in the bowl in which the three wise men of Gotha went to sea, put a premature period to their little history. * Henry, in his early manhood, was one day running after a hawk, perhaps to put a little salt on its tail in the idle hope of catching it. The bird was actively retreating before its royal pursuer, and had just quitted a hedge by hopping the twig, when it traversed a ditch on the other side, which Henry endeavoured to clear by the aid of his leaping-pole. The attempt somehow failed, and the monarch pitching on to his head in the soft mud, sunk into it as far as his neck, and became planted with his legs in the air for several seconds. Happily a footman named Edmund Moody—”You all know Tom Moody” though you may never have heard of Edmund—came up at the instant and pulled the king up from the ground by the roots—at least by the roots of his hair—with wondrous

promptitude. Had this accident proved fatal, Henry would have been the first instance of a monarch losing his crown by being planted instead of supplanted, which had been the fate of some that had preceded him. "Three wise men of Gotha

Went to sea in a bowl; Had the bowl been stronger

My story would have been longer."—Old Nursery Ballad.

Though the fact is not stated, the inference clearly is, that the "wise men" bowled themselves out of existence by that rash proceeding. It is now time for us to speak of the commencement of that spirit of Bluebeardism which ultimately gave the most glaring colouring to Henry's character. He had always been a little flighty and indiscriminate in his attentions to the fair sex, but he had hitherto treated Catherine with respect, until he met with Anne Boleyn, or Bullen, the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, who was descended from a former Lord Mayor of London, but by a series of clever match-making a talent for which was inherited by Miss Annethe family had succeeded in allying itself, by marriage,

to some of the proudest aristocracy in the land.

One of their earliest "dodges" had been to repair the plebeian word Bullen, by omitting the U and substituting an O, which got it to Bollen. In the course of time, having been allowed an inch in the way of licence, they took an L, or at least one liquid absorbed another, and the word now stood Bolen. Subsequently a Y, without a why or wherefore, was dropped in, and the Bullens, who had probably acquired their name, originally, from having been landlords, or perhaps potboys, at the "Bull," had now assumed the comparatively elegant title of Boleyn, which has since become so famous in history. Sir Thomas Boleyn, the father of Nancy, had long lived about the Court, and had been employed as a deliverer of messages, or ticket-porter, for Henry the Eighth, on some important occasions. Anne, who was born in the year 1507, had in very early life gone out to service as maid—of honour—to the king's sister, Mary, who, when going

over to be married to Louis the Twelfth, took the girl abroad, where she picked up a few accomplishments.

On Mary's returning home, a widow, Anne Boleyn found another situation with Claude, the wife of Francis the First, but after remaining in another family or two for a short time in France, she returned to England, where we find her, in 1527, engaged as maid of honour to Catherine of Aragon.

Henry having become deeply enamoured of Miss Boleyn, who had shown a strong determination to stand no nonsense, was suddenly seized with religious scruples as to his marriage with the queen; for he found out, seventeen years after the event, that he had done wrong in allying himself with his brother's widow. The fact of her being now an oldish lady of forty-three added no doubt considerably to the pious horror of the king at the step which he had taken.

He accordingly began to think seriously of a divorce; and when Wolsey was sounded on the subject, the cardinal, for reasons of his own, yielded a prompt concurrence. He was anxious to pay off Catherine on account of a quarrel he had had with her nephew, the emperor; and thus, in the words of the poet of Dumbarton Castle, "He sought to consummate his fiendish part By breaking a defenceless female's heart."

He was sent as an ambassador to Francis, ostensibly to arrange about the marriage of Henry's only daughter Mary, but really, as it is believed, to induce the French king to consent that Wolsey should be a sort of acting pope during the investment of the castle of St. Angelo, where the Spaniards and Germans had made the real pontiff a prisoner.

Poor Clement bore his ill fortune with patience, though, as long as the investment of the castle lasted, he used to say it was one of the most unprofitable investments in which he had ever been involved, and that nothing but the excessive tightness prevented him from selling out, for he was quite tired of the security.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

HENRY THE EIGHTH (CONTINUED.)

THE reign of Henry the Eighth would become tedious were it not for the privilege we have assumed in dividing it into chapters; though we shall not follow the example of the melodramatists who suppose fifteen years to have elapsed between each of their acts, and thus carry on their plots by means of the imagination of their audience.

It is true that many of the events of Henry's reign are dark enough to cause a wish that we might be allowed to omit them; but we must not give up to squeamishness what we owe to posterity.

We have not yet come to the catalogue of his various female victims, and we have yet to describe those matrimonial freaks upon which we would gladly have put a ban by forbidding the banns, had we lived three centuries in advance of our present existence. We must, however, speak the truth; and though we might imitate the author of the play called *The Wife of Seven Husbands*, who requested the public to consider that a

husband had elapsed between each act, we will not call upon our readers to imagine that a wife of Henry the Eighth has elapsed between each chapter.

We will now resume our narrative, and in the first place look after Wolsey, whom we left under orders to proceed to the French dominions; and as the cardinal must by this time have commenced the passage across, we will take him at once out of his unpleasant position, and land him at Boulogne.

Wolsey's reception in France was like that of a royal personage, and had all the inconveniences of such a compliment; for the firing of the guns at Boulogne frightened his mule, who had not been trained to stand fire, and who indulged in a kick-up of the most extraordinary character.

This interview with Francis resulted in three treaties, which

were concluded on the 18th of August, 1527, by the first of which it was agreed that the Princess Mary should marry young



Francis, Duke of Orleans, instead of old Francis, his father, a point that had hitherto been an open question; the second treaty concluded a peace, and the third stipulated that nothing done by the pope during his captivity should take effect, but that as long as Clement was in durance, which it required all his fortitude to endure, Wolsey should have the management of ecclesiastical affairs in England. The pope himself good-naturedly sent over a bull to confirm the cardinal in his new powers; and “here certainly,” says Lord Herbert, “began the taste our king took of governing, in chief, the clergy.” His lordship might have added with truth that Wolsey had performed the wonderful physical feat of biting off his own nose to be revenged upon the rest of his face, for it is certain that the taste Henry had been encouraged to take of power over the church soon led him to be discontented with a mere snack, for his appetite grew fearfully by what it fed upon. Like the modest dropper-in at dinner-time, who sits down to take “just a mouthful,” and is led on to the consumption of a hearty meal, Henry, who at first simply intended to pick a bit

from the power of the pope, soon became a cormorant of church influence. Henry's thoughts were seriously occupied with the design of getting a divorce, and he therefore pretended to be in great alarm as to the succession to the throne, in consequence of a "public doubt" as to his marriage being lawful and the Princess Mary being legitimate, Lord Herbert's "Life of Henry the Eighth," of the quarto edition, 1741.

There is no question that the wish was in this instance father to the thought, and that, so far from Henry's desiring to silence all discussion on the point, he was the first to encourage the criticism of his wife's and his daughter's position.

Notwithstanding his notorious flirtation with Anne Boleyn, which the forward minx decidedly encouraged, he pretended to be looking out for an eligible parti in the event of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon being officially nullified.

He had a picture sent over to him of the Duchess of Alanson, sister to Francis, and used to pretend that he should probably set his cap at that lady; but the picture was a mere blind, or probably in a very short time it experienced a worse fate than that of a blind by being turned into a fire-board or consigned to a lumber-room.

The love-making of Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn was a mixture of mawkishness, childishness, hypocrisy, and scholastic pedantry, tinctured with an affectation of religion that was not the least disgusting feature of this disgraceful courtship. Henry used to write love-letters full of extracts from Thomas Aquinas, complaints of headache, reference to pious books, and sickly sentimentalism about "mine own sweet heart," while the good-for-nothing Nancy B.

would reply by sending him pretty little toys and pretty little words of encouragement. She had made good use of her time in Wolsey's absence, for, when the cardinal came back, the king, in answer to his own question, "Guess who's the gal of my 'art?'"

which his friend gave up, enthusiastically responded,

“Anne Boleyn The already corpulent monarch was stupidly and spoonily love-sick about this “artful puss,” as Catherine might have called her, and he used to leave scraps of paper about the palace scribbled over with charades, conundrums, and anagrams to the object of his admiration.

* Wolsey was a good deal annoyed by this avowal, but, finding his opposition would do no good, he changed his tack and fell in with the sovereign’s fancy.

Henry ordered him to consult Sir Thomas More, who, not at all liking the job, referred him politely to St. Jerome and St. Augustine, saying it was more in their way than his own, and he felt any interference on his part would be irregular and unprofessional. Wolsey next tried the bishops, who shook their heads and said, “You had better ask the pope,” to whom the king at last determined upon a reference. One of these has been preserved; it is to the following effect: “My first is the article indefinite (An); my second is a very useful animal (Bull); my third is the abode of hospitality (Inn); and my whole is the ‘gal of my art ‘An(n) Buli-Inn (Anne Boleyn).”

The pope, whom we left locked up in the castle of St. Angelo, had been obliged to “come out of that” for want of provisions, and had escaped in the disguise of a gardener, in which a shovel hat may have been of some use to him.

He played his cards so well as the one of spades, that, with the assistance of one or two true hearts who turned out trumps, he reached in safety the town of Orvieto, where he expected reinforcement from a French army Long before the promised aid arrived, he received a card inscribed “ Dr. Knight,” and he had scarcely time to say, “Doctor Knight? Who is Doctor Knight? I don’t know any Doctor Knight,” when the king of England’s secretary, who bore that name, rushed into the presence of the pontiff. The doctor, having briefly explained his object in

coming, which was to get the pope's consent to Henry's divorce, succeeded in extracting the requisite authority from his holiness, who was very unwilling, but he could not keep back his bull without finding himself on the horns of a worse dilemma.

He at all events wished the matter to be kept secret for a short time; but a friend of Wolsey stepped forward to stipulate that an Italian cardinal should be sent to England with Dr. Knight, to prove that the document he took with him was genuine. Poor Clement, being afraid to refuse compliance, pointed to half-a-dozen cardinals standing in one corner, and hurriedly observed, "There, there, Dr. Knight, take any one of those, for the whole six are quite at your service." In conformity with this permission, Cardinal Campeggio was selected to visit England, and he carried with him in his pocket a decree, rendering final any judgment that he and Wolsey might agree upon.

On the arrival of Campeggio a public entry into London was proposed: but he excused himself on the score of gout, which had laid him by the heels, or rather seized him by the great toe, and prevented him from coming into the metropolis on the footing that he might have desired. After spending a few days with his leg in a sling, he was introduced to the king, whom he greatly irritated by advising that the business of the divorce should not be proceeded with. Henry began declaring that he had been deceived, and that the pope was an old humbug, which caused the gouty leg of the legate to tremble in its shoe; and, taking the bull from his pocket, he showed that the pontiff meant business, and had given full authority for transacting it.

Henry's desire for a divorce got soon rumoured about the city, and caused so much dissatisfaction that he called a meeting of the judges, lord mayor, common council, and others, at which it was announced that his majesty would attend to give explanations, and enter into a justification of his conduct. He made an elaborate speech of the most artful and hypocritical kind, in which

he asserted that his religious scruples alone made him agitate the question of a divorce, and that if his marriage was valid, nothing would give him greater pleasure than to finish his life in the society of the old lady who had been for many years the partner of his existence. It is notorious that he had made up his mind to desert Catherine for Anne Boleyn; and his speech is therefore a disgusting specimen of low cunning, rendered doubly odious by the religious cant with which it was accompanied. The unhappy queen, when visited by Wolsey and Campeggio, exclaimed at once, "I know what you have come about." She said she thought it hard to have her marriage doubted after nearly twenty years; and spoke pathetically of those early days when she was in the habit of going out a-Maying with her royal husband.



"Ah, madam!" replied Wolsey, "if we could have May all the year round, it would be pleasant enough; but the spring of the year, as well as the spring-time of existence, is not perpetual." Catherine acknowledged she was not so young as she had been, and the English cardinal ventured to hint, that, even in those Maying days, she had the advantage of Henry—at least, if there can be any

advantage to a lady who is her husband's senior, Finding pathos of no use, she proceeded to argument, and endeavoured to show that Henry had almost lost his claim to a divorce by mere laches, in having so long neglected to apply for one.

The two cardinals only shook their heads, as if they would say, "I can't see much in that;" and she then ventured to take another ground for opposing her husband's project. She complained that her husband had paid for the licence and dispensation from the pope, but that the dispensation might be dispensed with as valueless, if one could supersede another at the instigation of the great and powerful against the comparatively friendless and impotent. At length, losing all temper and patience, she turned to Wolsey, taxing him with having "done it all;" when the wily cardinal did nothing but bow and smile in general terms, placing his hand upon his heart, muttering out, "Pon honour!"

"Nothing of the sort!" and giving other similar assurances that he had in no way instigated the conduct pursued by Henry.

The preliminary meeting to which we have referred was held in the Hall of the Black Friars, on the 31st of May, 1529; and an adjournment till the 21st of June having taken place, Wolsey and Campeggio were at their posts at the appointed hour. Henry and Catherine were both in attendance; and the former, when his name was called, gave a terrific shout of "Here!" which had a startling effect upon the whole assembly.

Catherine, though she might be considered upon her trial, was accommodated with a seat on the left of the bench, and was attended by four friendly bishops, who had come in the amiable capacity of moral bottle-holders to this injured woman.

When her name was called she refused to answer, or to say a word; but the dignity of the queen soon gave way to the volubility of the woman, and her tongue started off into a gallop of the most touching eloquence.

She commenced in the old style of appeal, by throwing herself at the king's feet, presuming perhaps, that if he had a tender

point it might be upon his toes, and she should thus make sure of touching it. She then implored his compassion, as a woman and a stranger, concluding with a happy alliterative effect by declaring herself “a friendless female foreigner.”

At the conclusion of a very powerful speech she rose slowly, and when it was expected she would return to her seat, she marched deliberately out of the hall, to the great amazement of the quartette of bishops by whom she had been accompanied. Henry was a little staggered by what had occurred; but he

nevertheless made a reply, which was partly inaudible from the flurry of the king himself, and the consternation into which the Court had been thrown by the queen’s very telling speech, and highly dramatic exit. He was understood to say, that he had a very high respect for the distinguished lady who had just addressed them; that she was a very good wife; that he had in fact no fault to find; but that really his scruples as to the lawfulness of his marriage had made him very uncomfortable.

He remarked that his conscience was so exceedingly delicate that it could not bear the slightest shock; and here indeed he seems to have spoken the truth, for his conscience appears to have died altogether within a very short time of the occurrence we have mentioned.

Catherine’s departure from the Court turned out to be final, for nothing could induce her to enter it again; and, being pronounced contumacious, the proceedings were carried on in her absence.

The two cardinals, out of regard to her majesty’s interests, requested Dr. Taylor—an aged junior in the back rows—to hold a brief for the defendant, and examine the witnesses: a proposition at which the learned gentleman jumped, for he had previously been occupying his own mind and the official ink in sketching the scene before him on the desk, or handing down his name to posterity by cutting it out on the bench with a pocket penknife. Dr. Taylor, if he had practised little before, had quite

enough to do on the occasion that brought him into notice, for Lord Herbert, in his "Life and Reign of Henry the Eighth," gives a list of thirty-seven witnesses for the plaintiff, all of whom our venerable junior had the task of cross-examining. Some idea may be formed of the magnitude of this achievement, when it is stated that several of the witnesses were ladies, and that the evidence of the first of them namely, Mary, Countess of Essex is summed up in the report as having amounted to "little," though conveyed in "general terms.

" There is something truly overwhelming in the idea which this slight summary conveys; for it is impossible that the imagination can set any limits to the "little" a lady can contrive to say when she avails herself of "general terms" to give it utterance. Cardinal Campeggio evinced a decided reluctance to bring the matter to a decision, though Henry's case was undoubtedly well supported by evidence; and old Taylor being, professionally speaking, a young hand, was able to do little for his absent client. The king at length grew angry at Campeggio's delay, and instructed counsel to move for judgment, which was accordingly done on the 23rd of July in a somewhat peremptory manner. The Italian cardinal refused the motion, and intimated that he would not be bullied by any man, "be he king or any other potentate." He then went on to say, that "he was an old man, sick, decayed, and daily looking for death:" which certainly gave no reason for delay; and a whisper to that effect went no doubt round the bar, and was caught up by Henry's counsel, who "humbly submitted" that "if the Court expected to be soon defunct, there must be the stronger reason for fixing an early day for its decision." Cardinal Campeggio got up somewhat angrily, and intimated that the cause must be made a "remanet;" that in fact it must stand over until next term, as he was not disposed to continue his sittings. "Is your lordship aware," asked Sampson, K.C., "that you will throw us over the long vacation? for we are now only

in July, and the next term begins in October.” The cardinal, who was half-way towards the robing-room, turned sharply round to observe that “the Court was virtually up,” and that “he really wished gentlemen of the bar would observe more regularity in their proceedings.” Sampson, K.C., had nevertheless got as far as “Will your lordship allow us?” in another attempt to be heard, when Campeggio, growling out furiously, “I can hear nothing now, Mr. Sampson,” retired angrily to his private apartment.* The King’s leading counsel was Richard Sampson, with whom was John Bell, Lord Herbert’s “Life of Henry the Eighth,” The Court never met again, and Campeggio left England a few days afterwards, having first taken leave of the king, who kept his temper and behaved very decently.

He even gave a few presents to the refractory cardinal, but, as the latter lay at Dover previous to embarkation, his bedroom door was burst open, his trunks were rummaged, and probably all his presents were taken away again, Wolsey, who had been associated in the hearing of the great cause,



Henry versus Catherine, or the Queen at the suit of the King, fell into instant disgrace for the part he had taken, or, rather, for the part he had omitted to take, upon this momentous occasion. Miss

Anne Boleyn, who had calculated on his keeping Campeggio up to the mark in pronouncing for the divorce, was especially angry with Wolsey for his apathy. Even the courtiers got up a joke upon the supineness of the English cardinal by calling him the supine in(h)um, while Campeggio was compared to the gerund in do, by reason of his active duplicity, through which he was declared to have regularly done the English sovereign. Many of the nobility attempted to excite the avarice of Henry by hinting to him that Wolsey's overthrow would be a good speculation, if only for the sake of obtaining the wealth he had managed to accumulate; and from this moment the cardinal stood in the precarious position of a turkey that is

only crammed to await the favourable opportunity for sacrifice. Soon after the trial of his cause, in which he thought proper to assume that he was entitled to a verdict, Henry set off on a tour, accompanied by Miss Anne Boleyn, who, in spite of Hume's panegyric on her "virtue and modesty," appears to have been what is commonly called a very pretty character. Wolsey was not invited to be of the party, but he rode after the Court, for he was one of those hangers-on that are not to be shaken off very easily. He came up with the king at Grafton, in Northamptonshire, and was very kindly received, but the next morning he was told distinctly that he was not wanted in the royal suite, and that he might go back to London, after which he never saw his master's face again. * Henry, being anxious to ruin his late favourite *selon les règles*, took the very decisive method of going to law with him. Two bills were filed against the cardinal in the King's Bench, but Wolsey, nevertheless, proceeded to the Court of Chancery to take his seat, just as if nothing had happened. None of the servants of the Court paid him any respect, and it is probable that even the mace-bearer, the ushers, and other officers omitted the customary ceremonies of preceding him with the mace, and crying out, "Pray, silence!" upon his entrance. On his expressing his readiness to take motions, he

was responded to by one general motion towards the door, in which the whole bar joined. Being thus left quite alone, he amused himself by giving judgment in some old suit which had lasted so long that the parties were all dead, and he consoled himself by saying that this accounted for the fact of nobody appearing on either side.

Cavendish., The king, hearing of the cardinal's proceedings, gave orders that he should be forbidden the Court altogether, and when he went to take his seat, as usual, he found the doors closed against him. When he got home to York Place, where he resided, he was told that two gentlemen were waiting to see him, and, on going upstairs, the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk requested to have a few words with him.

They told him that the king intended to come and live at York Place, so that Wolsey must "turn out," to which he made no objection; but when they insolently and tauntingly demanded the Great Seal, he declared he would not trust it in their possession without a written authority.

"How do I know what you are going to do with it?" cried the cardinal, holding it firmly in his grasp, and returning it to the sealskin case in which he was in the habit of keeping it.

The two dukes, having exhausted their vocabulary of abuse, retired for that day, but came back the next morning with an order, signed by the king, for the delivery of the Great Seal, which Wolsey gave up to them, together with an inventory of the furniture and fixtures of the magnificent abode he was about to vacate in favour of his sovereign.

The catalogue exhibited a long list of luxurious appointments, and commencing with "a splendid set of curtains of cloth of gold, went on with—a ditto—a ditto—and a ditto, down to the end of the three first pages.

The neatness and variety of his table-covers cannot be conceived, and his magnificent sideboard of gold and silver plate was in those days unparalleled.



He had got also a thousand pieces of fine Holland; but as the chief use of Holland is, we believe, to make blinds, as must regard the purchase of this material in so large a quantity, as one of those blind bargains which are sometimes the result of excessive opulence, Having made over all those articles to the king, Wolsey left his sumptuous palace, and jumping into a barge, desired the bargeman to drop him down with the tide towards Putney.

The river was crowded with boats to see him shove off, and he was assailed with the most savage yells from the populace.

As the bargeman gave Wolsey his hand and pulled him on board, the poor cardinal stumbled over a block of Wallsend, when an inhuman shout of "That's right, haul him over the coals," arose from one unfeeling brute, and was echoed by countless multitudes Herbert's "Life of Henry the Eighth," and Hume's "History of England." On reaching Putney, Wolsey gave the word to "pull her in shore," when he disembarked, with his fool and one or two others who had agreed to share his exile.

They had not gone very far when they heard a cry of "Ho! hoi hilly hilly hoi" and looking back, they perceived Sir John Norris coming full pelt after them. The cardinal was mounted on a

mule—hired probably at Putney, or picked off the common—and though he endeavoured to put the animal along by giving her first her own head, and then the head of a thick stick, the rise of a hill brought Wolsey to a dead stand-still.

Here he was easily overtaken by Sir John Norris, who came, as it turned out, with a present of a ring from the king's own finger, and a "comfortable message.

The abject cardinal went into the most humiliating ecstasies, and actually grovelled in the very mud, to show his humble sense of the kindness and condescension of his sovereign.

Thinking that Sir John Norris possibly expected something for his trouble in bringing the grateful tidings, Wolsey shook his head mournfully, saying, "I have nothing left except the clothes on my back—but here, take this"—and he tore from his neck an old piece of jewellery. "As for my sovereign," he cried, "I have nothing worthy of his acceptance;" when suddenly his eyes lighted upon his faithful fool, who had been such a thorough fool as to follow a fallen master. "Ha!" exclaimed Wolsey, "I will send to his majesty my jester, who is worth a thousand pounds to anybody who has never heard his jokes before; but as I am familiar with the entire collection, I have no further use for him." The faithful fool was exceedingly reluctant to go, and it took six stout yeomen to drag him away—a fact which, as he was full of wit, proves the humour of the period to have been dreadfully ponderous. Some of the jests of our own time are heavy enough, but we doubt whether it would require half-a-dozen porters to carry a professed wag of the present day—including the Durden of his entire stock-in-trade into the presence of royalty. It is not impossible that the obstinate resistance of the fool to a transfer from the service of a disgraced subject to that of a powerful king, may have been intended as a sample of his style of joking; but we can only say that if this was a specimen of his wit, the value set upon him by his old master was rather exorbitant. * Lord Herbert, 293.

Wolsey now lodged at Esher, where his spirits soon fell—if we may be allowed an engineering phrase—to a very dumpy level. Continual sighing had fearfully reduced his size, and he fretted so much that a sort of fret-work of tears seemed to be always hanging to his eye-lashes. His face became wrinkled and pale, as if constant crying had not only intersected his countenance with little channels, but had likewise washed out all its colour. It is not unlikely that he sometimes regretted having parted with his fool, whose dry humour might have mitigated the moisture or subdued the soaking which naturally resulted from the emptying of so many cups of sorrow over the dismal drooping and dripping cardinal. Nothing seemed to rouse him from his despondency, and the people about him could never succeed in stirring him up to a fit of even temporary gaiety. After dinner they would sometimes ask him to partake of a bowl of sack; but at the mere mention of the word sack he would burst into tears, and sob out, that the sack he had already received had been the cause of all his wretchedness. Upon this he would leave the dinner table, and wander forth to enjoy his solitary whine in the wood, among the thickly planted solitudes in the neighbourhood of Esher. Sometimes he would sit pining for hours under a favourite pine, or would go and indulge in a weeping match with one of the most lachrymose he could find of weeping willows. All this crying brought on a crisis at last, and Wolsey had so damped all his vital energies by the incessant showers of tears he let fall, that he fell into a slow fever.

The king now seemed to take some compassion upon his former friend, and sent down a medical man to see the prostrate cardinal; though we are inclined to attribute this anxiety for his health to a desire to keep him alive until the process was complete for depriving him of all his property. At all events a Parliament was suddenly summoned, and a Bill of impeachment promptly prepared against the fallen and feeble Wolsey.

There were no less than four-and-forty articles in this document,

which contained, among a variety of other ridiculous accusations, a charge of having, when ill with fever, “come whispering daily in the king’s ear, and blowing upon his most noble grace with breath infective and perilous.

” This would, indeed, have been convicting him out of his own mouth; but though the Lords passed the bill, it was thrown out in the Commons, through a speech of Thomas Cromwell, who had been secretary to the unfortunate cardinal.

Wolsey had always felt that when he did fall, he should fall not only as Shakespeare said, “like Lucifer,” but like an entire box of lucifers, “never to rise again.” Directly the cardinal learned that the bill had been defeated, his appetite returned, his cheeks resumed their colour, the furrows began to fill out, for grief had been at sad work with its plough all over his countenance.

He had still a good deal of property left, but the king began tearing it away by handfuls at a time, until Wolsey had nothing left but the bishoprics of York and Winchester.

Even these were a good deal impoverished by Henry, who made a series of snatches at the revenues, and divided the amount among Viscount Rochford, the father of Anne Boleyn—who used to say, “I am sure papa would like that,” whenever there was a good thing to be had—the Duke of Norfolk, and a few other lay cormorants. Wolsey was at length completely beggared, by treatment that was of such an impoverishing nature as really to beggar description.

He had nothing left him but a free pardon, a little plate—including two table-spoons, which his enemies said were more than his desert,—a small van of furniture, comprising, among other articles, an arm-chair, in which he was tauntingly told he might set himself down comfortably for life, and a little cash for current expenses. He was allowed also to move nearer town, and giving up his lodgings at Esher he took an apartment at Richmond, where he was not permitted to remain very long, for Anne and her party—including several knights of the Star and

Garter—persuaded Henry to order the cardinal off to his own archbishopric. The fallen prelate thought this forced journey so very hard that he tried to soften it by easy stages, and he travelled at the slowest possible pace, in the hope of being sent for back again. At every inn he entered for refreshment on the road he always left a request in the bar, that if anyone should ask for a gentleman of the name of Wolsey, the enquirer should be shown straight up, without the delay of an instant.

Not a knock came to the door of his bedroom but he expected it was a messenger from the king; and when he found, in many cases, it was “only the boots,” his disappointment would vent itself in terms of great bitterness.

Adopting the customary mode of showing grief in those superstitious days, he took to wearing shirts made of horse-hair next his shin, but donkey’s-hair would certainly have been more appropriate. He had, however, become so accustomed to hard rubs, that a little extra scarification was scarcely perceptible.

On his arrival at York, he endeavoured to make himself neighbourly with the people about him, and became a sort of gentleman farmer, expressing the utmost interest in rural affairs.

He made himself an universal favourite, and was the lion of every evening party within twelve miles of his residence.

He was, however, scarcely a figure for these réunions, in his horse-hair shirt; but he probably concealed the penitential part of his costume by wearing a camel’s-hair waistcoat immediately over it. The clergy were always getting up little fêtes, of which he was the hero; and he was invited to the ceremony of installation in his cathedral, which he promised to go through, on condition of the thing being done as quietly as possible. It was understood that there should be “no fuss,” but several of the nobility and gentry sent contributions of cold meat and wine, forming themselves in fact into a provisional committee, so that the affair partook rather of the character of a picnic than of a pageant. Three days before it was to take place Wolsey was

sitting at dinner, when there came a knock at the door, and it was announced that the Earl of Northumberland his friend and pupil—was waiting in the courtyard.

Let him come up and do as we are doing,” exclaimed the cardinal “Dear me, I wish he had been a little earlier; but he is just in pudding-time, at any rate.” As Northumberland entered the room Wolsey seized him by the hand, entreating him to sit down and enjoy a social snack—or, in other words, go snacks in the humble dinner. Northumberland seemed affected, when Wolsey, continuing his meal, observed, “Well, you will not make yourself at home, and I can’t make you out, so I may as well finish my dinner.” At length Northumberland, with a tottering foot, a trembling hand, a quivering lip, a faltering tongue, and a tearful eye, approached his friend Wolsey, and threw himself with a heavy heart—adding at least a pound to his weight—upon the old man’s bosom. Wolsey had scarcely time to exclaim, “Hold up!” when the earl, mournfully tapping the cardinal on the shoulder, murmured, in a voice completely macadamised with sobs, “My Lord—(oh, oh, oh!)—I arrest you” (here his voice became guttural from a perfect gutter of tears) “for high treason.” Poor Wolsey remained rooted to the spot, but it was soon necessary to transplant him, and he was speedily removed in custody. His old weakness again came over him, for he began to leak again at both eyes, as if he carried the veritable New River Head under the hat of a cardinal. He of course made himself ill, and indeed he was frequently warned that if he continued much longer in this liquid state, he would liquidate the debt of nature altogether. The warning was verified very speedily, for on reaching Leicester Abbey, when the monks came to the door with a candle to light him to bed, he observed to the abbot, “Father, I am come to lay my bones among you.

” He died on the 29th of November, 1530, in the sixtieth year of his age, and was buried in Leicester Abbey.

News of his death was at once dispatched to Henry, who was

having a little archery practice at Hampton Court on the arrival of the messenger. The king continued his sport for some time, until the straw man, upon whom he was trying his skill, had become thoroughly trussed with arrows, when his majesty turned round with an abrupt "Now then, what is it?" to the bearer of the sad intelligence. At the tale of Wolsey's death Henry pretended to be much affected, but he soon recovered his spirits sufficiently to inquire whether a sum of £1500 had not been left by the cardinal. The king expressed a desire to administer to his lamented friend's effects, but when the discovery was made, that instead of having £1500 to leave, Wolsey had just borrowed and spent that amount, his royal master thought it as well to have nothing to do with the business. Poor Wolsey had been the unfortunate goose who might have continued laying golden eggs for a considerable time had not Henry put him prematurely up for the sake of immediate profit.

We cannot part with Wolsey until we have dropped a few inky tears to his memory. We have already seen that his talents were considerable, but according to one of his biographers * he had a most elastic mind, or in other words he could "pull out" amazingly when occasion required. Rogue's European Library.

Some time before Wolsey's death a new ministry had been appointed, in which the family and friends of Anne Boleyn got very snug berths; but though in those days "any fool" could have a seat in the cabinet, it was necessary to have a chancellor of good abilities. The woolsack was literally in the market for a few days, until Henry thrust it on to the shoulders of Sir Thomas More, who would have declined the profitable burden, and who was somewhat averse to the Back of wool, because he felt that much of the material was obtained by fleecing the suitors.

He, however, was persuaded to accept the dignity, or rather to undertake the burden, and he was even heard to say by a gentleman who wishes to remain incog. that he wished there were porters' knots for moral responsibilities as well as for actual

weights, since it was exceedingly difficult to preserve one's uprightness beneath a load of dignity.

Among the persons recently introduced to Court was Thomas Cranmer, who happened to have met Dr. Gardiner, the king's secretary, and Dr. Fox at a private dinner table.

As the party sat over their wine, the divorce of Henry was brought upon the tapis, and Cranmer made the sagacious observation, that the proper way would be to have it looked into.

Gardiner and Fox exchanged glances, as much as to say "Shrewd fellow, that;" and they both agreed that he was a wonderful man for his age—which it will be remembered was the sixteenth century. They endeavoured to bring him out, and upon a free circulation of the bottle, Cranmer gave it as his opinion that there was "only one course to pursue," that "the thing lay in a nutshell," that "it was as clear as A, B, C;" a series of sentiments which, though more knowing than conclusive, made a deep impression on Fox and Gardiner. "There's a great deal in that fellow," said Fox after Cranmer had gone home, and indeed there was a good deal in him, no doubt, for scarcely anything had been got out of him. The two doctors hastened to the king to inform him of the enormous catch they had got in Cranmer, whose winks, innuendos, and occasional ejaculations of "I see it all;" "Plain as a pike-staff," etc., etc., had made such a deep impression upon the two doctors.

Henry was as much taken with their description of Cranmer as they had been with the original, and the king exclaimed in a perfect rhapsody, "That man has got the right sow by the ear;"

* an expression which we are sufficiently pig-headed not to appreciate. It was arranged that Cranmer should be asked to dine at the palace; and after a good deal of desultory conversation, in which "Exactly," "I see it," "No question about it," were Cranmer's running fire of ad

captandum remarks, Henry got so puzzled that he requested the gentleman to put his opinions in writing at his earliest convenience. Todd's "Life of Cranmer," Tytler's "Life of Henry the Eighth," etc., etc. The individual who had thus received instructions to act as pamphleteer in ordinary to the king, was sprung from an ancient family in Nottinghamshire, but he was destined for higher things than dragging out the thread of his existence in Notts, as we shall soon see when we proceed to unravel his history.

His early education had been somewhat neglected, for his father was a sportsman, who took more delight in going out to shoot than in teaching the young idea how to follow his example. Young Cranmer's master was a severe priest, who ruled his pupils with a rod of iron, and thrashed them with a rod of a different material. He snapped many a whip over the young whipper-snappers, as he was in the habit of calling his youthful charges, who, at all events, became hardened by the salutary treatment they experienced.

Cranmer applied himself with diligence to his studies, and in turn took pupils of his own at Cambridge, where he happened to meet one day at dinner with Fox and Gardiner, who, as we have already seen, introduced him to the sovereign.

The pamphleteer elect to Henry the Eighth was lodged in the house of the Earl of Wiltshire, the father of Anne Boleyn, who used to lock the author up in a garret, with a pen and ink and something to drink, upon which he received instructions to "fire away" in support of the views of his master. Cranmer soon rattled off a treatise in which he smashed the pope, demolished every objection to Henry's divorce, and proved to the satisfaction of the king that he could do as he liked as to contracting a second marriage. "Would you say as much to the pope himself?" asked Henry of his literary man.

“Ay, that I would, as soon as look at him,” was the reply; upon which Cranmer was taken at his word, and sent off to Rome with old Boleyn, now the Earl of Wiltshire.

As they entered the papal presence, Clement held out his toe to receive the usual homage, but the old earl positively declined to perform the humiliating ceremony, and after the pontiff had stood upon one leg for a considerable time, he found that he and his visitor must meet upon an equal footing. Cranmer, though not allowed a public disputation with the pope, took every opportunity of earwiggling the people about him, and got many of them to admit that the king’s marriage was illegal, though they would not acknowledge that his holiness had no power to give it validity.

Though Cranmer’s pamphlet had proved everything, it had done nothing, and Henry beginning to speak of his exertions as “all talk,” another tool was required to carry out the royal project. This tool came originally from a blacksmith’s shop in Putney, in the shape of one Thomas Cromwell, of whom it has since been said that he was a sharp file, who would cut right through a difficulty, while Cranmer was active enough in

hammering away at a point, but his hitting the right nail upon the head was generally very dubious.

The father of Cromwell did smiths’ work in general, but nothing at all in particular, for he had amassed a decent fortune.

His son was sent as a clerk to a factory at Antwerp, where he kept the books; but he soon abandoned accounts, in the hope of cutting a figure. He entered the army, and was present when Rome was made a bed of ruins, by getting a complete sacking. He next entered the counting-house of a merchant of Venice, who dealt in Venetian blinds and Venetian carpeting, but young Cromwell soon threw up the one and indignantly laid down the other. On arriving in London, he commenced the study of the law, and took chambers in Inner Temple Lane, which was, even

at that early period, the grand mart of legal ability.

Wolsey, who had lodgings over the gate hard by, was in the habit of meeting Cromwell, who eventually became what is professionally termed "the devil" of that ingenious advocate. These lodgings still exist as Honey and Skelton's, the hair-dressers, who have preserved a series of interesting historical documents, among which may be seen Wolsey's first brief, and other curious relics.

On the fall of his senior, Cromwell contrived to keep just far enough off to prevent himself from being crushed by the weight of the unfortunate cardinal, and offering his services to the king, was immediately retained in the great cause of Henry the Eighth versus Catherine of Aragon, *ex parte* Anne Boleyn. By the advice of Cromwell the authority of the pope was set at defiance, and in 1532 a law was passed prohibiting the payment to him of first-fruits; "which do not mean," says Strype, "the earliest gooseberries, to enable his holiness to play at gooseberry fool, but the first profits of a benefice." Henry at last determined to cut the Gordian knot, by forming another tie, and in January, 1533, he solved the question of the divorce by marrying Anne Boleyn.

The ceremony was performed in a garret at Whitehall, in the presence of Norris and Heneage, who were a couple of grooms, and of Mrs. Savage, the train-bearer of the bride, whose wedding came off much in the style of those clandestine affairs, in which the clerk gives the lady away, and the old pew-opener acts in the capacity of bridesmaid.

Cranmer, who had lately arrived in town for the season, found a vacancy in the see of Canterbury, which he consented to fill up, without scrupling to take the usual oaths to the pope, though openly avowing himself a Protestant.

Clement himself not only ratified the election of the man he knew

was committing perjury, but even consented to make a reduction in the fees that were usual on similar occasions.

Thus did these two precious humbugs humbug each other and their contemporaries; but the historian will not allow them any longer to humbug posterity. Cromwell swore obedience against his conscience, and intending to break his oath, but intent on obtaining the dignity which he could purchase by perjury, and Clement took a reduced fee, on the principle of half a loaf being better than no bread, from a man who, on the slightest opposition being offered to him, might have snapped his fingers at the papal chair as he did in his heart—if one can snap one's fingers in one's heart—at the papal authority.

Thus did the great champions of Protestantism on one side, and Catholicism on the other, agree in a disgraceful arrangement, by which one sold his sacred authority for a pecuniary bribe, and the other bartered his conscience for a temporary dignity. It has been said by Cromwell's apologists, that he took his false oaths with a mental reservation; but if this excuse were allowed to prevail, the conscience would possess a salve as efficacious as that of the quack which was warranted to cure every disease from apoplexy to chilblains, and prevent the necessity of patients with delicate lungs from exporting themselves abroad to avoid the danger of being left for home consumption.

The contemplation of so much hypocrisy, in such high quarters, having put us so thoroughly out of patience that we are unable to proceed, we break off here with the remark, that tergiversation and treachery have ever been common among even the highest in rank, and so we fear they will continue to be until—ha! ha!—the end of the chapter.

