The Project Gutenberg EBook of Cardinal Wolsey, by Mandell Creighton

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most

other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions

whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of

the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at

www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have

to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this ebook.

Title: Cardinal Wolsey

Author: Mandell Creighton

Release Date: November 14, 2016 [EBook #53526]

Language: English

\*\*\* START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CARDINAL WOLSEY \*\*\*

Produced by Cathy Maxam, Chris Pinfield and the Online

Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net (This

file was produced from images generously made available

by The Internet Archive)

Transcriber's Note.

Apparent typographical errors have been corrected. The use of hyphens

and of accents has been rationalised.

Italics are indicated by \_underscores\_ and black letter font by =equal

signs=. Small capitals have been replaced by full capitals. An "oe"

ligature has been removed.

=Twelve English Statesmen=

CARDINAL WOLSEY

[Illustration: Publisher's Mark]

CARDINAL WOLSEY

BY

MANDELL CREIGHTON

BISHOP OF LONDON

M.A. OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE, D.C.L. OF DURHAM

LL.D. OF GLASGOW AND HARVARD

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

ST. MARTIN'S STREET. LONDON

1912

\_First Edition April\_ 1888

\_Reprinted\_ 1888, 1891, 1895, 1898, 1902, 1904, 1906 (\_twice\_), 1912

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER I

THE STATE OF EUROPE, 1494-1512 1

CHAPTER II

THE FRENCH ALLIANCE, 1512-1515 18

CHAPTER III

THE UNIVERSAL PEACE, 1515-1518 35

CHAPTER IV

THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD, 1518-1520 51

CHAPTER V

THE CONFERENCE OF CALAIS, 1520-1521 66

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPERIAL ALLIANCE, 1521-1523 84

CHAPTER VII

RENEWAL OF PEACE, 1523-1527 101

CHAPTER VIII

WOLSEY'S DOMESTIC POLICY 123

CHAPTER IX

THE KING'S DIVORCE, 1527-1529 150

CHAPTER X

THE FALL OF WOLSEY, 1529-1530 184

CHAPTER XI

THE WORK OF WOLSEY 211

CHAPTER I

THE STATE OF EUROPE

1494-1512

All men are to be judged by what they do, and the way in which they do

it. In the case of great statesmen there is a third consideration which

challenges our judgment--what they choose to do. This consideration only

presents itself in the case of great statesmen, and even then is not

always recognised. For the average statesman does from day to day the

business which has to be done, takes affairs as he finds them, and makes

the best of them. Many who deliberately selected the questions with

which they dealt have yet shrunk from the responsibility of their

choice, and have preferred to represent their actions as inevitable. Few

can claim the credit of choosing the sphere of their activity, of

framing a connected policy with clear and definite ends, and of applying

their ideas to every department of national organisation. In short,

statesmen are generally opportunists, or choose to represent themselves

as such; and this has been especially the case with English

statesmen--amongst whom Wolsey stands out as a notable exception. For

Wolsey claims recognition on grounds which apply to himself alone. His

name is not associated with any great achievement, he worked out no

great measure of reform, nor did he contribute any great political idea

which was fruitful in after days. He was, above all things, a practical

man, though he pursued a line of policy which few understood, and which

he did not stop to make intelligible. No very definite results came of

it immediately, and the results which came of it afterwards were not

such as Wolsey had designed. Yet, if we consider his actual

achievements, we are bound to admit that he was probably the greatest

political genius whom England has ever produced; for at a great crisis

of European history he impressed England with a sense of her own

importance, and secured for her a leading position in European affairs,

which since his days has seemed her natural right.

Thus Wolsey is to be estimated by what he chose to do rather than by

what he did. He was greater than his achievements. Yet Wolsey's

greatness did not rise beyond the conditions of his own age, and he left

no legacy of great thought or high endeavour. The age in which he lived

was not one of lofty aspirations or noble aims; but it was one of large

designs and restless energy. No designs were cast in so large a mould as

were those of Wolsey; no statesman showed such skill as he did in

weaving patiently the web of diplomatic intrigue. His resources were

small, and he husbanded them with care. He had a master who only dimly

understood his objects, and whose personal whims and caprices had always

to be conciliated. He was ill supplied with agents. His schemes often

failed in detail; but he was always ready to gather together the broken

threads and resume his work without repining. In a time of universal

restlessness and excitement Wolsey was the most plodding, the most

laborious, and the most versatile of those who laboured at statecraft.

The field of action which Wolsey deliberately chose was that of foreign

policy, and his weapons were diplomacy. The Englishmen of his time were

like the Englishmen of to-day, and had little sympathy with his objects.

Those who reaped the benefits of his policy gave him no thanks for it,

nor did they recognise what they owed to him. Those who exulted in the

course taken by the English Reformation regarded Wolsey as its bitterest

foe, and never stopped to think that Wolsey trained the hands and brains

which directed it; that Wolsey inspired England with the proud feeling

of independence which nerved her to brave the public opinion of Europe;

that Wolsey impressed Europe with such a sense of England's greatness

that she was allowed to go her own way, menaced but unassailed. The

spirit which animated the England of the sixteenth century was due in no

small degree to the splendour of Wolsey's successes, and to the way in

which he stamped upon men's imagination a belief in England's greatness.

If it is the characteristic of a patriot to believe that nothing is

beyond the power of his country to achieve, then Wolsey was the most

devoted patriot whom England ever produced.

When Wolsey came to power England was an upstart trying to claim for

herself a decent position in the august society of European states. It

was Wolsey's cleverness that set her in a place far above that which she

had any right to expect. For this purpose Wolsey schemed and intrigued;

when one plan failed he was always ready with another. It mattered

little what was the immediate object which he had in hand; it mattered

much that in pursuing it he should so act as to increase the credit of

England, and create a belief in England's power. Diplomacy can reckon

few abler practitioners than was Wolsey.

There is little that is directly ennobling in the contemplation of such

a career. It may be doubted if the career of any practical statesman can

be a really ennobling study if we have all its activity recorded in

detail. At the best it tells us of much which seems disingenuous if not

dishonest--much in which nobility of aim or the complexity of affairs

has to be urged in extenuation of shifty words and ambiguous actions.

The age in which Wolsey lived was immoral in the sense in which all

periods are immoral, when the old landmarks are disappearing and there

is no certainty about the future. Morality in individuals and in states

alike requires an orderly life, a perception of limits, a pursuit of

definite ends. When order is shattered, when limits are removed, when

all things seem possible, then political morality disappears. In such a

condition was Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The old

ideas, on which the mediæval conception of Christendom depended, were

passing away. No one any longer regarded Christendom as one great

commonwealth, presided over by Pope and Emperor, who were the guardians

of international law and arbiters of international relations. The Empire

had long ceased to exercise any control, because it was destitute of

strength. The Papacy, after vainly endeavouring to unite Europe round

the old cry of a crusade against the Turk, had discovered that there was

no European power on which it could rely for support. The old ideas were

gone, the old tribunals were powerless, the old bonds of European union

were dissolved.

The first result of this decay in the mediæval state-system of Europe

was the emergence of vague plans of a universal monarchy. The Empire and

the Papacy had harmonised with the feudal conception of a regulative

supremacy over vassals who were free to act within the limits of their

obligations to their superior lord. When the old superiors were no

longer recognised, the idea of a supremacy still remained; but there was

no other basis possible for that supremacy than a basis of universal

sovereignty. It was long before any state was sufficiently powerful to

venture on such a claim; but the end of the fifteenth century saw France

and Spain united into powerful kingdoms. In France, the policy of Louis

XI. succeeded in reducing the great feudatories, and established the

power of the monarchy as the bond of union between provinces which were

conscious of like interests. In Spain, the marriage of Ferdinand and

Isabella united a warlike people who swept away the remains of the

Moorish kingdom. Germany, though nominally it recognised one ruler, had

sacrificed its national kingship to the futile claims of the Empire. The

emperor had great pretensions, but was himself powerless, and the German

princes steadily refused to lend him help to give reality to his

high-sounding claims. Unconsciously to themselves, the rulers of France

and Spain were preparing to attempt the extension of their power over

the rest of Europe.

France under Charles VIII. was the first to give expression to this new

idea of European politics. The Italian expedition of Charles VIII.

marked the end of the Middle Ages, because it put forth a scheme of

national aggrandisement which was foreign to mediæval conceptions. The

scheme sounded fantastic, and was still cast in the mould of mediæval

aspirations. The kingdom of Naples had long been in dispute between the

houses of Arragon and Anjou. As heir to the Angevin line, Charles VIII.

proposed to satisfy national pride by the conquest of Naples. Then he

appealed to the old sentiment of Christendom by proclaiming his design

of advancing against Constantinople, expelling the Turk from Europe, and

realising the ideal of mediæval Christianity by planting once more the

standard of the Cross upon the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

The first part of his plan succeeded with a rapidity and ease that

bewildered the rest of Europe. The French conquest of Naples awakened

men to the danger which threatened them. France, as ruler of Naples,

could overrun the rest of Italy, and as master of the Pope could use the

authority of the head of Christendom to give legitimacy to further

schemes of aggression. A sense of common danger drew the other powers of

Europe together; and a League of Spain, the Empire, the Pope, Milan, and

Venice forced Charles VIII. to retire from Naples (1495), where the

French conquests were rapidly lost. A threat of his return next year led

to an emphatic renewal of the League and an assertion of the basis on

which it rested--"the mutual preservation of states, so that the more

powerful might not oppress the less powerful, and that each should keep

what rightly belongs to him."

This League marks a new departure in European affairs. There was no

mention of the old ideas on which Europe was supposed to rest. There was

no recognition of papal or imperial supremacy; no principle of European

organisation was laid down. The existing state of things was to be

maintained, and the contracting powers were to decide amongst themselves

what rights and claims they thought fit to recognise. Such a plan might

be useful to check French preponderance at the moment, but it was fatal

to the free development of Europe. The states that were then powerful

might grow in power; those that were not yet strong were sure to be

prevented from growing stronger. Dynastic interests were set up as

against national interests. European affairs were to be settled by

combinations of powerful states.

The results of this system were rapidly seen. France, of course, was

checked for the time; but France, in its turn, could enter the League

and become a factor in European combinations. The problem now for

statesmen was how to use this concert of Europe for their own interests.

Dynastic considerations were the most obvious means of gaining powerful

alliances. Royal marriages became matters of the greatest importance,

because a lucky union of royal houses might secure a lasting

preponderance. The Emperor Maximilian married his son Philip to a

daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. Death removed the nearer heirs to

the Spanish rulers, and the son of Philip was heir to Austria, the

Netherlands, and the Spanish kingdoms. The notion of a maintenance of

European equilibrium faded away before such a prospect.

This prospect, however, was only in the future. For the present there

was an opportunity for endless scheming. The European League for the

preservation of the existing state of things resisted any expansion on

the part of smaller states, but encouraged compacts for aggression

amongst the more powerful. France, Spain, and Germany had each of them a

national existence, while Italy consisted of a number of small states.

If Italy was to survive it was necessary that she should follow the

example of her powerful neighbours, and consolidate herself as they had

done. The only state which was at that time likely to unite Italy was

Venice; and Venice, in consequence, became the object of universal

jealousy. The concert of Europe was applied to the Venetian question,

and discovered a solution of the simplest sort. Instead of allowing

Venice to unite Italy, it was judged better to divide Venice. A secret

agreement was made between Spain, France, the Emperor, and the Pope that

they would attack Venice simultaneously, deprive her of her possessions,

and divide them amongst themselves. There was no lack of claims and

titles to the possessions which were thus to be acquired. The powers of

Europe, being judges in their own cause, could easily state their

respective pleas and pronounce each other justified. The League of

Cambrai, which was published at the end of 1508, was the first great

production of the new system of administering public law in Europe.

Anything more iniquitous could scarcely be conceived. Venice deserved

well at the hands of Europe. She had developed a great system of

commerce with the East; she was the chief bulwark against the advance of

the Turkish power; she was the one refuge of Italian independence. Those

very reasons marked her out for pillage by the powers who, claiming to

act in the interests of Europe, interpreted these interests according to

their own selfishness. Each power hoped to appropriate some of the

profits of Venetian commerce; each power wished for a slice of the

domains of Italy. What the Turk did was a matter of little consequence;

he was not the object of immediate dread.

This League of Cambrai witnessed the assimilation by the new system of

the relics of the old. Imperial and papal claims were set in the

foreground. Venice was excommunicated by the Pope, because she had the

audacity to refuse to give up to him at once his share of the booty. The

iniquities of the European concert were flimsily concealed by the rags

of the old system of the public law of Europe, which only meant that the

Pope and the Emperor were foremost in joining in the general scramble.

France was first in the field against Venice, and consequently France

was the chief gainer. Pope Julius II., having won from Venice all that

he could claim, looked with alarm on the increase of the French power in

Italy. As soon as he had satisfied himself, and had reduced Venice to

abject submission, his one desire was to rid himself of his troublesome

allies. The papal authority in itself could no longer influence European

politics; but it could give a sanction to new combinations which

interested motives might bring about. With cynical frankness the Papacy,

powerless in its own resources, used its privileged position to further

its temporal objects. We cannot wonder that Louis XII. of France tried

to create a schism, and promoted the holding of a general council. We

are scarcely surprised that the fantastic brain of the Emperor

Maximilian formed a scheme of becoming the Pope's coadjutor, and finally

annexing the papal to the imperial dignity. On every side the old

landmarks of Europe were disappearing, and the future was seen to belong

to the strong hand and the adventurous wit.

During the reign of Henry VII. England had stood aloof from these

complicated intrigues. Indeed England could not hope to make her voice

heard in the affairs of Europe. The weak government of Henry VI., and

the struggles between the Yorkist and Lancastrian factions, had reduced

her to political exhaustion. While France and Spain had grown into

strong kingdoms, England had dwindled into a third-rate power. Henry

VII. had enough to do in securing his own throne against pretenders, and

in reducing the remnants of the feudal nobility to obedience. He so far

worked in accordance with the prevailing spirit that he steadily

increased the royal power. He fell in with the temper of the time, and

formed matrimonial alliances which might bear political fruits. He gave

his daughter in marriage to the King of Scotland, in the hopes of

thereby bringing the Scottish Crown into closer relation with England.

He sought for a connexion with Spain by marrying his eldest son Arthur

to Katharine, a daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and on Arthur's

untimely death Katharine became the wife of his next son Henry. Further,

Henry VII. gave his general approval to the League of 1496; he joined

it, but would promise no armed aid nor money. In short, he did enough to

claim for England a place in the new system of the European

commonwealth, though he himself declined to take any active part in the

activity that was consequently developed. He was old before his years,

and was unequal to any additional labour. He had saved his reputation by

his cautious and skilful policy at home. The statesmen of Europe

respected him for what he had done already, but they did not expect him

to do anything more. He had secured his dynasty, reduced his lands to

order, favoured its commerce, and secured for it peace. He had lived

frugally and had saved money, which was not the fortune of the more

adventurous princes. England was looked upon with an eye of

condescending favour by the great powers of Europe. Her population was

small, about three millions and a half; her military forces had not been

trained in the new methods of European warfare; her navy was not kept up

on a war footing. She could not rank higher than a third-rate power.

So England stood when Henry VII. died, and was succeeded by his son

Henry VIII., a youth of nineteen. We may indulge ourselves, if we

choose, in speculations on the probable effects if Henry VIII. had been

content to pursue his father's policy. The picture of England, peaceful

and contented while the rest of Europe is engaged in wasteful and wicked

war, is attractive as an ideal in English politics. England in the

sixteenth century might have stood aloof from European affairs, and

might have prospered in her own fashion. But one thing is certain, that

she would never have become the England of to-day; the New World, and

the possessions of the British Empire, would have been divided between

France and Spain; the course of civilisation would have been widely

different. For good or for evil the fortunes of England were given a

decided direction by Henry VIII.'s advance into the sphere of European

politics. England took up a position from which she could not afterwards

retire.

It is scarcely worth while to inquire if Henry VIII. could by prudence

and caution have continued to keep clear of the complications of

European politics, and make England strong by husbanding its resources

and developing its commerce. Such a course of action was not deemed

possible by any one. All classes alike believed that national prosperity

followed upon the assertion of national power. The commercial interests

of England would have had little chance of being respected unless they

were connected with political interests as well. If Henry VIII. had

lived frugally like his father, and avoided adventurous schemes for

which he needed the money of his people, the English monarchy would have

become a despotism, and the royal will would have been supreme in all

internal affairs. England was not exposed to this danger. Henry VIII.,

when he ascended the throne at the age of nineteen, was fully imbued by

the spirit of his time. The story goes that when Leo X. was elected Pope

he turned to his brother and said with a smile, "Let us enjoy the

Papacy, since God has given it to us." Henry VIII. was resolved to enjoy

his kingship to the full; he wished to show Europe that he was every

inch a king, and equal to the best.

Henry VIII. in his early days had been educated with a view to high

ecclesiastical preferment, and was a youth of many accomplishments of

mind and body. His tall stalwart frame, his fair round face and

profusion of light hair, his skill in athletic exercises, made the

Venetian envoy pronounce him to be the handsomest and most capable king

in Christendom. He inherited the geniality, the physical strength, the

resoluteness of the Yorkist house, and combined them with the

self-restraint and caution of the Lancastrians. No king began his reign

with greater popularity, and the belief in the soundness of his head and

heart filled all men with hopes of a long period of just and prosperous

government. But many hoped for more than this. The reign of Henry VII.

had been successful, but inglorious. The strong character and the

generous impulses of the new ruler were not likely to be satisfied with

the cautious intrigues and petty calculations of his father. England

looked forward to a glorious and distinguished future. It believed in

its king, and clave to its belief in spite of many disappointments. Not

all the harsh doings of Henry VIII. exhausted the popularity with which

he began his reign, and in the midst of his despotism he never lost his

hold upon the people.

So Henry VIII. carried out the plan which his father had formed for him.

He married Katharine, his brother's widow, and so confirmed the alliance

with Ferdinand of Spain. He renewed the marriage treaty between his

sister Mary and Charles, Prince of Castile, heir of the Netherlands, and

eldest grandson of Ferdinand and Maximilian alike. Charles was only a

boy of nine, and had great prospects of a large heritage. England was

likely, if this arrangement were carried out, to be a useful but humble

ally to the projects of the houses of Hapsburg and Spain, useful because

of its position, which commanded the Channel, and could secure

communications between the Netherlands and Spain, humble because it had

little military reputation or capacity for diplomacy.

The alliance, however, between Ferdinand and Maximilian was by no means

close. Ferdinand by his marriage with Isabella had united the kingdoms

of Castile and Arragon; but after Isabella's death he had no claim to

the Crown of Castile, which passed to his daughter Juana. Already

Juana's husband, the Archduke Philip, had claimed the regency of

Castile, and Ferdinand was only saved by Philip's death from the peril

of seeing much of his work undone. The claim to Castile had now passed

to the young Charles, and Ferdinand was afraid lest Maximilian should at

any time revive it in behalf of his grandson. He was unwilling to help

in any way to increase Maximilian's power, and rejoiced that in the

results of the League of Cambrai little profit fell to Maximilian's

share. The Pope gained all that he wished; Ferdinand acquired without a

blow the Venetian possessions in the Neapolitan kingdom; the French arms

were triumphant in North Italy; but Venice continued to offer a stubborn

resistance to Maximilian. In vain Maximilian implored Ferdinand's help.

He was unmoved till the successes of the French awakened in his mind

serious alarm. The authors of the League of Cambrai began to be afraid

of the catastrophe which they had caused. They did not wish to see the

French supreme in Italy, but their combination had gone far to ensure

the French supremacy.

Pope Julius II. felt himself most directly threatened by the growth of

the French power. He resolved to break up the League of Cambrai, and so

undo his own work. He tried to gain support from the Swiss and from

England. He released Venice from her excommunication, and showed himself

steadfastly opposed to France. He did his utmost to induce Ferdinand and

Maximilian to renounce the League. Ferdinand was cautious, and only gave

his secret countenance to the Pope's designs. Maximilian, anxious to

make good his claims against Venice, wavered between an alliance with

France and a rupture. Louis XII. of France was embarrassed by the

hostility of the Pope, whom he tried to terrify into submission. His

troops advanced against Bologna, where Julius II. was residing. The Pope

fled, but the French forces did not pursue him. Louis was not prepared

to treat the Pope as merely a temporal sovereign, and Rome was spared a

siege. But Louis was so ill-judging as to attack the Pope on his

spiritual side. He raised the old cry of a General Council for the

reform of the Church, and drew to his side a few disaffected cardinals,

who summoned a Council to assemble at Pisa.

This half-hearted procedure was fatal to all hopes of French supremacy.

Had Louis XII. promptly dealt with Julius II. by force of arms he would

have rendered the Pope powerless to interfere with his political plans,

and no one would have interposed to help the Pope in his capacity of an

Italian prince. But when the French king showed that he was afraid of

the papal dignity in temporal matters, while he was ready to attack it

in spiritual matters, he entered upon a course of action which was

dangerous to Europe. Ferdinand was waiting for a good pretext to free

himself from further share in the policy of the League of Cambrai, and

Louis provided him with the pretext which he sought. Shocked at the

danger of a new schism, Ferdinand, in October 1511, entered into a

League with the Pope and Venice, a League which took the high-sounding

title of the Holy League, since it was formed for the protection of the

Papacy.

Of this Holy League Henry VIII. became a member in December, and so

stepped boldly into the politics of Europe. He was at first a submissive

son of King Ferdinand, whose daughter, Queen Katharine, acted as Spanish

ambassador at the English Court. Henry wished to make common cause with

his father-in-law, and trusted implicitly to him for assurances of

goodwill. He made a separate accord with Ferdinand that a combined army

should invade Guienne. If the French were defeated Ferdinand would be

able to conquer Navarre, and England would seize Guienne. The gain to

England would be great, as Guienne would be a secure refuge for English

commerce, and its possession would make the English king an important

personage in Europe, for he would stand between Spain and France.

The scheme was not fantastic or impossible, provided that Ferdinand was

in earnest. Henry believed in his good faith, but he still had the

confidence of youth. Ferdinand trusted no one, and if others were like

himself he was wise in his distrust. Every year he grew more suspicious

and fonder of crooked ways. He took no man's counsel; he made fair

professions on every side; his only object was to secure himself at the

least cost. His confiding son-in-law was soon to discover that Ferdinand

only meant to use English gold as a means for furthering his own designs

against France; he did not intend that England should have any share in

the advantage.

Unconscious of the selfishness of his ally, Henry VIII. prepared for war

in the winter of 1512. In these preparations the capacity of Thomas

Wolsey first made itself felt, and the course of the war that followed

placed Wolsey foremost in the confidence of the English king.

CHAPTER II

THE FRENCH ALLIANCE

1512-1515

Thomas Wolsey was born at Ipswich, probably in March 1471. He was the

son of Robert Wolsey and Joan his wife. Contemporary slander, wishing to

make his fortunes more remarkable or his presumption more intolerable,

represented his father as a man of mean estate, a butcher by trade.

However, Robert Wolsey's will shows that he was a man of good position,

probably a grazier and wool merchant, with relatives who were also

well-to-do. Thomas seems to have been the eldest of his family, and his

father's desire was that he should enter the priesthood. He showed

quickness in study; so much so that he went to Oxford at the early age

of eleven, and became Bachelor of Arts when he was fifteen. His studies

do not seem to have led him in the direction of the new learning; he was

well versed in the theology of the schools, and is said to have been a

devoted adherent to the system of St. Thomas Aquinas. But it was not by

the life of a student or the principles of a philosopher that Wolsey

rose to eminence. If he learned anything in his University career he

learned a knowledge of men and of their motives.

In due course he became a Fellow of Magdalen, and master of the grammar

school attached to the College. Soon afterwards, in 1498, he was bursar;

and tradition has connected with him the building of the graceful tower

which is one of the chief architectural ornaments of Oxford.

Unfortunately the tower was finished in the year in which Wolsey became

bursar, and all that he can have done was the prosaic duty of paying the

bills for its erection. He continued his work of schoolmaster till in

1500 the Marquis of Dorset, whose sons Wolsey had taught, gave him the

living of Lymington in Somerset.

So Wolsey abandoned academic life for the quietness of a country living,

which, however, did not prove to be entirely free from troubles. For

some reason which is not clear, a neighbouring squire, Sir Amyas Paulet,

used his power as justice of peace to set Wolsey in the stocks, an

affront which Wolsey did not forgive, but in the days of his power

punished by confining Sir Amyas to his London house, where he lived for

some years in disgrace. If this story be true, it is certainly not to

Wolsey's discredit, who can have been moved by nothing but a sense of

injustice in thus reviving the remembrance of his own past history.

Moreover, Wolsey's character certainly did not suffer at the time, as in

1501 he was made chaplain to Dean, Archbishop of Canterbury. After

Dean's death in 1503, his capacity for business was so far established

that he was employed by Sir Richard Nanfan, Deputy-Lieutenant of Calais,

to help him in the duties of a post which advancing years made somewhat

onerous. When Nanfan, a few years afterwards, retired from public life,

he recommended Wolsey to the king, and Wolsey entered the royal service

as chaplain probably in 1506.

At Court Wolsey allied himself with Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester,

Lord Privy Seal, and at first seems to have acted as one of his

secretaries.

Fox was a well-trained and careful official, who had been in Henry

VII.'s employment all through his reign. Cold and cautious by nature,

Henry VII. had to pick his way through many difficulties, and took no

man unreservedly into his confidence. He was his own minister, and chose

to be served by men of distinguished position who were content to do his

bidding faithfully, and were free from personal ambition. For this

purpose ecclesiastics were best adapted, and Henry VII. did much to

secularise the Church by throwing the weight of public business into the

hands of men like Morton and Fox, whom he rewarded by the highest

ecclesiastical offices. In such a school Wolsey was trained as a

statesman. He regarded it as natural that the King should choose his

ministers for their readiness to serve his purposes, and should reward

them by ecclesiastical preferments. The State might gain by such a plan,

but the Church undoubtedly lost; and in following the career of Wolsey

there is little to remind us of the ecclesiastic, however much we may

admire the statesman.

It was well for England that Wolsey was trained in the traditions of the

policy of Henry VII., which he never forgot. Henry VII. aimed, in the

first place, at securing his throne and restoring quiet and order in his

kingdom by developing trade and commerce. For this purpose he strove to

turn his foreign neighbours into allies without adventuring into any

military enterprises. He did not aspire to make England great, but he

tried to make her secure and prosperous. Wolsey gained so much insight

into the means which he employed for that end that he never forgot their

utility; and though he tried to pass beyond the aim of Henry VII., he

preferred to extend rather than abandon the means which Henry VII. had

carefully devised. Nor was Wolsey merely a spectator of Henry VII.'s

diplomacy; he was soon employed as one of its agents. In the spring of

1508 he was sent to Scotland to keep King James IV. true to his alliance

with England, and explain misunderstandings that had arisen. In the

autumn of the same year he was sent to Mechlin to win over the powerful

minister of Maximilian, the Bishop of Gurk, to a project of marriage

between Henry VII. and Maximilian's daughter Margaret, by which Henry

hoped that he would get control of the Low Countries. Here Wolsey

learned his first practical lesson of diplomatic methods, and uttered

the complaint, which in later years he gave so much reason to others to

pour forth, "There is here so much inconstancy, mutability, and little

regard of promises and causes, that in their appointments there is

little trust or surety; for things surely determined to be done one day

are changed and altered the next."

Nothing came of Wolsey's embassy, nor can we be sure that Henry VII. was

much in earnest in his marriage schemes. However, he died in April next

year, and was succeeded by a son whose matrimonial hesitations were

destined to give Wolsey more trouble than those of his father. Before

his death he laid the foundation of Wolsey's clerical fortunes by

bestowing on him the rich deanery of Lincoln.

The accession of Henry VIII. made little change in the composition of

the King's Council. The Lady Margaret survived her son long enough to

make her influence felt in the choice of her grandson's advisers.

Archbishop Warham, Bishop Fox, and Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, were

the men into whose hands public business naturally fell. But Warham was

somewhat stiff and crabbed, so that he did not commend himself to the

young king. Fox represented the opinions of the old officials, while the

Earl of Surrey was the natural leader of the old nobility, who could not

help resenting the subordinate position into which they had been reduced

by Henry VII., and hoped that a new reign would give them fresh

opportunities. So Fox urged caution and carefulness, while Surrey

favoured extravagance and military ambition. Fox felt that he was

growing old, and the pressure of a continued conflict of opinion was

irksome to him. Much as the ecclesiastics of that time were secular in

their lives, they were rarely entirely forgetful of their priestly

office, and were genuinely anxious to rid themselves of the burden of

affairs and spend their last years in quiet. So Fox chose Wolsey as the

man to take his place, perhaps because he saw in him the qualities

necessary to influence the young king. Besides him he favoured Ruthal,

another experienced official, who was rewarded by the rich bishopric of

Durham, but who was soon eclipsed by the superior genius of Wolsey,

which he frankly admitted, and willingly accepted the post of Wolsey's

assistant and subordinate.

So Wolsey was made the king's almoner, and had sundry preferments

bestowed on him as marks of the royal favour. He ingratiated himself

with the king, and worked with Fox and Ruthal to counteract the

influence of the Earl of Surrey. Probably in 1511 he was called to the

King's Council, but neither he nor Fox had it in their power to shape

the king's policy as they wished, or to direct his doings. His warlike

ardour was against their will; but from the beginning of his reign Henry

VIII. went his own way, and others had to follow. All they could do was

to show him that they were the most capable of his servants, and when

Henry VIII. had determined on war they were the men to whom he turned to

carry out the necessary details. On Wolsey as the youngest the chief

labour was thrown. England was unprepared for war, and every branch of

the military service had to be almost created. Wolsey had at all events

a sufficient opportunity for displaying his practical capacity as an

organiser.

So Wolsey worked at providing for the troops who were sent to Guienne in

1512; but the expedition itself was a complete failure. Ferdinand played

his own game of procrastination, and sent no succours. The Marquis of

Dorset was an incapable leader. The English troops were not inured to

hardships, and soon grew discontented; at last they rose in open mutiny,

and clamoured to be led back to England. Dorset was driven to retire

without striking a blow. The first attempt of England to assert her

prowess ended in disaster. The statesmen of the Continent made merry

over the blundering efforts of an upstart power. "The English," they

said, "are so unaccustomed to war that they have no experience to guide

them." Henry longed to wipe out this disgrace, and prepared to invade

the north of France in the next year. Wolsey was not yet of sufficient

importance to direct the king's policy, and had no experience of war.

But he threw himself heart and soul into the task of military

organisation, and the administrative capacity which he displayed secured

his hold on the king's favour. He provided for victualling the fleet,

raised the necessary number of ships, selected their captains, and even

apportioned the gunners. Nothing was too trivial for his attention, even

down to beer-barrels and biscuits. It is not surprising that his

colleague, Bishop Fox, wrote to him, "I pray God send us with speed, and

soon deliver you of your outrageous charge and labour."

The fleet put to sea in March 1513, under the command of the Lord

Admiral Sir Edward Howard. The French fleet was far superior in numbers,

and prepared to prevent the English from landing on the French coast.

Sir Edward Howard was burning with desire for a decisive engagement, and

on 25th April attacked the French galleys as they lay in shallow water.

He boarded them with his boats, and himself leapt on to the ship of the

French admiral, but before his men could follow him their cable was cut

away, and he was left almost alone. Seeing that there was no hope of

support, he took his whistle from his neck and cast it into the sea;

then with his gilt target on his arm he fought till the enemy's pikes

thrust him overboard and he was drowned. The English attack was driven

back; but its gallantry and the bravery of Sir Edward Howard produced a

great impression. It was clear that after all the Englishmen had not

forgotten how to fight.

The efforts of the English fleet were successful in securing the

peaceful landing of the army at Calais, where Henry arrived at the end

of June. With him went Wolsey, commanding two hundred men, and now a

necessary personage in the king's train. Such confidence was placed in

him by Queen Katharine that she requested him to write to her frequently

and inform her of the king's health, while in return she poured her

household troubles into his sympathetic ear. No doubt Wolsey's hands

were full of business of many kinds during this brief and glorious

campaign, glorious in the sense that success attended its operations,

but fruitless because the things done were scarcely worth the doing. The

English army took Terouenne, more owing to the feebleness of the French

than to their own valour. Louis XII. was prematurely old and ailing;

things had gone against him in Italy, and there was little spirit in the

French army. The defeat of the French outside Terouenne was so rapid

that the battle was derisively called the Battle of Spurs. Henry's

desire for martial glory was satisfied by the surrender of Terouenne,

and his vanity was gratified by the presence of Maximilian, who in

return for a large subsidy brought a few German soldiers, and professed

to serve under the English king. From Terouenne he advanced to Tournai,

which surrendered at the end of September. Maximilian was delighted at

these conquests, of which he reaped all the benefit; with Tournai in the

hands of England, Flanders had a strong protection against France. So

Maximilian would gladly have led Henry to continue the campaign in the

interests of the Flemish frontier. But Henry had no taste for spending a

winter in the field; he pleaded that his presence was needed in England,

and departed, promising to return next year.

In truth the arms of England had won a greater victory on English ground

than anything they had achieved abroad. The war against France awakened

the old hostility of Scotland, and no sooner was Henry VIII. encamped

before Terouenne than he received a Scottish herald bringing a message

of defiance. "I do not believe that my brother of Scotland will break

his oath," said Henry, "but if he does, he will live to repent it."

Repentance came rapidly on the Field of Flodden, where the Scottish army

was almost cut to pieces. This brilliant victory was greatly due to the

energy of Queen Katharine, who wrote to Wolsey, "My heart is very good

to it, and I am horribly busy with making standards, banners, and

badges." She addressed the English leaders before they started for the

war, bade them remember that the English courage excelled that of other

nations, and that the Lord smiled on those who stood in defence of their

own. With a proud heart she sent her husband the blood-stained plaid of

the Scottish king, taken from his corpse. "In this," she wrote, "your

Grace shall see how I keep my promise, sending you for your banner a

king's coat."

The victory of Flodden Field was of great importance, for it delivered

England from the fear of a troublesome neighbour, and showed Europe that

England could not be muzzled by the need of care for her own borders.

The Scottish power was broken for many years to come, and England was

free to act as she would. Europe began to respect the power of England,

though there was little reason to rate highly the wisdom of her king.

Henry had won little by his campaign; he had gratified his vanity, but

he had not advanced towards any definite end.

Henry VIII. was young and simple. He expected to captivate the world by

brilliant deeds, and fascinate it by unselfish exploits. He soon found

that his pretended allies were only seeking their own advantage. The

name of the "Holy League" was the merest pretext. The new Pope, Leo X.,

a supple time-serving intriguer, trained in the deceitful policy of the

Medici House, was willing to patch up the quarrel between France and the

Papacy. Ferdinand of Spain wished only to keep things as they were. As

he grew older he grew more suspicious, and clung to the power which he

possessed. His one dread was lest Charles, the grandson of himself and

Maximilian, should demand his maternal heritage of Castile. Ferdinand

was resolved to keep the two Spanish kingdoms united under his own rule

until his death, and considered European affairs in the first instance

as they were likely to affect that issue. He was of opinion that France

was no longer formidable to Spanish interests in Italy, while English

successes on the Flemish frontier might make Charles more powerful than

he wished him to be. Accordingly he set to work to undermine Henry's

position by making an alliance with France. He was still Henry's ally,

and had promised him to help him to continue the war in the spring of

1514. None the less he entered into secret negotiations with France, and

cautiously endeavoured to persuade Maximilian to join him. Maximilian

was still at war with Venice, and was aggrieved that he was the only

member of the plundering gang who had not gained by the League of

Cambrai. Ferdinand allured him from his interest in Flanders by the

prospect of a renewal of the League against Venice in his special

behalf, and Maximilian was sanguine enough to listen to the temptation.

He faintly stipulated that the consent of England should be obtained,

but was satisfied with Ferdinand's assurance that Henry would have no

objection to a truce with France. Early in April 1514 a truce for a year

was made between Louis XII., Maximilian, and Ferdinand. Henry found

himself tricked by his father-in-law, and abandoned by the ally whom he

had largely subsidised, and had greatly benefited.

It is no wonder that Henry was greatly angered at this result, and

declared that he would trust no man any more. He had taken the measure

of the good faith of European rulers, and had learned the futility of

great undertakings for the general welfare. In truth, the difficulty of

European politics always lies in the fact that the general welfare can

only be promoted by the furtherance of particular interests, which

threaten in their turn to become dangerous. The interests of the

sixteenth century were purely dynastic interests, and seem trivial and

unworthy. We are not, however, justified in inferring that dynastic

interests, because they are concerned with small arrangements, are in

their nature more selfish or more iniquitous than interests which clothe

themselves in more fair-sounding phrases. Their selfishness is more

apparent; it does not follow that it is less profound.

However that may be, the desertion of Maximilian and Ferdinand put a

stop to Henry's warlike projects, and restored England to peace. Henry

had had enough of fighting other people's battles. He was willing to

pursue his own course by the means which others used, and trust

henceforth to the bloodless battles of diplomacy. In this new field

Wolsey was the English champion, and for the next sixteen years the

history of England is the history of Wolsey's achievements.

Wolsey's services in the campaign of 1513 gave him a firm hold of the

king's favour, and secured for him large rewards. As he was an

ecclesiastic his salary was paid out of the revenues of the Church. When

Tournai became an English possession its bishopric was conferred on

Wolsey, and on a vacancy in the bishopric of Lincoln in the beginning of

1514 that see was given him in addition. How the offices of the Church

were in those days used as rewards for service to the State may be seen

by the fact that the English representative in Rome was the Archbishop

of York, Thomas Bainbridge, who lived as Cardinal in the Papal Court.

Moreover, an Italian, Silvestro de' Gigli, held the bishopric of

Worcester, though he lived habitually in Rome, and devoted his energies

to the furtherance of the interests of England. In July 1514 Cardinal

Bainbridge died in Rome, poisoned by one of his servants. The Bishop of

Worcester was suspected of being privy to the deed for the purpose of

removing out of the way a troublesome rival. It would seem, however,

that the murder was prompted by vengeful feelings and the desire to hide

peculations. The charge against the Bishop of Worcester was investigated

by the Pope, and he was acquitted; but the story gives a poor picture of

morality and security of life at Rome. On the death of Bainbridge the

vacant archbishopric of York was also conferred on Wolsey, who was now

enriched by the revenues of three sees, and was clearly marked out as

the foremost man in England.

He rose to this position solely by the king's favour, as the king alone

chose his own ministers and counsellors, and there existed no external

pressure which could influence his decisions. The Wars of the Roses had

seen the downfall of the baronial power, and Henry VII. had accustomed

men to see affairs managed almost entirely by a new class of officials.

The ministers and counsellors of Henry VIII. were chosen from a desire

to balance the old and the new system. The remnants of the baronial

party were associated with officials, that they might be assimilated

into the same class. The Duke of Norfolk, as the greatest nobleman in

England, was powerful, and was jealous of the men with whom he found

himself called upon to work. Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, was the

personal friend of the king, and shared in his private more than in his

public life. The Earl of Surrey had done good service at Flodden Field,

and was a man of practical capacity. The other ministers were most of

them ecclesiastics. Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, was respected

rather than trusted. Fox, Bishop of Winchester, was a capable and

painstaking official. Ruthal, Bishop of Durham, was destitute of real

insight, and was content to follow Wolsey's lead. Wolsey won his way by

his political genius, his quickness, and his vast power of detailed

work. He owed his position entirely to the king, and was responsible to

him alone. The king consulted his Council only about such matters as he

thought fit; foreign affairs were managed almost entirely according to

his own will and pleasure.

The English have never been famous for diplomacy, and Wolsey was ill

supplied with agents for his work. The English residents at foreign

Courts were not men of mark or position. John Stile at the Court of

Ferdinand, and Thomas Spinelly in Flanders seem to have been merchants

carrying on their own business. With Maximilian was a more important

man, Sir Richard Wingfield, a Suffolk knight, who was too self-satisfied

and too dull-witted to understand Wolsey's schemes. For special work

special agents had to be sent, who went unwillingly to a thankless and

laborious task. They were ill paid and ill supported; but even here

Wolsey knew how to choose the right men, and he managed to inspire them

with his own zeal and tenacity of purpose. It is a striking proof of

Wolsey's genius that he knew whom he could trust, and that his trust was

never misplaced.

When Henry VIII. was smarting under his rebuff from Maximilian and

Ferdinand, he concerted with Wolsey how he might avenge himself, and

Wolsey devised his scheme in entire secrecy. Ferdinand and Maximilian

had left England in the lurch by making a truce with France. Wolsey

resolved to outdo them in their own lines. They had elected to maintain

the existing condition of affairs by checking England's aspirations and

lending a cold support to France. Wolsey resolved to turn France into a

firm ally, that so England and France united might form a new

combination, before which the schemes of Ferdinand would be powerless.

Wolsey luckily had the means of approaching Louis XII. without

attracting attention. Amongst the prisoners taken in the Battle of the

Spurs was the young Duke of Longueville, a favourite of the French king.

He had been sent to London, to the sore disturbance of Queen Katharine,

who, being a sensible woman, thought that the best thing to do with a

prisoner was to confine him in the Tower. On Henry's return the Duke of

Longueville was released, and amused himself at Court like any one else.

Through him Wolsey opened up secret communications with Louis XII.,

whose domestic circumstances luckily gave a handle for Wolsey's designs.

In January 1514 the French queen died; and although the widowed husband

had reached the age of fifty-two, it was known that he was looking out

for a young bride.

It has always been one of the most revolting features of dynastic

politics that the private relationships of members of ruling families

have been entirely determined by considerations of dynastic expediency.

In the sixteenth century this was eminently the case. Alliances

were family arrangements, and corresponded to motives of family

aggrandisement rather than to national interests. They were sealed

by marriages, they were broken by divorces. So great were the

responsibilities of royalty that the private life of members of royal

houses was entirely sunk in their official position. They were mere

counters to be moved about the board at will, and disposed of according

to the needs of family politics. Such a victim of circumstances was

Henry VIII.'s younger sister, the Princess Mary, a bright and

intelligent girl of seventeen. She was betrothed to Charles, Prince of

Castile, and it had been arranged that the marriage should take place

when he reached the age of fourteen. The time was come for the

fulfilment of the promise; but Ferdinand did not wish to see his

troublesome grandson more closely united to England, which had shown

such ambitious inclinations. Maximilian, the guardian of Charles,

wavered between his desire to please Henry and Ferdinand, and invented

one excuse after another for not proceeding with his grandson's marriage.

Wolsey allowed Maximilian to go on with his shifty talk, and was only

too glad to see him fall into the trap. His negotiations with France

were progressing, and the outward sign of the new alliance was to be the

marriage of Mary to Louis XII. So secretly were the arrangements made

that Europe was taken by surprise when, at the end of July, it was

gradually known that the alliance between France and England was an

accomplished fact. The marriage contract was soon signed, and in October

Mary went to Abbeville, where she was met by her elderly husband.

The result of this clever diplomacy was to secure England the respect

and envy of Europe. It was clear that henceforth England was a power

which had to be reckoned with. Ferdinand was taught that he could no

longer count on using his dutiful son-in-law as he thought most

convenient to himself. Maximilian sadly reflected that if he needed

English gold in the future he must show a little more dexterity in his

game of playing fast and loose with everybody. Pope Leo X. was not

over-pleased at seeing England develop a policy of her own, and looked

coldly on Wolsey. After the death of Cardinal Bainbridge Henry wrote to

the Pope and begged him to make Wolsey cardinal in his room. "Such are

his merits," said the king, "that I esteem him above my dearest friends,

and can do nothing of importance without him." Leo X. coldly replied

that there were great difficulties in the way of creating a cardinal:

the title, he reminded the king, was much sought after, and admitted its

bearer to the highest rank: he must wait a more suitable time. It would

seem that the Pope wished to have further guarantees of England's

goodwill, and hinted that Wolsey must give pledges of his good behaviour.

England did not long enjoy the diplomatic victory which Wolsey had won

by his brilliant scheme of a French alliance. Henry still had a longing

for military glory, with which Wolsey had little sympathy. He wished to

revenge himself on his perfidious father-in-law, and proposed to Louis

XII. an attack upon Navarre, and even thought of claiming a portion of

the kingdom of Castile, as rightfully belonging to Queen Katharine.

Whatever projects Henry may have had came to an end on the death of

Louis on the 1st of January 1515. The elderly bridegroom, it was said,

tried too well to humour the social disposition of his sprightly bride.

He changed his manner of life, and kept late hours, till his health

entirely gave way, and he sank under his well-meant efforts to renew the

gallantry of youth.

CHAPTER III

THE UNIVERSAL PEACE

1515-1518

The death of Louis XII. was a severe blow to Wolsey. The French alliance

was not popular in England, and was bitterly opposed by the Duke of

Norfolk and the party of the old nobility, who saw with dislike the

growing influence of Wolsey. They now had an opportunity of reversing

his policy and securing his downfall. It required all Wolsey's sagacity

to devise a means of solving the difficulties which the death of Louis

created. The new King of France, Francis I., was aged twenty-one, and

was as ambitious of distinction as was Henry. The treaty between France

and England had not yet been carried out, and it would require much

dexterity to modify its provisions. The kings of the sixteenth century

were keen men of business, and never let money slip through their hands.

The widowed Queen of France must, of course, return to England, but

there were all sorts of questions about her dowry and the jewels which

Louis had given her. Henry claimed that she should bring back with her

everything to which any title could be urged: Francis I. wished to give

up as little as possible. The two monarchs haggled like two hucksters,

and neither of them had any care of the happiness or reputation of the

young girl round whom they bickered. In the background stood Wolsey's

enemies, who saw that if they could create a rupture between France and

England Wolsey's influence would be at an end.

In these dangerous conditions Wolsey had to seek an ally in Charles

Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and had to trust to his private knowledge of

the character of Queen Mary. She had the strong will of the Tudors, and

had also their craving for admiration. These two qualities seem to have

drawn her in opposite directions. While her marriage with Prince Charles

was talked of she professed the greatest admiration for him, and gazed

with rapture on a very bad portrait of her intended husband. But this

did not prevent her from being attracted by the personal fascinations of

the Duke of Suffolk, as Wolsey knew. When he negotiated the French

alliance he had some difficulty in overcoming Mary's repugnance to an

old husband; but she viewed the proposal in a business-like way, and was

not indifferent to the position of Queen of France. She looked forward

to a speedy widowhood, and extracted from Henry a promise that, if she

undertook to marry for the first time to please him, she might choose

her second husband to please herself. When Mary was free the hopes of

the Duke of Suffolk revived, and Wolsey knowing this, chose him as the

best instrument for clearing away the difficulties raised by Francis I.,

and bringing back Mary honourably to England.

Francis, on his side, used his knowledge of the current rumour to

extract from Mary her confidences about Suffolk, and with this knowledge

approached Suffolk as a friend. By alternately encouraging Suffolk and

terrifying Mary he turned Wolsey's ambassador into an anxious lover.

Still Wolsey trusted that Suffolk would the more bestir himself to bring

Mary back, and would make such terms with Francis as would commend his

suit to Henry. But Wolsey's enemies led Henry to make exorbitant

demands, which Francis met by redoubling his persecution of Mary. At

last she asked Suffolk to marry her, which he did in secret. After this

Francis was free from any further need of conciliating Henry, who must

take back his sister on any terms, and Wolsey was left to appease Henry

as best he could. In April Mary and Suffolk returned to England, and in

May the luckless pair were publicly married. Wolsey manfully befriended

Suffolk in this matter, but the calculations of his diplomacy were

hopelessly upset by private feelings and the rashness of passion.

However, Mary received part of her dowry and some of her jewels. Francis

I. had no wish to quarrel with England, but only to make the best terms

for himself. He was bent upon gathering laurels in Italy, and on 5th

April renewed the alliance between France and England. This time,

however, the treaty was little more than a truce, and many questions

were left untouched; no mention was made of the return of Tournai, and

the question of Mary's jewels was left undecided. Francis I. counted on

keeping England quiet by an alliance which he formed at the same time

with Ferdinand, while he won over the Flemish counsellors of Prince

Charles, who betrothed himself to the infant daughter of Louis XII.,

Renée, a child of four.

Thus he had cleared the way for an expedition to Italy, where he longed

to claim for France the Duchy of Milan, that had been won and lost by

Louis XII. In July he set out contentedly, knowing that Henry was

powerless to interfere. He treated England with neglect, and gave Henry

no information of his movements. England looked on with growing jealousy

while Francis crossed the Alps and in September defeated the Swiss

mercenaries who held Milan in the name of the last Sforza Duke. The

battle of Marignano (14th September) was a splendid success for Francis,

who there beat back the Swiss infantry, hitherto considered invincible

in Europe. The star of France had risen, and Francis could look round

with proud superiority.

The princes of Europe were alarmed beyond measure at the completeness of

the French success. They had looked with equanimity at the preparations

of Francis, because they expected that he would be delayed, or, if he

attacked the Swiss, would be defeated. But his rapid march soon

convinced men that he was in earnest, and especially excited the fear of

Pope Leo X., whose ingenious policy of being secretly allied with

everybody was disturbed by this display of unexpected vigour. The alarm

of the Pope was useful to Wolsey. It awakened him to the need of making

the English king his friend, and fulfilling his desire to have Wolsey

created cardinal. Wolsey had not ceased, through his agent, the Bishop

of Worcester, to urge this point upon the Pope, and when Francis was

well advanced on his road to Milan the pleadings of Wolsey were

irresistible. "If the King of England forsake the Pope," wrote Wolsey to

the Bishop of Worcester, "he will be in greater danger on this day two

years than ever was Pope Julius." Leo X. had no wish to run the risks

which the impetuous Julius II. faced with unbroken spirit. He prepared

to keep himself supplied with allies to protect him against all

emergencies, and on 10th September nominated Wolsey cardinal sole, a

special mark of favour, as cardinals were generally created in batches

at intervals.

Wolsey's creation was not popular in the Roman Court. Cardinal

Bainbridge had been overbearing in manner and hasty in temper, and the

English were disliked for their outspokenness. England was regarded as a

political upstart, and Wolsey was considered to be a fitting emblem of

the country which he represented. Moreover, the attitude of England in

ecclesiastical matters was not marked by that subservience which the

Papacy wished to exact, and many doubted the expediency of exalting in

ecclesiastical authority an English prelate of such far-reaching views

as Wolsey was known to hold. An official of the Roman Court gives the

following account of the current opinion:--

"Men say that an English Cardinal ought not to be created lightly,

because the English behave themselves insolently in that dignity, as was

shown in the case of Cardinal Bainbridge just dead. Moreover, as Wolsey

is the intimate friend of the king, he will not be contented with the

Cardinalate alone, but, as is the custom of these barbarians, will wish

to have the office of legate over all England. If this be granted the

influence of the Roman Court will be at an end; if it be not granted the

Cardinal will be the Pope's enemy and will favour France. But despite

all this the Pope, in whose hands alone the matter was, created him

Cardinal on the seventh of September."

This elevation of Wolsey was due to the strong expression of desire on

the part of Henry, who further asked that legatine powers should be

given to the new cardinal. This Leo refused for the present; he had done

enough to induce Henry to enter into a secret league for the protection

of the Church, which meant a convenient pretext for attacking Francis if

he became too powerful in Italy. When this was arranged the red hat was

sent to England, and its reception gave Wolsey an opportunity of

displaying his love for magnificent ceremonial. On 17th November it was

placed on his head by Archbishop Warham in Westminster Abbey.

Ceremonial, however splendid, was but an episode in Wolsey's diplomatic

business. The news of the French victory at Marignano was so unpleasant

that Henry VIII. for some time refused to believe it to be true. When at

last it was impossible to doubt any longer, the necessity became urgent

to put a spoke in the wheel of Francis I. England was not prepared to go

to war with France without allies, and Wolsey developed his cleverness

in attaining his ends by secret means. Nothing could be done by uniting

with the cautious Ferdinand; but the flighty Maximilian was a more

hopeful subject. The only troops that could be used against France were

the German and Swiss mercenaries, men who made war a trade, and were

trained and disciplined soldiers. The first means of injuring France was

to prevent her from hiring Swiss soldiers, and the second was to induce

Maximilian to undertake an Italian expedition in his own interests. As

regards the Swiss, it was merely a matter of money, for they were ready

to sell themselves to the highest bidder. In like manner it was easy to

subsidise Maximilian, but it was difficult to hold him to his promise

and be sure that he would spend the money on the right purpose. Wolsey,

however, resolved to try and use Maximilian; he offered him the aid of a

large contingent of the Swiss if he would attack Milan. Knowing the

delicacy of the enterprise and the slipperiness of Maximilian, Wolsey

entrusted this matter to a man whose pertinacity had been already

tried,--Richard Pace, secretary of Cardinal Bainbridge, who had

stubbornly insisted on an investigation of the circumstances of his

master's death, and had annoyed the Roman Court by his watchful care of

his master's effects. Pace was sent to hire soldiers amongst the Swiss,

and Wolsey's ingenuity was sorely tried to supply him with money

secretly and safely.

The hindrances which beset Pace in carrying out his instructions

decorously were very many. Not the least troublesome was the want of

intelligence displayed by Sir Robert Wingfield, the English envoy to

Maximilian. Wingfield belonged to the old school of English officials,

honest and industrious, but entirely incapable of \_finesse\_. He did not

understand what Pace was about; he could not comprehend Wolsey's hints,

but was a blind admirer of Maximilian, and was made his tool in his

efforts to get the gold of England and do nothing in return. But Pace

was deaf to the entreaties of Maximilian and to the lofty remonstrances

of Wingfield. He raised 17,000 Swiss soldiers, who were to serve under

their own general, and whose pay was not to pass through Maximilian's

hands. Maximilian was sorely disappointed at this result, but led his

troops to join the Swiss in an attack on Milan. On 24th March 1516, the

combined army was a few miles from Milan, which was poorly defended, and

victory seemed secure. Suddenly Maximilian began to hesitate, and then

drew off his forces and retired. We can only guess at the motive of this

strange proceeding; perhaps he had never been in earnest, and only meant

to extract money from England. When Pace refused to pay he probably

negotiated with Francis I., and obtained money from him. Anyhow his

withdrawal was fatal to the expedition. The Germans at Brescia seized

the money which was sent to Pace for the payment of the Swiss. The Swiss

in anger mutinied, and Pace was for some days thrown into prison.

Maximilian vaguely promised to return, but the Swiss troops naturally

disbanded. Such was Maximilian's meanness that he threatened Pace, now

deserted and broken by disappointment, that if he did not advance him

money he would make peace with France. Pace, afraid to run the risk,

pledged Henry VIII. to pay 60,000 florins. All this time Wingfield was

convinced that it was Pace's ill-judged parsimony that had wrought this

disaster, and he continued to write in a strain of superior wisdom to

Wolsey. He even, at Maximilian's bidding, forged Pace's name to receipts

for money. Never was diplomat in more hopeless plight than the unlucky

Pace.

Wolsey saw that his plan had failed, but he put a good face upon his

failure. Maximilian enjoyed the advantage which consummate meanness

always gives for a moment. He put down the failure to niggardliness in

the supplies, and showed his goodwill towards Henry by treating him to

fantastic proposals. If Henry would only cross to Flanders with 6000

men, Maximilian would meet him with his army, set him up as Duke of

Milan, and resign the Empire in his favour. This preposterous scheme did

not for a moment dazzle the good sense of the English counsellors. Pace,

in announcing it to Wolsey, pointed out that the Emperor spoke without

the consent of the Electors, that Maximilian was thoroughly

untrustworthy, and that Henry in such an enterprise might imperil his

hold upon the English Crown, "which," writes Pace with pardonable pride,

"is this day more esteemed than the Emperor's crown and all his empire."

Henry was of the same opinion; and Maximilian failed on this plea "to

pluck money from the king craftily." Pace remained, and jingled English

money in Maximilian's ear, as a means of preventing him from turning to

France; but not a penny was Maximilian allowed to touch, to Sir Robert

Wingfield's great annoyance. Pace so far succeeded, that when, in

November 1516, Francis I. made an alliance with the Swiss, five of the

cantons stood aloof. Pace was rewarded for his labours and sufferings by

being made a secretary of state. Sir Robert Wingfield received a severe

rebuke from the king, which sorely disturbed his self-complacency. But

it is characteristic of Wolsey's absence of personal feeling that

Wingfield was not recalled from his post. Wolsey saw that he had been no

more foolish than most other Englishmen would have been in his place.

Meanwhile a change had taken place in the affairs of Europe which turned

the attention of France and England alike in a new direction. Ferdinand

the Catholic died in January 1516, and the preponderance of France had

so alarmed him that he laid aside his plan of dividing the power of the

House of Austria by instituting his second grandson, Ferdinand, King of

Spain. After the battle of Marignano he changed his will in favour of

his eldest grandson, the Archduke Charles, who now added the Spanish

kingdoms to his possession of the Netherlands. The young prince had just

emancipated himself from the tutelage of Maximilian, but was under the

influence of ministers who pursued a purely Flemish policy, and longed

to give peace to the Netherlands by an alliance with France. England was

connected with Flanders by commercial interests, and long negotiations

had been conducted with the Flemish Government for a close alliance. But

Charles's advisers were won over by France, and Charles himself was

attracted by the hope of a French marriage. His position was difficult,

as he was poor and helpless; he could not even go to take possession of

the Spanish Crowns without help from one side or the other. Had he been

older and wiser he would have seen that it was safer to accept the gold

of Henry VIII., from whose future projects he had nothing to fear,

rather than try and secure a precarious peace for the Netherlands by an

alliance with France. However, Charles turned a cold ear to the English

ambassadors, and his ministers secretly brought about a treaty with

France, which was signed at Noyon in August 1516.

The Treaty of Noyon was a further rebuff to Wolsey, England was passed

by in silence, and a tempting bait was laid to draw Maximilian also into

the French alliance, and so leave England entirely without allies.

Maximilian had been for some time at war with Venice about the

possession of the towns of Brescia and Verona. The Treaty of Noyon

provided that the Venetians should pay the Emperor 200,000 crowns and

remain in possession of the disputed territory. Maximilian used this

offer to put himself up to auction; he expressed his detestation of the

peace of Noyon, but pleaded that unless Henry came to his help he would

be driven by poverty to accept the proffered terms. Henry answered by a

proposal that Maximilian should earn the price he fixed upon his

services: let him come into the Netherlands, and work the overthrow of

the unworthy ministers who gave such evil advice to their sovereign.

Maximilian stipulated for the allowance which he was to receive for the

expenses of a journey to the Netherlands, for which he began to make

preparations. He raised all possible doubts and difficulties, and

received all the money he could extract on any pretext from Henry VIII.;

at last he secretly signed the Treaty of Noyon in December, and drew his

payments from both parties so long as he could keep his game unsuspected.

But Wolsey was not so much deceived as Maximilian thought, and showed no

discomfiture when Maximilian's shiftiness at length came to light. If

Maximilian would not be faithful it was well that his untrustworthiness

should be openly shown, and Francis I., who was watching his manoeuvres,

could not feel proud of his new ally. He knew what he had to expect from

Maximilian when the 200,000 crowns were spent. The money that had been

spent on Maximilian was not wasted if it gave him an encouragement to

display his feebleness to the full.

So Henry maintained a dignified attitude, and showed no resentment. He

received Maximilian's excuses with cold politeness, and waited for

Francis I. to discover the futility of his new alliances. Maximilian was

clearly of no account. Charles had gained all that he could gain from

his league with France towards quieting the Netherlands; for his next

step, a journey to Spain, he needed the help of England, and soon

dropped his attitude of indifference. After thwarting England as much as

he could, he was driven to beg for a loan to cover the expenses of his

journey, and England showed no petty resentment for his past conduct.

The loan was negotiated, Charles's ambassadors were honourably received,

it was even proposed that he should visit Henry on his way. This honour

Charles cautiously declined on the ground of ill health; but all the

other marks of Henry's goodwill were accepted with gratitude, and in

September 1517 Charles set out on his voyage to Spain, where he found

enough to employ his energies for some time.

This conciliatory attitude of England was due to a perception that the

time had come when simple opposition to France was no longer useful.

England had so far succeeded as to prevent the French ascendency from

being complete; she had stemmed the current, had shown Francis I. the

extent of her resources, and had displayed unexpected skill. Moreover,

she had made it clear that neither she nor France could form a

combination sufficiently powerful to enable the one to crush the other,

and had given Francis I. a lesson as to the amount of fidelity he might

expect from his allies. When it was clear to both sides that there was

no hope for far-reaching schemes, it was natural for the two powers to

draw together, and seek a reasonable redress for the grievances which

immediately affected them.

Chief amongst these on the French side was the possession of Tournai by

the English, glorious, no doubt, as a trophy of English valour, but of

very doubtful advantage to England. Negotiations about its restoration

were begun as early as March 1517, and were conducted with profound

secrecy. Of course Charles hoped to get Tournai into his own hands, and

did not wish it to be restored to France. It was necessary to keep him

in ignorance of what was going on, and not till he had sailed to Spain

were there any rumours of what was passing.

Wolsey and Henry VIII. deceived the ambassadors of Charles and of Venice

by their repeated professions of hostility against France, and Charles's

remonstrances were answered by equivocations, so that he had no

opportunity for interfering till the matter had been agreed upon as part

of a close alliance between England and France. The negotiations for

this purpose were long and intricate, and form the masterpiece of

Wolsey's diplomatic skill. They were made more difficult by the outbreak

in England of a pestilence, the sweating sickness, before which Henry

fled from London and moved uneasily from place to place. Wolsey was

attacked by it in June so seriously that his life was despaired of;

scarcely was he recovered when he suffered from a second attack, and

soon after went on a pilgrimage to Walsingham to perform a vow and enjoy

change of air. But with this exception, he stuck manfully to his work in

London, where, beside his manifold duties in internal administration, he

directed the course of the negotiations with France.

In fact Wolsey alone was responsible for the change of policy indicated

by the French alliance. He had thoroughly carried the king with him; but

he was well aware that his course was likely to be exceedingly

unpopular, and that on him would fall the blame of any failure. Henry

did not even inform his Council of his plans. He knew that they would

all have been opposed to such a sudden change of policy, which could

only be justified in their eyes by its manifest advantage in the end.

Wolsey was conscious that he must not only conclude an alliance with

France, but must show beyond dispute a clear gain to England from so

doing.

Wolsey's difficulties were somewhat lessened by the birth of an heir to

the French Crown in February 1518. France could now offer, as a

guarantee for her close alliance with England, a proposal of marriage

between the Dauphin and Henry's only daughter Mary. Still the

negotiations cautiously went on while Wolsey drove the hardest bargain

that he could. They were not finished till September, when a numerous

body of French nobles came on a splendid embassy to London. Never had

such magnificence been seen in England before as that with which Henry

VIII. received his new allies. Even the French nobles admitted that it

was beyond their power to describe. Wolsey entertained the company at a

sumptuous supper in his house at Westminster, "the like of which," says

the Venetian envoy, "was never given by Cleopatra or Caligula, the whole

banqueting hall being decorated with huge vases of gold and silver."

After the banquet a band of mummers, wearing visors on their faces,

entered and danced. There were twelve ladies and twelve gentlemen,

attended by twelve torch-bearers; all were clad alike "in fine green

satin, all over covered with cloth of gold, undertied together with

laces of gold." They danced for some time and then removed their masks,

and the evening passed in mirth. Such were the festivities of the

English Court, which Shakespeare has reproduced, accurately enough, in

his play of \_Henry VIII.\_

But these Court festivities were only preliminary to the public

ceremonies whereby Wolsey impressed the imagination of the people. The

proclamation of the treaty and the marriage of the Princess Mary by

proxy were both the occasions of splendid ceremonies in St. Paul's

Cathedral. The people were delighted by pageantry and good cheer; the

opposition of old-fashioned politicians was overborne in the prevailing

enthusiasm; and men spoke only of the triumph of a pacific policy which

had achieved results such as warfare could not have won. Indeed, the

advantages which England obtained were substantial. France bought back

Tournai for 600,000 crowns, and entered into a close alliance with

England, which cut it off from interference in the affairs of Scotland,

which was included in the peace so long as it abstained from

hostilities. But more important than this was the fact that Wolsey

insisted on the alliance between France and England being made the basis

of a universal peace. The Pope, the Emperor, the King of Spain, were all

invited to join, and all complied with the invitation.

None of them, however, complied with goodwill, least of all Pope Leo X.,

whose claim to be the official pacifier of Europe was rudely set aside

by the audacious action of Wolsey. Leo hoped that the bestowal of a

cardinal's hat had established a hold on Wolsey's gratitude; but he soon

found that he was mistaken, and that his cunning was no match for

Wolsey's force. No sooner had Wolsey obtained the cardinalate than he

pressed for the further dignity of papal legate in England. Not

unnaturally Leo refused to endow with such an office a minister already

so powerful as to be almost independent; but Wolsey made him pay for his

refusal. Leo wanted money, and the pressure of the Turk on Southern

Europe lent a colour to his demand of clerical taxation for the purposes

of a crusade. In 1517 he sent out legates to the chief kings of

Christendom; but Henry refused to admit Cardinal Campeggio, saying that

"it was not the rule of this realm to admit legates \_à latere\_." Then

Wolsey intervened and suggested that Campeggio might come if he would

exercise no exceptional powers, and if his dignity were shared by

himself. Leo was forced to yield, and Campeggio's arrival was made

the occasion of stately ceremonies which redounded to Wolsey's

glorification. Campeggio got little for the crusade, but served to grace

the festivities of the French alliance, and afterwards to convey the

Pope's adhesion to the universal peace. Wolsey had taken matters out of

the Pope's hand, and Leo was driven to follow his lead with what grace

he could muster. Perhaps as he sighed over his discomfiture he consoled

himself with the thought that the new peace would not last much longer

than those previously made: if he did, he was right in his opinion.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD

1518-1520

The object of Wolsey's foreign policy had been attained by the universal

peace of 1518. England had been set up as the mediator in the politics

of Europe. The old claims of the empire and the papacy had passed away

in the conflict of national and dynastic interests, in which papacy and

empire were alike involved. England, by virtue of its insular position,

was practically outside the objects of immediate ambition which

distracted its Continental neighbours; but England's commercial

interests made her desirous of influence, and Henry VIII. was bent upon

being an important personage. It was Wolsey's object to gratify the king

at the least expense to the country, and so long as the king could be

exalted by peaceful means, the good of England was certainly promoted at

the same time. The position of England as the pacifier of Europe was one

well qualified to develop a national consciousness of great duties to

perform; and it may be doubted if a country is ever great unless it has

a clear consciousness of some great mission.

Wolsey's policy had been skilful, and the results which he had obtained

were glorious; but it was difficult to maintain the position which he

had won. It was one thing to proclaim a peace; it was another to

contrive that peace should be kept. One important question was looming

in the distance when Wolsey's peace was signed,--the succession to the

empire on Maximilian's death. Unfortunately this question came rapidly

forward for decision, as Maximilian died suddenly on 12th January 1519,

and the politicians of Europe waited breathlessly to see who would be

chosen as his successor.

The election to the empire rested with the seven electors, the chief

princes of Germany; but if they had been minded on this occasion to

exercise freely their right, it would have been difficult for them to do

so. The empire had for a century been with the house of Austria, and

Maximilian had schemed eagerly that it should pass to his grandson

Charles. It is true that Charles was already King of Spain, Lord of the

Netherlands, and King of Naples and Sicily, so that it seemed dangerous

to increase still further his great dominions. But Charles urged his

claim, and his great rival, Francis I. of France, entered the lists

against him. Strange as it may seem that a French king should aspire to

rule over Germany, Francis I. could urge that he was almost as closely

connected with Germany as was Charles, whose interests were bound up

with those of Spain and the Netherlands. In the face of these two

competitors, it was hard for the electors to find a candidate of a

humbler sort who would venture to draw upon himself the wrath of their

disappointment. Moreover, the task of ruling Germany was not such as to

attract a small prince. The Turks were threatening its borders, and a

strong man was needed to deal with many pressing problems of its

government. The electors, however, were scarcely guilty of any patriotic

considerations; they quietly put up their votes for auction between

Francis and Charles, and deferred a choice as long as they could.

Both competitors turned for help to their allies, the Pope and the King

of England, who found themselves greatly perplexed. Leo X. did not wish

to see French influence increased, as France was a dangerous neighbour

in Italy; nor did he wish to see the empire and the kingdom of Naples

both held by the same man, for that was against the immemorial policy of

the Papacy. So Leo intrigued and prevaricated to such an extent that it

is almost impossible to determine what he was aiming at. He managed,

however, to throw hindrances in Wolsey's path, though we cannot be sure

that he intended to do so.

Wolsey's plan of action was clear, though it was not dignified. He

wished to preserve England's mediating attitude and give offence to no

one; consequently, he secretly promised his help both to Charles and

Francis, and tried to arrange that each should be ignorant of his

promises to the other. All went well till Leo, in his diplomatic

divagations, commissioned his legate to suggest to Henry VIII. that it

might be possible, after all, to find some third candidate for the

empire, and that he was ready to try and put off the election for that

purpose, if Henry agreed. Henry seems to have considered this as a hint

from the Pope to become a candidate himself. He remembered that

Maximilian had offered to resign the empire in his favour, but he forgot

the sufficient reasons which had led him to dismiss the proposal as

fantastic and absurd. His vanity was rather tickled with the notion of

rivalling Charles and Francis, and he thought that if the Pope were on

his side, his chances would be as good as theirs.

We can only guess at Wolsey's dismay when his master laid this project

before him. Whatever Wolsey thought, he knew that it was useless to

offer any opposition. However much he might be able to influence the

king's opinions in the making, he knew that he must execute them when

they were made. If Henry had made up his mind to become a candidate for

the empire, a candidate he must be. All that could be done was to

prevent his determination from being hopelessly disastrous. So Wolsey

pointed out that great as were the advantages to be obtained by gaining

the empire, there were dangers in being an unsuccessful candidate. It

was necessary first to make sure of the Pope, and then to prosecute

Henry's candidature by fair and honourable means. Francis was spending

money lavishly to win supporters to his side; and Charles was

reluctantly compelled to follow his example lest he should be outbid. It

would be unwise for Henry to squander his money and simply raise the

market price of the votes. Let him make it clear to the greedy Germans

that they would not see the colour of England's money till the English

king had been really elected.

So Wolsey sent the most cautious instructions to his agent in Rome to

see if the Pope would take the responsibility of urging Henry to become

a candidate; but Leo was too cautious, and affected not to understand

the hint. Then in May, Pace, who was now the king's secretary, was sent

to Germany to sound the electors with equal care. He was to approach the

electors who were on Francis's side, as though Henry were in favour of

Francis, and was to act similarly to those who were in favour of

Charles; then he was to hint cautiously that it might be well to choose

some one more closely connected with Germany, and if they showed any

acquiescence, was to suggest that Henry was "of the German tongue," and

then was to sing his praises. Probably both Pace and Wolsey knew that it

was too late to do anything serious. Pace reported that the money of

France and Spain was flowing on all sides, and was of opinion that the

empire was "the dearest merchandise that ever was sold," and would prove

"the worst that ever was bought to him that shall obtain it." Yet still

he professed to have hopes, and even asked for money to enter the lists

of corruption. But this was needless, as the election at last proceeded

quickly. The Pope came round to the side of Charles as being the least

of two evils, and Charles was elected on 28th June.

Thus Wolsey succeeded in satisfying his master's demands without

committing England to any breach with either of her allies. Henry VIII.

could scarcely be gratified at the part that he had played, but Wolsey

could convince him that he had tried his best, and that at any rate no

harm had been done. Though Henry's proceedings were known to Francis and

Charles, there was nothing at which they could take offence. Henry had

behaved with duplicity, but that was only to be expected in those days;

he had not pronounced himself strongly against either. The ill-will that

had long been simmering between Charles V. and Francis I. had risen to

the surface, and the long rivalry between the two monarchs was now

declared. Each looked for allies, and the most important ally was

England. Each had hopes of winning over the English king, and Wolsey

wished to keep alive, without satisfying, the hopes of both, and so

establish still more securely the power of England as holding the

balance of the peace of Europe.

Wolsey's conduct in this matter throws much light on his relations to

the king, and the method by which he retained his influence and managed

to carry out his own designs. He appreciated the truth that a statesman

must lead while seeming to follow--a truth which applies equally to all

forms of government. Wolsey was responsible to no one but the king, and

so had a better opportunity than has a statesman who serves a democracy

to obtain permission to carry out a consecutive policy. But, on the

other hand, he was more liable to be thwarted and interrupted in matters

of detail by the interference of a superior. Wolsey's far-seeing policy

was endangered by the king's vanity and obstinacy; he could not ask for

time to justify his own wisdom, but was forced to obey. Yet even then he

would not abandon his own position and set himself to minimise the

inconvenience. It is impossible to know how often Wolsey was at other

times obliged to give way to the king and adopt the second-best course;

but in this case we find clear indications of the process. When he was

driven from his course, he contrived that the deviation should be as

unimportant as possible.

Wolsey's task of maintaining peace by English mediation was beset with

difficulties now that the breach between Francis I. and Charles V. was

clearly made. It was necessary for England to be friendly to both, and

not to be drawn by its friendliness towards either to offend the other.

In the matter of the imperial election English influence had been

somewhat on the side of Charles, and Francis was now the one who needed

propitiation. The treaty with France had provided for a personal

interview between the two kings, and Francis was anxious that it should

take place at once. For this purpose he strove to win the good offices

of Wolsey. He assured him that in case of a papal election he could

command fourteen votes which should be given in his favour. Moreover, he

conferred on him a signal mark of his confidence by nominating him his

plenipotentiary for the arrangements about the forthcoming interview. By

this all difficulties were removed, and Wolsey stood forward before the

eyes of Europe as the accredited representative of the kings of England

and France at the same time. It is no wonder that men marvelled at such

an unheard-of position for an English subject.

But nothing that Francis had to give could turn Wolsey away from his own

path. No sooner did he know that the French interview was agreed upon

than he suggested to Charles that it would be well for him also to have

a meeting with the English king. The proposal was eagerly accepted, and

Wolsey conducted the negotiations about both interviews side by side.

Rarely did two meetings cause such a flow of ink and raise so many

knotty points. At last it was agreed that Charles should visit Henry in

England in an informal way before the French interview took place. It

was difficult to induce the punctilious Spaniards to give way to

Wolsey's requirements. It was a hard thing for one who bore the

high-sounding title of Emperor to agree to visit a King of England on

his own terms. But Wolsey was resolute that everything should be done in

such a way as to give France the least cause of complaint. When the

Spanish envoys objected to his arrangements or proposed alterations, he

brought them to their bearings by saying, "Very well; then do not do it

and begone." They were made to feel their dependence on himself. The

interview was of their seeking, and must be held on terms which he

proposed, or not at all. This, no doubt, was felt to be very haughty

conduct on Wolsey's part; but he had set on foot the scheme of this

double interview, by which Henry was to be glorified and England's

mediatorial position assured. It was his business to see that his plan

succeeded. So he turned a deaf ear to the offers of the Spanish

ambassadors. He was not to be moved by the promise of ecclesiastical

revenues in Spain. Even when the influence of Spain was proffered to

secure his election to the Papacy, he coldly refused.

It has been said that Wolsey was open to bribes, and his seemingly

tortuous policy has been accounted for by the supposition that he

inclined to the side which promised him most. This, however, is an

entire mistake. Wolsey went his own way; but at the same time he did not

disregard his personal profit. He was too great a man to be bribed; but

his greatness entailed magnificence, and magnificence is expensive. He

regarded it as natural that sovereigns who threw work upon his shoulders

should make some recognition of his labours. This was the custom of the

time; and Wolsey was by no means singular in receiving gifts from

foreign kings. The chief lords of Henry's Court received pensions from

the King of France; and the lords of the French Court were similarly

rewarded by Henry. This was merely a complimentary custom, and was open

and avowed. Wolsey received a pension from Francis I., and a further sum

as compensation for the bishopric of Tournai, which he resigned when

Tournai was returned to France. In like manner, Charles V. rewarded him

by a Spanish bishopric; but Wolsey declined the office of bishop, and

preferred to receive a fixed pension secured on the revenues of the see.

This iniquitous arrangement was carried out with the Pope's consent; and

such like arrangements were by no means rare. They were the natural

result of the excessive wealth of the Church, which was diverted to the

royal uses by a series of fictions, more or less barefaced, but all

tending to the weakening of the ecclesiastical organisation. Still the

fact remains that Wolsey thought no shame of receiving pensions from

Francis and Charles alike; but there was nothing secret nor

extraordinary in this. Wolsey regarded it as only obvious that his

statesmanship should be rewarded by those for whom it was exercised; but

the Emperor and the King of France never hoped that by these pensions

they would attach Wolsey to their side. The promise by which they tried

to win him was the promise of the Papacy; and to this Wolsey turned a

deaf ear. "He is seven times more powerful than the Pope," wrote the

Venetian ambassador; and perhaps Wolsey himself at this time was of the

same opinion.

Meanwhile Francis was annoyed when he heard of these dealings with

Charles, and tried to counteract them by pressing for an early date of

his meeting with Henry VIII. It is amazing to find how large a part

domestic events were made to play in these matters of high policy when

occasion needed. Francis urged that he was very anxious for his queen to

be present to welcome Katharine; but she was expecting her confinement,

and if the interview did not take place soon she would be unable to

appear. Wolsey replied with equal concern for family affairs, that the

Emperor was anxious to visit his aunt, whom he had never seen, and Henry

could not be so churlish as to refuse a visit from his wife's relative.

Katharine, on her side, was overjoyed at this renewal of intimacy with

the Spanish Court, to whose interests she was strongly attached, and

tried to prevent the understanding with France, by declaring that she

could not possibly have her dresses ready under three months. In her

dislike of the French alliance Queen Katharine expressed the popular

sentiment. The people had long regarded France as the natural enemy of

England, and were slow to give up their prejudices. The nobles grew more

and more discontented with Wolsey's policy, which they did not care to

understand. They only saw that their expectations of a return to power

were utterly disappointed; Wolsey, backed by officials such as Pace, was

all-powerful, and they were disregarded. Wolsey was working absolutely

single-handed. It is a remarkable proof of his skill that he was able to

draw the king to follow him unhesitatingly, at the sacrifice of his

personal popularity, and in spite of the representations of those who

were immediately around him.

Moreover, Wolsey, in his capacity of representative of the Kings of

England and France, had in his hands the entire management of all

concerning the coming interview. He fixed the place with due regard to

the honour of England, almost on English soil. The English king was not

to lodge outside his own territory of Calais; the spot appointed for the

meeting was on the meadows between Guisnes and Ardres, on the borderland

of the two kingdoms. Wolsey had to decide which of the English nobles

and gentry were to attend the king, and had to assign to each his office

and dignity. The king's retinue amounted to nearly 4000, and the queen's

was somewhat over 1000. A very slight knowledge of human nature will

serve to show how many people Wolsey must necessarily have offended. If

the ranks of his enemies were large before, they must have increased

enormously when his arrangements were made known.

Still Wolsey was not daunted, and however much every one, from Francis

and Charles, felt aggrieved by his proceedings, all had to obey; and

everything that took place was due to Wolsey's will alone. The interview

with Charles was simple. On 26th May 1520 he landed at Dover, and was

met by Wolsey; next morning Henry rode to meet him and escort him to

Canterbury, which was his headquarters; on the 29th Charles rode to

Sandwich, where he embarked for Flanders. What subjects the two monarchs

discussed we can only dimly guess. Each promised to help the other if

attacked by France, and probably Henry undertook to bring about a

joint-conference of the three sovereigns to discuss their common

interests. The importance of the meeting lay in its display of

friendliness; in the warning which it gave to France that she was not to

count upon the exclusive possession of England's goodwill.

No sooner was the Emperor gone than Henry embarked for Calais, and

arrived at Guisnes on 4th June. We need not describe again the "Field of

the Cloth of Gold," to furnish which the art of the Renaissance was used

to deck mediæval pageantry. It is enough to say that stately palaces of

wood clothed the barren stretch of flat meadows, and that every ornament

which man's imagination could devise was employed to lend splendour to

the scene. No doubt it was barbaric, wasteful, and foolish; but men in

those days loved the sight of magnificence, and the display was as much

for the enjoyment of countless spectators as for the self-glorification

of those who were the main actors. In those days the solace of a poor

man's life was the occasional enjoyment of a stately spectacle; and

after all, splendour gives more pleasure to the lookers-on than to the

personages of the show.

Most splendid among the glittering throng was the figure of Wolsey, who

had to support the dignity of representative of both kings, and spared

no pains to do it to the full. But while the jousts went on, Wolsey was

busy with diplomacy; there were many points relating to a good

understanding between France and England, which he wished to

arrange,--the projected marriage of the Dauphin with Mary of England,

the payment due from France to England on several heads, the relations

between France and Scotland and the like. More important than these was

the reconciliation of Charles with Francis, which Wolsey pressed to the

utmost of his persuasiveness, without, however, reaching any definite

conclusion. Charles was hovering on the Flemish border, ready at a hint

from Wolsey to join the conference; but Wolsey could find no good

reasons for giving it, and when the festivities came to an end on 24th

June, it might be doubted if much substantial good had resulted from the

interview. No doubt the French and English fraternised, and swore

friendship over their cups; but tournaments were not the happiest means

of allaying feelings of rivalry, and the protestations of friendship

were little more than lip-deep. Yet Wolsey cannot be blamed for being

over-sanguine. It was at least a worthy end that he had before him,--the

removal of long-standing hostility, the settlement of old disputes, the

union of two neighbouring nations by the assertion of common aims and

common interests. However we may condemn the methods which Wolsey used,

at least we must admit that his end was in accordance with the most

enlightened views of modern statesmanship.

When Henry had taken leave of Francis, he waited in Calais for the

coming of Charles, whose visit to England was understood to be merely

preliminary to further negotiations. Again Henry held the important

position; he went to meet Charles at Gravelines, where he stayed for a

night, and then escorted Charles as his guest to Calais, where he stayed

from 10th to 14th July. The result of the conference was a formal treaty

of alliance between the two sovereigns, which Charles proposed to

confirm by betrothing himself to Henry's daughter Mary. As she was a

child of four years old, such an undertaking did not bind him to much;

but Mary was already betrothed to the Dauphin, while Charles was also

already betrothed to Charlotte of France, so that the proposal aimed at

a double breach of existing relationships and treaties. Henry listened

to this scheme, which opened up the way for further negotiation, and the

two monarchs parted with protestations of friendship. It was now the

turn of Francis to hang about the place where Henry was holding

conference with his rival, in hopes that he too might be invited to

their discussions. He had to content himself with hearing that Henry

rode a steed which he had presented to him, and that his face did not

look so contented and cheerful as when he was on the meadows of Guisnes.

In due time he received from Henry an account of what had passed between

himself and the Emperor. Henry informed him of Charles's marriage

projects, and of his proposal for an alliance against France, both of

which Henry falsely said that he had rejected with holy horror.

Truly the records of diplomacy are dreary, and the results of all this

display, this ingenious scheming, and this deceit seem ludicrously

small. The upshot, however, was that Wolsey's ideas still remained

dominant, and that the position which he had marked out for England was

still maintained. He had been compelled to change the form of his

policy, but its essence was unchanged. European affairs could no longer

be directed by a universal peace under the guarantee of England; so

Wolsey substituted for it a system of separate alliances with England,

by which England exercised a mediating influence on the policy of the

two monarchs, whose rivalry threatened a breach of European peace. He

informed Francis of the schemes of Charles, that he might show him how

much depended on English mediation. He so conducted matters that Charles

and Francis should both be aware that England could make advantageous

terms with either, that her interests did not tend to one side rather

than the other, that both should be willing to secure her goodwill, and

should shrink from taking any step which would throw her on the side of

his adversary. It was a result worth achieving, though the position was

precarious, and required constant watchfulness to maintain.

CHAPTER V

THE CONFERENCE OF CALAIS

1520-1521

The most significant point in the mediatorial policy of Wolsey was the

fact that it threw the Papacy entirely into the shade. What Wolsey was

doing was the traditional business of the Pope, who could not openly

gainsay a policy which he was bound to profess coincided with his own.

So Leo X. followed Wolsey's lead of keeping on good terms with France

and the Emperor alike; but Leo had no real wish for peace. He wished to

gain something in Italy for the Medici, and nothing was to be gained

while France and Spain suspended hostilities. Only in time of war could

he hope to carry out his own plans by balancing one combatant against

the other. Charles's ambassador was not wrong in saying that Leo hated

Wolsey more than any other man; and Leo tried to upset his plans by

drawing nearer to the imperial side.

It required very little to provoke war between Francis and Charles;

either would begin the attack if the conditions were a little more

favourable, or if he could secure an ally. But Charles was weak owing to

the want of unity of interest in his unwieldy dominions. Germany was

disturbed by the opinions of Luther; Spain was disturbed by a revolt of

the cities against long-standing misgovernment. Charles was not ready

for war, nor was Francis much better provided. His coffers were empty

through his lavish expenditure, and his Government was not popular.

Really, though both wished for war, neither was prepared to be the

aggressor; both wanted the vantage of seeming to fight in self-defence.

It was obvious that Charles had made a high bid for the friendship of

England when he offered himself as the husband of the Princess Mary.

Wolsey had taken care that Francis was informed of this offer, which

necessarily led to a long negotiation with the imperial Court. Really

Charles's marriage projects were rather complicated; he was betrothed to

Charlotte of France; he had made an offer for Mary of England; but he

wished to marry Isabella of Portugal for no loftier reason than the

superior attractions of her dowry. His proposal for Mary of England was

prompted by nothing save the desire to have Henry as his ally against

France; if he could manage by fair promises to induce Henry to go to war

his purpose would be achieved, and he could still go in quest of the

Portuguese dower. So when Tunstal, the Master of the Rolls, went as

English envoy to discuss the matter, Charles's Council raised all sorts

of difficulties. Let the English king join a league with the Pope and

the Emperor against France; then the Pope would grant his dispensation,

which was necessary, owing to the relationship between Charles and Mary.

Tunstal was bidden by Wolsey to refuse such conditions. England would

not move until the marriage had been concluded, and would not join in

any league with the Pope till his dispensation was in Henry's hand. The

separate alliance of England and the Emperor must be put beyond doubt to

England's satisfaction before anything else could be considered. Wolsey

commissioned Tunstal to adopt a lofty tone. "It would be great folly,"

he says, "for this young prince, not being more surely settled in his

dominions, and so ill-provided with treasure and good councillors, the

Pope also being so brittle and variable, to be led into war for the

pleasure of his ministers." Truly Wolsey thought he had taken the

measure of those with whom he dealt, and spoke with sufficient plainness

when occasion needed. But Charles's chancellor, Gattinara, a

Piedmontese, who was rising into power, was as obstinate as Wolsey, and

rejected the English proposals with equal scorn. "Your master," he said

to Tunstal, "would have the Emperor break with France, but would keep

himself free; he behaves like a man with two horses, one of which he

rides, and leads the other by the hand." It was clear that nothing could

be done, and Wolsey with some delight recalled Tunstal from his embassy.

The closer alliance with the Emperor was at an end for the present; he

had shown again that England would only forego her mediating position on

her own terms.

At the same time he dealt an equal measure of rebuff to France. Before

the conference at Guisnes Francis had done some work towards rebuilding

the ruined walls of Ardres on the French frontier. After the conference

the work was continued till England resented it as an unfriendly act.

Francis was obliged to give way, and order the building to be stopped.

Neither Francis nor Charles were allowed to presume on the complacency

of England, nor use their alliance with her to further their own

purposes.

The general aspect of affairs was so dubious that it was necessary for

England to be prepared for any emergency, and first of all Scotland must

be secured as far as possible. Since the fall of James IV. at Flodden

Field, Scotland had been internally unquiet. Queen Margaret gave birth

to a son a few months after her husband's death, and, to secure her

position, took the unwise step of marrying the Earl of Angus. The

enemies of Angus and the national party in Scotland joined together to

demand that the Regency should be placed in firmer hands, and they

summoned from France the Duke of Albany, a son of the second son of

James III., who had been born in exile, and was French in all the

traditions of his education. When Albany came to Scotland as Regent,

Queen Margaret and Angus were so assailed that Margaret had to flee to

England for refuge in 1515, leaving her son in Albany's care. She stayed

in England till the middle of 1517, when she was allowed to return to

Scotland on condition that she took no part in public affairs. About the

same time Albany returned to France, somewhat weary of his Scottish

charge. By his alliance with Francis Henry contrived that Albany should

not return to Scotland; but he could not contrive to give his sister

Margaret the political wisdom which was needed to draw England and

Scotland nearer together. Margaret quarrelled with her husband Angus,

and only added another element of discord to those which previously

existed. The safest way for England to keep Scotland helpless was to

encourage forays on the Border. The Warden of the Western Marches, Lord

Dacre of Naworth, was admirably adapted to work with Wolsey for this

purpose. Without breaking the formal peace which existed between the two

nations, he developed a savage and systematic warfare, waged in the

shape of Border raids, which was purposely meant to devastate the

Scottish frontier, so as to prevent a serious invasion from the Scottish

side. Still Henry VIII. was most desirous to keep Scotland separate from

France; but the truce with Scotland expired in November 1520. Wolsey

would gladly have turned the truce into a perpetual peace; but Scotland

still clung to its French alliance, and all that Wolsey could achieve

was a prolongation of the truce till 1522. He did so, however, with the

air of one who would have preferred war; and Francis I. was induced to

urge the Scots to sue for peace, and accept as a favour what England was

only too glad to grant.

At the same time an event occurred in England which showed in an

unmistakable way the determination of Henry to go his own way and allow

no man to question it. In April 1520 the Duke of Buckingham, one of the

wealthiest of the English nobles, was imprisoned on an accusation of

high treason. In May he was brought to trial before his peers, was found

guilty, and was executed. The charges against him were trivial if true;

the witnesses were members of his household who bore him a grudge. But

the king heard their testimony in his Council, and committed the duke to

the Tower. None of the nobles of England dared differ from their

imperious master. If the king thought fit that Buckingham should die,

they would not run the risk of putting any obstacle in the way of the

royal will. Trials for treason under Henry VIII. were mere formal acts

of registration of a decision already formed.

The Duke of Buckingham, no doubt, was a weak and foolish man, and may

have done and said many foolish things. He was in some sense justified

in regarding himself as the nearest heir to the English throne if Henry

left no children to succeed him. Henry had been married for many years,

and as yet there was no surviving child save the Princess Mary. It was

unwise to talk about the succession to the Crown after Henry's death; it

was criminal to disturb the minds of Englishmen who had only so lately

won the blessings of internal peace. If the Duke of Buckingham had

really done so, he would not be undeserving of punishment; but the

evidence against him was slight, and its source was suspicious. No doubt

Buckingham was incautious, and made himself a mouthpiece of the

discontent felt by the nobles at the French alliance and their own

exclusion from affairs. No doubt he denounced Wolsey, who sent him a

message that he might say what he liked against himself, but warned him

to beware what he said against the king. It does not seem that Wolsey

took any active part in the proceedings against the Duke, but he did not

do anything to save him. The matter was the king's matter, and as such

it was regarded by all. The nobles, who probably agreed with

Buckingham's opinions, were unanimous in pronouncing his guilt; and the

Duke of Norfolk, with tears streaming down his cheeks, condemned him to

his doom. The mass of the people were indifferent to his fate, and were

willing that the king should be sole judge of the precautions necessary

for his safety, with which the internal peace and outward glory of

England was entirely identified. Charles and Francis stood aghast at

Henry's strong measures, and were surprised that he could do things in

such a high-handed manner with impunity. If Henry intended to let the

statesmen of Europe know that he was not to be diverted from his course

by fear of causing disorders at home he thoroughly succeeded. The death

of Buckingham was a warning that those who crossed the king's path and

hoped to thwart his plans by petulant opposition were playing a game

which would only end in their own ruin.

Free from any fear of opposition at home, Wolsey could now give his

attention to his difficult task abroad. Charles V. had been crowned at

Aachen, and talked of an expedition to Rome to receive the imperial

crown. Francis I. was preparing for a campaign to assert the French

claims on Milan. Meanwhile he wished to hamper Charles without openly

breaking the peace. He stirred up a band of discontented barons to

attack Luxembourg, and aided the claimant to the crown of Navarre to

enter his inheritance. War seemed now inevitable; but Wolsey remained

true to his principles, and urged upon both kings that they should

submit their differences to the mediation of England. Charles was busied

with the revolt of the Spanish towns, and was not unwilling to gain

time. After a show of reluctance he submitted to the English proposals;

but Francis, rejoicing in the prospect of success in Luxembourg and

Navarre, refused on the ground that Charles was not in earnest. Still

Francis was afraid of incurring England's hostility, and quailed before

Wolsey's threat that if France refused mediation, England would be

driven to side with the Emperor. In June 1521 he reluctantly assented to

a conference to be held at Calais, over which Wolsey should preside, and

decide between the pleas urged by representatives of the two hostile

monarchs.

If Wolsey triumphed at having reached his goal, his triumph was of short

duration. He might display himself as a mediator seeking to establish

peace, but he knew that peace was well-nigh impossible. While the

negotiations were in progress for the conference which was to resolve

differences, events were tending to make war inevitable. When Wolsey

began to broach his project, Francis was desirous of war and Charles was

anxious to defer it; but Charles met with some success in obtaining

promises of help from Germany in the Diet of Worms, and when that was

over, he heard welcome news which reached him gradually from all sides.

The revolt of the Spanish towns was dying away; the aggressors in

Luxembourg had been repulsed; the troops of Spain had won signal

successes in Navarre. His embarrassments were certainly disappearing on

all sides. More than this, Pope Leo X., after long wavering, made up his

mind to take a definite course. No doubt he was sorely vexed to find

that the position which he hankered after was occupied by England; and

if he were to step back into the politics of Europe, he could not defer

a decision much longer. He had wavered between an alliance with France

and Venice on the one side, or with the Emperor on the other. The

movement of Luther in Germany had been one of the questions for

settlement in the Diet of Worms, and Luther had been silenced for a

time. Leo awoke in some degree to the gravity of the situation, and saw

the advantage of making common cause with Charles, whose help in Germany

was needful. Accordingly he made a secret treaty with the Emperor for

mutual defence, and was anxious to draw England to the same side. The

religious question was beginning to be of importance, and Francis I. was

regarded as a favourer of heretics, whereas Henry VIII. was strictly

orthodox, was busy in suppressing Lutheran opinions at home, and was

preparing his book which should confute Luther for ever.

Another circumstance also greatly affected the attitude of Charles, the

death of his minister Chièvres, who had been his tutor in his youth, and

continued to exercise great influence over his actions. Charles was

cold, reserved, and ill-adapted to make friends. It was natural that one

whom he had trusted from his boyhood should sway his policy at the

first. Chièvres was a Burgundian, whose life had been spent in saving

Burgundy from French aggression, and the continuance of this watchful

care was his chief object till the last. His first thought was for

Burgundy, and to protect that he wished for peace with France and

opposed an adventurous policy. On his death in May 1521 Charles V.

entered on a new course of action. He felt himself for the first time

his own master, and took his responsibilities upon himself. He seems to

have admitted to himself that the advice of Chièvres had not always been

wise, and he never allowed another minister to gain the influence

Chièvres had possessed. He contented himself with officials who might

each represent some part of his dominions, and whose advice he used in

turns, but none of whom could claim to direct his policy as a whole.

Chief of these officials was a Savoyard, Mercurino della Gattinara,

whose diplomatic skill was now of great service to the Emperor.

Gattinara was a man devoted to his master's interests, and equal to

Wolsey in resoluteness and pertinacity. Hitherto Wolsey had had the

strongest will amongst the statesmen of Europe, and had reaped all the

advantages of his strength. In Gattinara he met with an opponent who was

in many ways his match. It is true that Gattinara had not Wolsey's

genius, and was not capable of Wolsey's far-reaching schemes; but he had

a keen eye to the interests of the moment, and could neither be baffled

by \_finesse\_ nor overborne by menaces. His was the hand that first

checked Wolsey's victorious career.

So it was that through a combination of causes the prospects of peace

suddenly darkened just as Wolsey was preparing to stand forward as the

mediator of Europe. Doubtless he hoped, when first he put forward the

project of a conference, that it might be the means of restoring his

original design of 1518, a European peace under the guarantee of

England. Since that had broken down he had been striving to maintain

England's influence by separate alliances; he hoped in the conference to

use this position in the interests of peace. But first of all the

alliance with the Emperor must be made closer, and the Emperor showed

signs of demanding that this closer alliance should be purchased by a

breach with France. If war was inevitable, England had most to gain by

an alliance with Charles, to whom its friendship could offer substantial

advantages, as England, in case of war, could secure to Charles the

means of communicating between the Netherlands and Spain, which would be

cut off if France were hostile and the Channel were barred by English

ships. Moreover the prospect of a marriage between Charles and the

Princess Mary was naturally gratifying to Henry; while English industry

would suffer from any breach of trading relations with the Netherlands,

and the notion of war with France was still popular with the English.

So Wolsey started for Calais at the beginning of August with the

intention of strengthening England's alliance with the Emperor, that

thereby England's influence might be more powerful. Charles on the other

hand was resolved on war; he did not wish for peace by England's

mediation, but he wished to draw England definitely into the league

between himself and the Pope against France. Wolsey knew that much

depended on his own cleverness, and nerved himself for the greatest

caution, as Francis was beginning to be suspicious of the preparations

of Charles, and the attitude of affairs was not promising for a pacific

mediation.

This became obvious at the first interview of Wolsey with the imperial

envoys, foremost amongst whom was Gattinara. They were commissioned to

treat about the marriage of Charles with the Princess Mary, and about a

secret undertaking for war against France; but their instructions

contained nothing tending to peace. The French envoys were more pacific,

as war was not popular in France.

On 7th August the conference was opened under Wolsey's presidency; but

Gattinara did nothing save dwell upon the grievances of his master

against France; he maintained that France had been the aggressor in

breaking the existing treaty; he had no powers to negotiate peace or

even a truce, but demanded England's help, which had been promised to

the party first aggrieved. The French retorted in the same strain, but

it was clear that they were not averse to peace, and were willing to

trust to Wolsey's mediation. Wolsey saw that he could make little out of

Gattinara. He intended to visit the Emperor, who had come to Bruges for

the purpose, as soon as he had settled with the imperial envoys the

preliminaries of an alliance; now he saw that the only hope of

continuing the conference lay in winning from Charles better terms than

the stubborn Gattinara would concede. So he begged the French envoys to

remain in Calais while he visited the Emperor and arranged with him

personally for a truce. As the French were desirous of peace, they

consented.

On 16th August Wolsey entered Bruges in royal state, with a retinue of

1000 horsemen. Charles came to the city gate to meet him, and received

him almost as an equal. Wolsey did not dismount from his horse, but

received Charles's embrace seated. He was given rooms in Charles's

palace, and the next day at church Charles sat by Wolsey's side and

shared the same kneeling stool with him. Their private conferences dealt

solely with the accord between England and the Emperor. Wolsey saw that

it was useless to urge directly the cause of peace, and trusted to use

for this purpose the advantages which his alliance would give. He

succeeded, however, in considerably modifying the terms which had been

first proposed. He diminished the amount of dowry which Mary was to

receive on her marriage, and put off her voyage to the Emperor till she

should reach the age of twelve, instead of seven, which was first

demanded. Similarly he put off the period when England should declare

war against France till the spring of 1523, though he agreed that if war

was being waged between Francis and Charles in November, England should

send some help to Charles. Thus he still preserved England's freedom of

action, and deferred a rupture with France. Every one thought that many

things might happen in the next few months, and that England was pledged

to little. Further, Wolsey guarded the pecuniary interests of Henry by

insisting that if France ceased to pay its instalments for the purchase

of Tournai, the Emperor should make good the loss. He also stipulated

that the treaty should be kept a profound secret, so that the

proceedings of the conference should still go on.

Wolsey was impressed by Charles, and gave a true description of his

character to Henry: "For his age he is very wise and understanding his

affairs, right cold and temperate in speech, with assured manner,

couching his words right well and to good purpose when he doth speak."

We do not know what was Charles's private opinion of Wolsey. He can

scarcely have relished Wolsey's lofty manner, for Wolsey bore himself

with all the dignity of a representative of his king. Thus, the King of

Denmark, Charles's brother-in-law, was in Bruges, and sought an

interview with Wolsey, who answered that it was unbecoming for him to

receive in his chamber any king to whom he was not commissioned; if the

King of Denmark wished to speak with him, let him meet him, as though by

accident, in the garden of the palace.

When the provisions of the treaty had been drafted, Wolsey set out for

Calais on 26th August, and was honourably escorted out of Bruges by the

Emperor himself. On his return the business of the conference began, and

was dragged on through three weary months. The imperial envoys naturally

saw nothing to be gained by the conference except keeping open the

quarrel with France till November, when Henry was bound to send help to

the Emperor if peace were not made. Wolsey remained true to his two

principles: care for English interests, and a desire for peace. He

secured protection for the fishery of the Channel in case of war, and he

cautiously strove to lead up both parties to see their advantage in

making a truce if they could not agree upon a peace. It was inevitable

that these endeavours should bring on Wolsey the suspicions of both. The

French guessed something of the secret treaty from the warlike

appearance which England began to assume, and cried out that they were

being deceived. The imperial envoys could not understand how one who had

just signed a treaty with their master, could throw obstacles in their

way and pursue a mediating policy of his own. Really both sides were

only engaged in gaining time, and their attention was more fixed upon

events in the field than on any serious project of agreement.

When in the middle of September the French arms won some successes,

Gattinara showed himself inclined to negotiate for a truce. The

conference, which hitherto had been merely illusory, suddenly became

real, and Wolsey's wisdom in bargaining that England should not declare

war against France till the spring of 1523 became apparent. He could

urge on Gattinara that it would be wise to agree to a truce till that

period was reached; then all would be straightforward. So Wolsey

adjourned the public sittings of the conference, and negotiated

privately with the two parties. The French saw in a year's truce only a

means of allowing the Emperor to prepare for war, and demanded a

substantial truce for ten years. Wolsey used all his skill to bring

about an agreement, and induced Gattinara to accept a truce for eighteen

months, and the French to reduce their demands to four years. But

Charles raised a new difficulty, and claimed that all conquests made in

the war should be given up. The only conquest was Fontarabia, on the

border of Navarre, which was still occupied by the French. Francis not

unnaturally declined to part with it solely to obtain a brief truce, as

Charles had no equivalent to restore. Wolsey used every argument to

induce the Emperor to withdraw his claim; but he was obstinate, and the

conference came to an end. It is true that Wolsey tried to keep up

appearances by concluding a truce for a month, that the Emperor might go

to Spain and consult his subjects about the surrender of Fontarabia.

So Wolsey departed from Calais on 25th November, disappointed and worn

out. As he wrote himself, "I have been so sore tempested in mind by the

untowardness of the chancellors and orators on every side, putting so

many difficulties and obstacles to condescend to any reasonable

conditions of truce and abstinence of war, that night nor day I could

have no quietness nor rest." There is no doubt that Wolsey wrote what he

felt. He had laboured hard for peace, and had failed. If he hoped that

the labours of the conference might still be continued by his diplomacy

in England, that hope was destroyed before he reached London. On 1st

December the imperial troops captured Tournai, which they had been for

some time besieging, and news came from Italy that Milan also had fallen

before the forces of the Emperor and the Pope. Charles had seemed to

Wolsey unreasonable in his obstinacy. He had refused a truce which he

had every motive of prudence for welcoming; and now events proved that

he was justified. Not only had Francis been foiled in his attempts to

embarrass his rival, but success had followed the first steps which

Charles had taken to retaliate. The time for diplomacy was past, and the

quarrel must be decided by the sword.

So Wolsey saw his great designs overthrown. He was a peace minister

because he knew that England had nothing to gain from war. He had

striven to keep the peace of Europe by means of England's mediation, and

his efforts had been so far successful as to give England the first

place in the counsels of Europe. But Wolsey hoped more from diplomacy

than diplomacy could do. Advice and influence can do something to check

the outbreak of war when war is not very seriously designed; but in

proportion as great interests are concerned, attempts at mediation are

useless unless they are backed by force. England was not prepared for

war, and had no troops by whom she could pretend to enforce her

counsels. When the two rival powers began to be in earnest, they

admitted England's mediation only as a means of involving her in their

quarrel. Wolsey was only the first of a long series of English ministers

who have met with the same disappointment from the same reason. England

in Wolsey's days had the same sort of interest in the affairs of the

Continent as she has had ever since. Wolsey first taught her to develop

that interest by pacific counsels, and so long as that has been

possible, England has been powerful. But when a crisis comes England has

ever been slow to recognise its inevitableness; and her habit of hoping

against hope for peace has placed her in an undignified attitude for a

time, has drawn upon her reproaches for duplicity, and has involved her

in war against her will.

This was now the net result of Wolsey's endeavours, a result which he

clearly perceived. His efforts of mediation at Calais had been

entirely his own, and he could confide to no one his regret and his

disappointment. Henry was resolved on war when Wolsey first set forth,

and if Wolsey had succeeded in making a truce, the credit would have

been entirely his own. He allowed Henry to think that the conference at

Calais was merely a pretext to gain time for military preparations; if a

truce had been made he would have put it down to the force of

circumstances; as his efforts for a truce had failed, he could take

credit that he had done all in his power to establish the king's

reputation throughout Christendom, and had fixed the blame on those who

would not follow his advice. It is a mark of Wolsey's conspicuous skill

that he never forgot his actual position, and never was so entirely

absorbed in his own plans as not to leave himself a ready means for

retreat. His schemes had failed; but he could still take credit for

having furthered other ends which were contrary to his own. Henry was

well contented with the results of Wolsey's mission, and showed his

satisfaction in the customary way of increasing Wolsey's revenues at the

expense of the Church. The death was announced of the Abbot of St.

Alban's, and the king, in answer to Wolsey's request, ordered the monks

to take Wolsey for their abbot, saying, "My lord cardinal has sustained

many charges in this his voyage, and hath expended £10,000." So kings

were served, and so they recompensed their servants.

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPERIAL ALLIANCE

1521-1523

The failure of Wolsey's plans was due to the diplomacy of Gattinara and

to the obstinacy of Charles V., who showed at the end of the

negotiations at Calais an unexpected readiness to appreciate his

obligations towards his dominions as a whole, by refusing to abandon

Fontarabia lest thereby he should irritate his Spanish subjects. It was

this capacity for large consideration that gave Charles V. his power in

the future; his motives were hard to discover, but they always rested on

a view of his entire obligations, and were dictated by reasons known

only to himself. Even Wolsey did not understand the Emperor's motives,

which seemed to him entirely foolish. He allowed himself to take up a

haughty position, which deeply offended Charles, who exclaimed angrily,

"This cardinal will do everything his own way, and treats me as though I

were a prisoner." Charles treasured up his resentment, of which Wolsey

was entirely unconscious, and was determined not to allow so masterful a

spirit to become more powerful.

He soon had an opportunity of acting on this determination, as the

unexpected death of Pope Leo X. on 1st December naturally awakened hopes

in Wolsey's breast. It was impossible that the foremost statesman in

Europe should not have had the legitimate aspiration of reaching the

highest office to which he could attain. But though Wolsey was ready

when the opportunity came to press his own claims with vigour, it cannot

be said with fairness that his previous policy had been in any way

directed to that end, or that he had swerved in the least from his own

path to further his chances for the papal office. Indeed he had no

reason for so doing, as Leo was only forty-six years old when he died,

and his death was entirely unforeseen. Moreover, we know that when the

Spanish envoys offered Wolsey the Emperor's help towards the Papacy in

1520, Wolsey refused the offer; since then Charles at Bruges had

repeated the offer without being asked. Now that a vacancy had arisen,

it was natural for Wolsey to attach some weight to this promise, and

Henry expressed himself warmly in favour of Wolsey's election, and urged

his imperial ally to work by all means for that end. He sent to Rome his

favourite secretary Pace to further it by pressing representations to

the cardinals.

It does not seem that Wolsey was very sanguine in his expectations of

being elected. Leo X. had died at a moment of great importance for

Charles V.; in fact his death had been brought about by the imprudence

which he showed in manifesting his delight at the success of the

imperial arms against Milan, and his prospect of the overthrow of

France. It was necessary for Charles that a Pope should be elected who

would hold to Leo's policy, and would continue the alliance with

England. The man who held in his hand the threads of Leo X.'s numerous

intrigues was his cousin, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, and Wolsey

admitted the advantages to be gained by his election. Wolsey at once

declared that he submitted his candidature to the decision of Henry

VIII. and the Emperor; if they thought that he was the best person to

promote their interests he would not shrink from the labour; but he

agreed that if his candidature were not likely to be acceptable to the

cardinals, the two monarchs should unite in favour of Cardinal Medici.

Charles's ambassador wrote him that it would be well to act carefully,

as Wolsey was watching to see how much faith he could put in the

Emperor's protestations of goodwill.

So Charles was prepared, and acted with ambiguous caution. He put off

communicating with Henry as long as he could; he regretted that he was

in the Netherlands instead of Germany, whence he could have made his

influence felt in Rome; he secretly ordered his ambassador in Rome to

press for the election of Cardinal Medici, but gave him no definite

instructions about any one else; finally he wrote a warm letter in

favour of Wolsey, which he either never sent at all, or sent too late to

be of any use, but which served as an enclosure to satisfy Henry VIII.

Wolsey was not deceived by this, and knew how papal elections might be

influenced. He told the Spanish ambassador that, if his master were in

earnest, he should order his troops to advance against Rome, and should

command the cardinals to elect his nominee; he offered to provide

100,000 ducats to cover the expenses of such action. When it came to the

point Wolsey was a very practical politician, and was under no illusions

about the fair pretences of free choice which surrounded a papal

election. He treated it as a matter to be settled by pressure from

outside, according to the will of the strongest. There is something

revoltingly cynical in this proposal. No doubt many men thought like

Wolsey, but no one else would have had the boldness to speak out.

Wolsey's outspokenness was of no avail at the time, but it bore fruits

afterwards. He taught Henry VIII. to conceive the possibility of a short

way of dealing with refractory popes. He confirmed his willing pupil in

the belief that all things may be achieved by the resolute will of one

who rises above prejudice and faces the world as it is. When he fell he

must have recognised that it was himself who trained the arm which smote

him.

In spite of Wolsey's advice Charles did not allow Spanish influence to

be unduly felt in the proceedings of the conclave. Rarely had the

cardinals been more undecided, and when they went into the conclave on

27th December, it was said that every one of them was a candidate for

the Papacy. The first point was to exclude Cardinal Medici, and it could

be plausibly urged that it was dangerous to elect two successive popes

from the same family. Medici's opponents succeeded in making his

election impossible, but could not agree upon a candidate of their own;

while Medici tried to bring about the election of some one who would be

favourable to the Emperor. At last in weariness the cardinals turned

their thoughts to some one who was not present. Wolsey was proposed, and

received seven votes; but Medici was waiting his time, and put forward

Cardinal Adrian of Utrecht, who had been Charles's tutor, and was then

governing Spain in his master's name. Both parties agreed on him,

chiefly because he was personally unknown to any of the cardinals, had

given no offence, was well advanced in years, and was reckoned to be of

a quiet disposition, so that every one had hopes of guiding his

counsels. It was clear that the imperialists were strongest in the

conclave, and of all the imperialist candidates Adrian was the least

offensive to the French. One thing is quite clear, that Charles V. had

not the least intention of helping Wolsey.

Wolsey probably knew this well enough, and was not disappointed. He bore

the Emperor no ill-will for his lukewarmness; indeed he had no ground

for expecting anything else. Wolsey's aim was not the same as that of

Charles, and Charles had had sufficient opportunity to discover the

difference between them. Probably Wolsey saw that the alliance between

England and the Emperor would not be of long duration, as there was no

real identity of interests. Henry VIII. was dazzled for a moment with

the prospect of asserting the English claims on France; he was glad to

find himself at one with his queen, who was overjoyed at the prospect of

a family alliance with her own beloved land of Spain. The English nobles

rejoiced at an opportunity to display their prowess, and hoped in time

of war to recover the influence and position of which they had been

deprived by an upstart priest. The sentiment of hostility to France was

still strong amongst the English people, and the allurements of a

spirited foreign policy were many. But as a matter of fact England was

ill prepared for war; and though the people might throw up their caps at

first, they would not long consent to pay for a war which brought them

no profits. And the profits were not likely to be great, for Charles had

no wish to see England's importance increased. He desired only English

help to achieve his own purposes, and was no more trustworthy as an ally

than had been his grandfather Ferdinand.

However, war had been agreed upon, and all that Wolsey could do was to

try and put off its declaration until he had secured sufficient

assurance that English money was not to be spent to no purpose. Charles

V., who was in sore straits for money, asked for a loan from England, to

which Wolsey answered that England could not declare war till the loan

was repaid. He insisted that no declaration of war should be made till

the Emperor had fulfilled his promise to pay a visit to England, a

promise which Charles's want of money rendered him unable for some time

to keep.

But however much Wolsey might try to put off the declaration of war, it

was inevitable. Francis could not be expected, for all Wolsey's fine

promises, to continue his payments for Tournai to so doubtful an ally as

Henry, nor could he resist from crippling England as far as he could.

The Duke of Albany went back to Scotland; and in the beginning of May

Francis ordered the seizure of goods lying at Bordeaux for shipment to

England. This led to retaliation on the part of England, and war was

declared against France on 28th May 1522.

This coincided with the visit of Charles V. to London, where he was

magnificently entertained for a month, while the treaty of alliance was

being finally brought into shape by Wolsey and Gattinara. Wolsey

contented himself with providing that the alliance did not go further

than had been agreed at Bruges, and that England's interests were

secured by an undertaking from Charles that he would pay the loss which

Henry VIII. sustained by the withdrawal of the French instalments for

Tournai. When the treaty was signed it was Wolsey who, as papal legate,

submitted both princes to ecclesiastical censures in case of a breach of

its provisions. Moreover, Charles granted Wolsey a pension of 9000

crowns in compensation for his loss from Tournai, and renewed his empty

promise of raising him to the Papacy.

It was one thing to declare war and another to carry it on with good

effect. England, in spite of all the delays which Wolsey had contrived

to interpose, was still unprepared. It was late in the autumn before

forces could be put in the field, and the troops of Charles V. were too

few for a joint undertaking of any importance. The allies contented

themselves with invading Picardy, where they committed useless

atrocities, burning houses, devastating the country, and working all the

mischief that they could. They did not advance into the centre of

France, and no army met them in the field; in the middle of October they

retired ingloriously. It is hard to discover the purpose of such an

expedition. The damage done was not enough to weaken France materially,

and such a display of barbarity was ill suited to win the French people

to favour Henry VIII.'s claim to be their rightful lord. If Francis I.

had been unpopular before, he was now raised to the position of a

national leader whose help was necessary for the protection of his

subjects.

The futile result of this expedition caused mutual recriminations

between the new allies. The imperialists complained that the English had

come too late; the English answered that they had not been properly

supported. There were no signs of mutual confidence; and the two

ministers, Wolsey and Gattinara, were avowed enemies, and did not

conceal their hostility. The alliance with the Emperor did not show

signs of prospering from the beginning.

The proceedings of the Earl of Surrey and the direction of the campaign

were not Wolsey's concern. He was employed nearer home, in keeping a

watchful eye on Scotland, which threatened to be a hindrance to Henry

VIII.'s great undertakings abroad. The return of the Duke of Albany in

December 1521 was a direct threat of war. Albany was nominally regent,

but had found his office troublesome, and had preferred to spend the

last five years in the gaieties of the French Court rather than among

the rugged nobles of Scotland. They were years when France was at peace

with England and had little interest in Scottish affairs; so Queen

Margaret might quarrel with her husband at leisure, while the Scottish

lords distributed themselves between the two parties as suited them

best. But when war between France and England was approaching, the Duke

of Albany was sent back by Francis I. to his post as agent for France in

Scottish affairs. Queen Margaret welcomed him with joy, hoping that he

would further her plan of gaining a divorce from the Earl of Angus.

Before this union of forces the English party in Scotland was powerless.

It was in vain that Henry VIII. tried by menaces to influence either his

sister or the Scottish lords. As soon as the English forces sailed for

France Albany prepared to invade England.

It was lucky for Henry VIII. that he was well served on the Borders by

Lord Dacre of Naworth, who managed to show the Scots the measure of

Albany's incapacity. Dacre began negotiations with Albany, to save time;

and when, in September, the Scottish forces passed the Border, Albany

was willing to make a truce. As a matter of fact, England was totally

unprepared to repel an invasion, and Albany might have dictated his own

terms. But Dacre, in Carlisle, which he could not defend, maintained his

courage, and showed no signs of fear. He managed to blind Albany to the

real state of affairs, and kept him from approaching to the crumbling

walls of Carlisle. He advanced to the Debatable Land to meet him, and

"with a high voice" demanded the reason of his coming; and the parley

thus begun ended in the conclusion of a month's truce. Wolsey was

overjoyed at this result, but yet found it necessary to intercede with

the king for Dacre's pardon, as he had no authority to make terms with

the enemy; and Dacre was not only forgiven, but thanked. This futile end

to an expedition for which 80,000 soldiers had been raised ruined

Albany's influence, and he again retired to France at the end of October.

Wolsey at once saw the risk which England had run. A successful invasion

on the part of the Scots would have been a severe blow to England's

military reputation; and Wolsey determined to be secure on the Scottish

side for the future. The Earl of Surrey, on his return from his

expedition in France, was put in charge of the defences of the Border,

and everything was done to humour Queen Margaret, and convince her that

she had more to gain from the favour of her brother than from the help

of the Duke of Albany. Moreover, Wolsey, already convinced of the

uselessness of the war against France, was still ready to gain from it

all that he could, and strove to use the threat of danger from Scotland

as a means of withdrawing from war and gaining a signal triumph. Francis

I., unable to defend himself, tried to separate his enemies, and turned

to Charles V. with offers of a truce. When this was refused, he repeated

his proposals to England, and Wolsey saw his opportunity. He represented

to Charles that so long as England was menaced by Scotland she could

send little effective help abroad; if Scotland were crushed she would be

free again. He suggested that the Emperor had little to win by military

enterprises undertaken with such slight preparation as the last

campaign; would he not make truce for a year, not comprehending the

realm of Scotland?

The suggestion was almost too palpable. Gattinara answered that Henry

wished to use his forces for his private advantage, and neglected the

common interest of the alliance. Again bitter complaints were made of

Wolsey's lukewarmness. Again the two allies jealously watched each other

lest either should gain an advantage by making a separate alliance with

France. And while they were thus engaged the common enemy of Christendom

was advancing, and Rhodes fell before the Turkish arms. It was in vain

that Adrian VI. lamented and wept; in vain he implored for succours.

Fair promises alone were given him. Europe was too much intent on the

duel between Francis and Charles to think seriously of anything else.

The entreaties of the Pope were only regarded by all parties as a good

means of enabling them to throw a decent veil over any measure which

their own interests might prompt. They might declare that it was taken

for the sake of the holy war; they might claim that they had acted from

a desire to fulfil the Pope's behest.

So things stood in the beginning of 1523, when an unexpected event

revived the military spirit of Henry VIII., and brought the two

half-hearted allies once more closely together, by the prospect which it

afforded of striking a deadly blow at France. The chief of the nobles of

France, the sole survivor of the great feudatories, the Constable of

Bourbon, was most unwisely affronted by Francis I., at a time when he

needed to rally all his subjects round him. Not only was Bourbon

affronted, but also a lawsuit was instituted against him, which

threatened to deprive him of the greater part of his possessions.

Bourbon, who could bring into the field 6000 men, did not find his

patriotism strong enough to endure this wrong. He opened up secret

negotiations with Charles, who disclosed the matter to Henry. Henry's

ambition was at once fired. He saw Francis I., hopelessly weakened by a

defection of the chief nobles, incapable of withstanding an attack upon

the interior of his land, so that the English troops might conquer the

old provinces which England still claimed, and victory might place upon

his head the crown of France.

Wolsey was not misled by this fantastic prospect, but as a campaign was

imminent, took all the precautions he could that it should be as little

costly as possible to England, and that Charles should bear his full

share of the expense. He demanded, moreover, that Bourbon should

acknowledge Henry VIII. as the rightful King of France--a demand which

was by no means acceptable to Charles. He sent an envoy of his own to

confer with Bourbon, but his envoy was delayed on the way, so that the

agreement was framed in the imperial interests alone, and the demands of

Henry were little heeded. The agreement was that Bourbon should receive

the hand of one of the Emperor's sisters, and should receive a subsidy

of 200,000 crowns to be paid equally by Henry and Charles; the question

of the recognition of Henry as rightful King of France was to be left to

the decision of the Emperor.

The plan of the campaign was quickly settled. Charles, with 20,000 men,

was to advance into Guienne; Henry, with 15,000 English, supported by

6000 Netherlanders, was to advance through Picardy; 10,000 Germans were

to advance through Burgundy; and Bourbon was to head a body of

dissatisfied nobles of France. It was an excellent plan on paper; and,

indeed, the position of France seemed hopeless enough. Francis I. had

squandered his people's money, and was exceedingly unpopular; Wolsey's

diplomacy had helped to win over the Swiss to the imperial alliance; and

the indefatigable secretary Pace had been sent to Venice to detach the

republic from its connexion with France. It was believed that Wolsey was

jealous of Pace's influence with Henry VIII., and contrived to keep him

employed on embassies which removed him from the Court. At all events,

he certainly kept him busily employed till his health gave way under the

excessive pressure. To lend greater weight to Pace's arguments, Wolsey

descended to an act of overbearing insolence. Some Venetian galleys

trading with Flanders put in at Plymouth during a storm; they were laid

under an embargo, and were detained on many flimsy pretexts. It was in

vain that the Venetian ambassador remonstrated; Wolsey always had a

plausible answer. Probably he wished to show Venice that its trading

interests required the friendship of England. At all events the galleys

were not released till Venice was on the point of joining the imperial

alliance. Even then Wolsey had the meanness to carry off a couple of

guns from each vessel, and Venice had to make a present of them to the

English king with as much grace as the circumstances allowed. This

little incident certainly shows Wolsey's conduct at its worst, and

confirms the impression of contemporaries, that he had to some degree

the insolence of an upstart, and sometimes overrode the weak in a way to

leave behind a bitter feeling of resentment.

However, Venice joined the Emperor, and Pope Adrian VI., who had pursued

hitherto a policy of pacification, was at last overborne by the pressure

of England and the Emperor, so that he entered into a defensive league

against France. Thus France was entirely isolated. Distrusted at home

and unbefriended abroad, she seemed to be a prey to her enemies; and

Henry's hopes rose so high that he gleefully looked forward to being

recognised as "governor of France," and that "they should by this means

make a way for him as King Richard did for his father." Wiser men shook

their heads at the king's infatuation. "I pray God," wrote More to

Wolsey, "if it be good for his Grace and for this realm that then it may

prove so; and else in the stead thereof I pray God send his grace an

honourable and profitable peace."

The spirit that breathes through this prayer is not a martial spirit,

and no doubt More's feelings represented those of Wolsey, who, though

carried away by the king's military zeal, had little hopes of any great

success, and such hopes as he had were rapidly destroyed. The campaign

did not begin till the end of September; the contingent from the

Netherlands was late in appearing and was ill supplied with food. Till

the last moment Wolsey urged, as the first object of the campaign, the

siege of Boulogne, which, if successful, would have given England a

second stronghold on the French coast; but Wolsey was overruled, and an

expedition into the interior of France was preferred. It was a

repetition of the raid made in the last year, and was equally futile.

The army advanced to Montdidier, and expected tidings of its

confederate; but nothing was to be heard of Bourbon; his lanzknechts

began to devastate France and then disbanded. The army of Charles V.

contented itself with taking Fontarabia, and did not co-operate with the

English forces. After the capture of Montdidier the troops, who were

attacked by sickness, and had difficulty in finding provisions, withdrew

to the coast; and the Duke of Suffolk brought back his costly army

without having obtained anything of service to England. This expedition,

which was to do so much, was a total failure--there was positively

nothing to be shown in return for all the money spent.

Again the wisdom of Wolsey's policy was fully justified. He was right in

thinking that England had neither troops nor generals who were

sufficient for an expedition on the Continent, where there was nothing

tangible to be gained. So long as England was a neutral and mediating

power she could pursue her own interests; but her threats were more

efficacious than her performances. She could not conquer unaided, and

her allies had no intention of allowing her to win more than empty

glory. Even this had been denied in the last campaigns. England had

incurred debts which her people could ill afford to pay, and had only

lowered her reputation by a display of military incompetence. Moreover,

her expedition against France involved her in the usual difficulties on

the side of Scotland. Again there was a devastating war along the

Border; again the Duke of Albany was sent from France and raised an army

for the invasion of England. But this time Wolsey had taken his

precautions, and the Earl of Surrey was ready to march against him. When

in November Albany crossed the Tweed and besieged the Castle of Wark,

Surrey took the field, and again Albany showed his incapacity as a

leader. He retired before Surrey's advance, and wished to retire to

France, but was prevented by the Scottish lords. Again the Border raids

went on with their merciless slaughter and plunder, amidst which was

developed the sternness and severity which still mark the character of

the northern folk.

Still, though the Scots might be defeated in the field, their defeat and

suffering only served to strengthen the spirit of national independence.

The subjugation of Scotland to England was hindered, not helped, by the

alliance with the Emperor, which only drew Scotland nearer to France,

and kept alive the old feeling of hostility. It was hard to see what

England had to gain from the imperial alliance, and events soon proved

that Charles V. pursued his own interests without much thought of the

wishes of Henry VIII.

On 14th September died Pope Adrian VI., a weary and disappointed man.

Again there was a prospect of Wolsey's election to the papacy; again it

might be seen how much Charles V. would do for his English ally. Wolsey

had little hope of his good offices, and was his own negotiator in the

matter. He was not sanguine about his prospects of success, as he knew

that Cardinal Medici was powerful in Rome; and the disasters of the

pontificate of Adrian VI. led the cardinals to wish for a return to the

old policy of Leo X., of which Medici held the threads. So two letters

were sent to the English representatives in Rome, one in behalf of

Wolsey, the other in behalf of Medici. If things were going for Medici,

Wolsey was not to be pressed; only in case of a disagreement was Wolsey

to be put forward, and then no effort was to be spared; money was to be

of no object, as Henry would make good any promises made on his behalf

to secure Wolsey's election.

The conclave was protracted; it sat from 1st October to 17th November,

and there was ample opportunity for Charles to have made his influence

felt in Wolsey's behalf. He professed to Henry that he was doing so. He

wrote a letter recommending Wolsey to his envoy in Rome, and then gave

orders that the courier who carried the letter should be detained on the

way. Really his influence was being used for Medici, and though a strong

party in the conclave opposed Medici's election, it does not appear that

Wolsey was ever put forward as a competitor. The cardinals would hear

nothing of a foreigner, and the stubbornness of Medici's party was at

length rewarded by his election. There is no trace that Wolsey was

keenly disappointed at this result. In announcing it to Henry VIII., he

wrote, "For my part, as I take God to record, I am more joyous thereof

than if it had fortuned upon my person, knowing his excellent qualities

most meet for the same, and how great and sure a friend your Grace and

the Emperor be like to have of him, and I so good a father."

Few popes came to their office amid greater expectations, and few more

entirely disappointed them than did Guilio de' Medici. Clement VII.,

whose election Charles, Henry, and Wolsey united in greeting with joy,

suffered in a brief space entire humiliation at the hands of Charles,

caused the downfall of Wolsey, and drove Henry to sever the bond between

the English Church and the Holy See. It is impossible not to think how

different would have been the course of events if Wolsey had presided

over the destinies of the Church.

CHAPTER VII

RENEWAL OF PEACE

1523-1527

The events of the year 1523 had practically made an end of the imperial

alliance. Henry VIII. was not in a position to go to war again, and his

confidence in Charles V.'s good intentions towards him was dispelled.

Charles and Francis had had enough of war, and both of them secretly

desired peace, but neither would make the first move towards it. Wolsey

watched their movements keenly, and strove that English interests should

not be entirely sacrificed in the pacification which seemed imminent. He

strove to induce Charles to allow proposals of peace to proceed from

England, which should arbitrate on the differences between him and

Francis. He urged that in any negotiations which Charles himself

undertook he was bound to consider how Henry could be recompensed for

his losses. Moreover, he secretly opened up negotiations of his own with

the French Court, and used the imperial alliance as a means to heighten

England's value to France.

The more Wolsey watched events the more he became convinced that the

best thing was to make a separate peace with France, yet in such a way

as to avoid an open breach with the Emperor. There were other reasons

besides the failure of military expeditions, and the distrust in any

good result from their continuance, which impelled Wolsey to a pacific

policy. He knew only too well that war was impossible, and that the

country could not bear the continued drain on its resources. If Henry

VII. had developed the royal power by a parsimony which enabled him to

be free from parliamentary control, Henry VIII. had dazzled his people

by the splendour of royalty, and had displayed his magnificence to such

an extent that Englishmen were beginning to doubt if they could afford

much longer to be so important, or rather if England's importance in

Continental affairs were worth all the money that it cost. Of late years

the weight of taxation had become oppressive, and the expenses of the

last campaign were difficult to meet.

There was no difference between the national revenue and the royal

revenue in Wolsey's days. The king took all the money he could get, and

spent it as he thought good; if he went to war he expected his people to

pay for it. In an ordinary way the king was well provided for by his

feudal dues and the proceeds of customs, tonnage and poundage, and the

tax on wool, wool-fells, and leather. When extraordinary expenses were

incurred Parliament was summoned, and granted taxes to the king. Their

vote was reckoned on an old assessment of tenths and fifteenths of the

value of chattels possessed by the baronage and the commons; and when

Parliament made this grant the clergy in their convocation granted a

tenth of clerical incomes. The value of a tenth and fifteenth was

£30,000; of a clerical tenth £10,000; so that the usual grant in case of

an emergency amounted to £40,000 from the whole realm. For his

expedition of 1513 Henry obtained a vote of two tenths and fifteenths,

besides a subsidy of a graduated income and property tax which was

estimated to produce £160,000, and this had to be supplemented by a

further grant of tenths and fifteenths in 1515.

It was in 1515 that Wolsey became Chancellor, and with that office

assumed the entire responsibility for all affairs of state. He managed

to introduce some order into the finances, and during the years of

pacific diplomacy things went tolerably well. But the French expeditions

were costly, and in April 1523 Parliament had to be summoned to pay the

king's debts. The war against France was popular, and men were willing

to contribute.

So on 15th April Henry VIII. opened Parliament, and Tunstal, Bishop of

London, delivered the usual oration in praise of the king and grief over

the evils of the time. The Commons departed, and elected as their

Speaker Sir Thomas More, who had already abandoned the quiet paths of

literature for the stormy sea of politics. The king's assent was given

in the usual manner to his appointment, and the session was adjourned.

The Commons doubtless began to take financial matters under their

consideration, but it was thought desirable that they should have a

definite statement of the national needs. On 29th April Wolsey went to

the House, and after urging the importance of the interests at stake in

the war, proposed a subsidy of £800,000, to be raised according to an

old method, by a tax of four shillings in the pound on all goods and

lands. Next day there was much debate on this proposal; it was urged

that the sudden withdrawal of so large an amount of ready money would

seriously affect the currency, and was indeed almost impossible. A

committee was appointed to represent to Wolsey that this was the sense

of the House, and beg him to induce the king to moderate his demands.

Wolsey answered that he would rather have his tongue pulled out with

red-hot pincers than carry such a message to the king.

The Commons in a melancholy mood renewed their debate till Wolsey

entered the House and desired to reason with those who opposed his

demands. On this Sir Thomas More, as Speaker, defended the privilege of

the House by saying, "That it was the order of that House to hear and

not to reason save among themselves." Whereupon Wolsey was obliged to

content himself with answering such objections as had come to his ear.

He argued, it would seem with vigour, that the country was much richer

than they thought, and he told them some unpleasant truths, which came

with ill grace from himself, about the prevalence of luxury. After his

departure the debate continued till the House agreed to grant two

shillings in the pound on all incomes of £20 a year and upwards; one

shilling on all between £20 and £2; and fourpence on all incomes under

£2; this payment to be extended over two years. This was increased by a

county member, who said, "Let us gentlemen of £50 a year and upwards

give the king of our lands a shilling in the pound, to be paid in two

years." The borough members stood aloof, and allowed the landholders to

tax themselves an extra shilling in the pound if they chose to do so.

This was voted on 21st May, and Parliament was prorogued till 10th June.

Meanwhile popular feeling was greatly moved by rumours of an

unprecedented tax, and what was really done was grossly exaggerated on

all sides. As the members left the House an angry crowd greeted them

with jeers. "We hear say that you will grant four shillings in the

pound. Do so, and go home, we advise you." Really the members had done

the best they could, and worse things were in store for them. For when

the session was resumed the knights of the shire showed some resentment

that they had been allowed to outdo the burgesses in liberality. They

proposed that as they had agreed to pay a shilling in the pound on land

assessed over £50 in the third year, so a like payment should be made in

the fourth year on all goods over the value of £50. There was a stormy

debate on this motion; but Sir Thomas More at length made peace, and it

was passed. Thus Wolsey, on the whole, had contrived to obtain something

resembling his original proposal, but the payments were spread over a

period of four years. After this Wolsey, at the prorogation of

Parliament, could afford to thank the Commons on the king's behalf, and

assure them that "his Grace would in such wise employ their loving

contribution as should be for the defence of his realm and of his

subjects, and the persecution and pressing of his enemy."

Yet, however Wolsey might rejoice in his success, he knew that he had

received a serious warning, which he was bound to lay to heart. He had

been faithful to the king, and had done his best to carry out his views.

The war with France was none of his advising, and he had no hopes of any

advantage from it; yet he was willing to take all the blame of measures

which inwardly he disapproved. He stood forward and assumed the

unpopularity of taxation, whose necessity he deplored. Henry spent the

nation's money at his pleasure, and Wolsey undertook the ungrateful task

of squeezing supplies from a reluctant Parliament, while the king sat a

benevolent spectator in the background. Henry took all the glory, and

left Wolsey to do all the unpleasant work. Wolsey stood between the

national temper and the king; he felt that he could not stand under the

odium of accomplishing many more such reconciliations. England had

reached the limit of its aspirations after national glory. For the

future Wolsey must maintain the king's honour without appealing to the

national pocket.

There was no prospect of obtaining further supplies from Parliament, and

the best way to pay the expenses of a futile war was by making a

lucrative peace. Wolsey tried to induce Francis I. to renew his

financial agreement with Henry VIII. which the war had broken off; and

to bring pressure to bear upon him for this purpose, was willing to

continue with Charles V. negotiations for a fresh undertaking.

So in June the unwearied Pace was sent to Bourbon's camp to promise

England's help on terms which Wolsey knew were sure to be refused.

England would again join in a campaign against France in the north,

provided Bourbon, by an invasion of Provence, succeeded in raising a

rebellion against Francis I., and would take an oath of allegiance to

the English king as lord of France. Bourbon sorely needed money, and did

all he could to win over Pace. He secretly took an oath of fidelity, not

of allegiance; and Pace was impressed with admiration of his genius and

believed in his chances of success. Wolsey was coldly cautious towards

Pace's enthusiasm, and the result was a breach between them. Pace openly

blamed Wolsey, as Wingfield had done before, and pressed for money and

an armed demonstration. Wolsey soberly rebuked his lack of judgment by

setting before him a well-considered survey of the political chances.

His caution proved to be justified, as Bourbon's invasion of Provence

was a failure. Wolsey gained all that he needed by his pretence of

helping Bourbon; he induced the French Court to undertake negotiations

seriously by means of secret envoys who were sent to London.

Still Wolsey did not hide from himself the difficulties in the way of an

alliance with France which would satisfy Henry VIII. or bring

substantial advantage to the country. However, on one point he managed

to obtain an immediate advantage. He always kept his eye on Scotland,

and now used the first signs of returning friendliness on the part of

France to further his scheme of restoring English influence in that

country. In June the Duke of Albany was recalled to France, and Wolsey

set to work to win back Queen Margaret to her brother's cause. He seems

to have despaired of blandishments, and contrived a way to have a more

powerful weapon. Margaret's husband, the Earl of Angus, had been sent by

Albany to France, where he was carefully guarded. On the first signs of

renewed friendliness between England and France a hint from Wolsey

procured him an opportunity of escaping to England. With Angus at his

disposal Wolsey urged Margaret to be reconciled to her husband, and

terrified her by the prospect of alternately restoring him to Scotland.

By playing cleverly on her personal feelings, Wolsey led her by degrees

to accept his own plan for freeing Scotland from Albany and French

interference. He urged that the young king was now old enough to rule

for himself, and promised Margaret help to secure her supremacy in his

council. At the same time he won over the Scottish lords by the prospect

of a marriage between James and Mary of England, who was still Henry

VIII.'s heir. In August James V. was set up as king, and the Scottish

Parliament approved of the English marriage. Again Wolsey won a signal

triumph, and accomplished by diplomacy what the sword had been unable to

achieve.

We need not follow the complicated diplomacy of the year 1524, which was

transferred to Italy, whither Francis I. had pursued Bourbon and was

engaged in the siege of Pavia. It is enough to say that Wolsey pursued a

cautious course: if Francis won the day in Italy he was ready to treat

with him liberally: if the imperial arms prevailed, then he could sell

England's alliance more dearly. But this cautious attitude was

displeasing to Charles, whose ambassador in London, De Praet, complained

without ceasing of the growing coldness of Henry and Wolsey. Wolsey kept

a sharp watch on De Praet, and resented his keen-sightedness; finally,

in February 1525, De Praet's despatches were intercepted, and he was

called before the Council, when Wolsey charged him with untruth. De

Praet answered by complaining that his privileges as an ambassador had

been violated. He was ordered to confine himself to his own house till

the king had written to the Emperor about his conduct.

This was indeed an unheard-of treatment for the ambassador of an ally,

and we can scarcely attribute it merely to personal spite on the part of

so skilled a statesman as Wolsey. Perhaps it was a deliberate plan to

cause a personal breach between Henry and the Emperor. No doubt Henry's

own feelings were towards Charles rather than Francis, and it seems

probable that Wolsey wished to show his master that Charles was only

trying to make use of his friendship for his own purposes. The

despatches of Charles's envoy were opened and their contents made known

to Henry for some time before Wolsey took any open action. He acted when

he saw his master sufficiently irritated, and he probably suggested that

the best way to give Charles a lesson was by an attack upon his

ambassador. This proposal agreed with the high-handed manner of action

which Henry loved to adopt. It gave him a chance of asserting his own

conception of his dignity, and he challenged Charles to say if he

identified himself with his ambassador's sentiments.

Under any circumstances it was an audacious step, and as things turned

out it was an unfortunate one. Within a few days the news reached

England that Francis had been attacked at Pavia by the imperial forces,

had been entirely routed, and was a prisoner in the hands of Charles.

Though Wolsey was prepared for some success of the imperial arms, he was

taken aback at the decisiveness of the stroke. His time for widening the

breach between Charles and Henry had not been well chosen.

However, Charles saw that he could not pursue his victory without money,

and to obtain money he must adopt an appearance of moderation. So he

professed in Italy willingness to forget the past, and he avoided a

quarrel with England. He treated the insult to his ambassador as the

result of a personal misunderstanding. Henry complained of De Praet's

unfriendly bearing; Charles assured him that no offence was intended.

Both parties saved their dignity; De Praet was recalled, and another

ambassador was sent in his stead. Wolsey saw that he had been

precipitate, and hastened to withdraw his false step; Henry lent him his

countenance, but can scarcely have relished doing so. Wolsey knew that

his difficulties were increased. The victory of Charles again drew Henry

to his side and revived his projects of conquest at the expense of

France, now left helpless by its king's captivity. As the defection of

Bourbon had formerly awakened Henry's hopes, so now did the captivity of

Francis. Again Wolsey's pacific plans were shattered; again he was

driven to undertake the preparations for a war of which his judgment

disapproved.

Indeed Wolsey knew that war was absolutely impossible for want of money;

but it was useless to say so to the king. He was bound to try and raise

supplies by some means or other, and his experience of the last

Parliament had shown him that there was no more to be obtained from that

source. In his extremity Wolsey undertook the responsibility of reviving

a feudal obligation which had long been forgotten. He announced that the

king purposed to pass the sea in person, and demanded that the goodwill

of his subjects should provide for his proper equipment. But the

goodwill of the people was not allowed the privilege of spontaneous

generosity. Commissioners were appointed in every shire to assess men's

property, and require a sixth part of it for the king's needs. Wolsey

himself addressed the citizens of London. When they gave a feeble assent

to his request for advice, "whether they thought it convenient that the

king should pass the sea with an army or not," he proceeded, "Then he

must go like a prince, which cannot be without your aid." He unfolded

his proposals for a grant of 3s. 4d. in the pound on £50 and upwards,

2s. 8d. on £20 and upwards, and 1s. in the pound on £1 and upwards. Some

one pleaded that the times were bad. "Sirs," said Wolsey, "speak not to

break what is concluded, for some shall not pay even a tenth; and it

were better that a few should suffer indigence than the king at this

time should lack. Beware, therefore, and resist not, nor ruffle not in

this case; otherwise it may fortune to cost some their heads." This was

indeed a high-handed way of dealing with a public meeting, which was

only summoned to hear the full measure of the coming calamity. We cannot

wonder that "all people cursed the cardinal and his adherents as

subverters of the laws and liberty of England." Nor was Wolsey ignorant

of the unpopularity which he incurred; but there was no escape possible.

He rested only on the king's favour, and he knew that the king's

personal affection for him had grown colder. He was no longer the king's

friend and tutor, inspiring him with his own lofty ideas and slowly

revealing his far-reaching schemes. Late years had seen Wolsey immersed

in the business of the State, while the king pursued his own pleasures,

surrounded by companions who did their utmost to undermine Wolsey's

influence. They advocated war, while he longed for peace; they

encouraged the royal extravagance, while he worked for economy; they

favoured the imperial alliance and humoured Henry's dreams of the

conquest of France, while Wolsey saw that England's strength lay in a

powerful neutrality. The king's plans had deviated from the lines which

Wolsey had designed, and the king's arbitrary temper had grown more

impatient of restraint. Wolsey had imperceptibly slipped from the

position of a friend to that of a servant, and he was dimly conscious

that his continuance in the royal service depended on his continued

usefulness. Whatever the king required he was bound to provide.

So Wolsey strained every nerve to fill the royal coffers by the device

of an "Amicable Loan," which raised a storm of popular indignation. Men

said with truth that they had not yet paid the subsidy voted by

Parliament, and already they were exposed to a new exaction. Coin had

never been plentiful in England, and at that time it was exceptionally

scarce. The commissioners in the different shires all reported the

exceeding difficulty which they met with in the discharge of their

unpleasant duty. It soon became clear to Wolsey that his demand had

overshot the limits of prudence, and that money could not be raised on

the basis of the parliamentary assessment without the risk of a

rebellion. Accordingly Wolsey withdrew from his original proposal. He

sent for the mayor and corporation of London and told them, in the

fictitious language in which constitutional procedure is always veiled,

"I kneeled down to his Grace, showing him both your good minds towards

him and also the charge you continually sustain, the which, at my desire

and petition, was content to call in and abrogate the same commission."

The attempt to raise money on the basis of each man's ratable value was

abandoned, and the more usual method of a benevolence was substituted in

its stead.

This, however, was not much more acceptable. Again Wolsey summoned the

mayor and corporation; but they had now grown bolder, and pleaded that

benevolences had been abolished by the statute of Richard III. Wolsey

angrily answered that Richard was a usurper and a murderer of his

nephews; how could his acts be good? "An it please your Grace," was the

answer, "although he did evil, yet in his time were many good acts made

not by him only, but by the consent of the body of the whole realm,

which is Parliament." There was nothing more to be said, and Wolsey had

to content himself with leaving every man to contribute privily what he

would. It did not seem that this spontaneous liberality went far to

replenish the royal exchequer.

What happened in London was repeated in different forms in various parts

of England. In Norwich there was a tumult, which it needed the presence

of the Duke of Norfolk to appease. He asked the confused assembly who

was their captain, and bade that he should speak. Then out spake one

John Greene, a man of fifty years. "My lord, since you ask who is our

captain, forsooth, his name is Poverty; for he and his cousin Necessity

have brought us to this doing. For all these persons and many more live

not of ourselves, but we live by the substantial occupiers of this

country; and yet they give us so little wages for our workmanship that

scarcely we be able to live; and thus in penury we pass the time, we,

our wives and children: and if they, by whom we live, be brought in that

case that they of their little cannot help us to earn our living, then

must we perish and die miserably. I speak this, my lord: the clothmakers

have put away all their people, and a far greater number, from work. The

husbandmen have put away their servants and given up household; they say

the king asketh so much that they be not able to do as they have done

before this time, and then of necessity must we die wretchedly."

John Greene's speech expressed only too truly the condition of affairs

in a period of social change. The old nobility had declined, and the old

form of life founded on feudalism was slowly passing away. Trade was

becoming more important than agriculture; the growth of wool was more

profitable than the growth of corn. It is true that England as a whole

was growing richer, and that the standard of comfort was rising; but

there was a great displacement of labour, and consequent discontent. The

towns had thriven at the expense of the country; and in late years the

war with France had hindered trade with the Netherlands. The custom

duties had diminished, the drain of bullion for war expenses had

crippled English commerce. There had been a succession of bad seasons,

and every one had begun to diminish his establishment and look more

carefully after his expenditure.

All this was well known to the Duke of Norfolk, and was laid before the

king. The commissions were recalled, pardons were granted to the

rioters, and the loan was allowed to drop. But Wolsey had to bear all

the odium of the unsuccessful attempt, while the king gained all the

popularity of abandoning it. Yet Henry VIII. resented the failure, and

was angry with Wolsey for exposing him to a rebuff. In spite of his

efforts Wolsey was ceasing to be so useful as he had been before, and

Henry began to criticise his minister. Brave and resolute as Wolsey was,

his labours and disappointments began to tell upon him. Since the

failure of the Conference of Calais he had been working not at the

development of a policy which he approved, but at the uncongenial task

of diminishing the dangers of a policy which he disapproved. The effects

of this constant anxiety told upon his health and spirits, and still

more upon his temper. He might be as able and as firm as ever, but he no

longer had the same confidence in himself.

It was perhaps this feeling which led Wolsey to show the king the

extremity of his desire to serve him by undertaking the desperate

endeavour to wring more money from an exhausted people. Wolsey had done

his utmost to satisfy the king; he had accepted without a murmur the

burden of popular hatred which the attempt was sure to bring. There is a

pathos in his words, reported by an unfriendly hand, addressed to the

council: "Because every man layeth the burden from him, I am content to

take it on me, and to endure the fume and noise of the people, for my

goodwill towards the king, and comfort of you, my lords and other the

king's councillors; but the eternal God knoweth all." Nor was it enough

that he submitted to the storm; he wished to give the king a further

proof of his devotion. Though others might withhold their substance, yet

he would not. He offered the king his house at Hampton Court, which he

had built as his favourite retreat, and had adorned to suit his taste.

It was indeed a royal gift, and Henry had no scruple in accepting it.

But the offer seems to show an uneasy desire to draw closer a bond which

had been gradually loosened, and renew an intimacy which was perceptibly

diminishing.

However, in one way Wolsey had a right to feel satisfaction even in his

ill-success. If money was not to be had, war was impossible, and Wolsey

might now pursue his own policy and work for peace. He had to face the

actual facts that England was allied to Charles, who had won a signal

victory over Francis, and had in his hands a mighty hostage in the

person of the King of France. His first object was to discover Charles

V.'s intentions, and prevent him from using his advantage solely for his

own profit. Bishop Tunstal and Sir Richard Wingfield were sent to

Charles with orders to put on a bold face, and find whether Charles

thought of dethroning Francis or releasing him for a ransom. In the

first case, they were to offer military aid from England; in the second,

they were to claim for England a large share in the concessions to be

wrung out of Francis. The English demands were so exorbitant that though

they may have satisfied the fantastic aspirations of Henry, Wolsey must

have known them to be impossible. Under cover of a friendly proposal to

Charles he was really preparing the way for a breach.

Charles on his side was engaged in playing a similar game. In spite of

his success at Pavia he was really helpless. He had no money, and the

captivity of the French king awakened so much alarm in Europe that he

felt compelled to use his advantage moderately. As a first measure he

needed money, and saw no chance of obtaining it save by marrying

Isabella of Portugal, who would bring him a dowry of 1,000,000 golden

crowns. For this purpose he must free himself from the engagement of the

treaty of Windsor, by which he was betrothed to Mary of England. So he

acted as Wolsey was acting. He professed a great desire to carry out his

engagement as a means of getting rid of it, and sent ambassadors to ask

that Mary and her dowry should be given up to him, with a further loan

of 200,000 ducats.

The two embassies had crossed on the way, and Henry received Charles's

communication as an answer to his demands. In this way it served

Wolsey's purpose admirably, for it showed clearly enough that the

interests of Henry and Charles were not the same. Charles was bent upon

pursuing his own advantage, and was still willing to use Henry as a

useful ally; but Henry saw nothing to be gained from the alliance, and

the time had come when some tangible gain was to be secured from all his

expenditure. Hitherto he had been personally on Charles's side, but in

his conferences with the imperial envoys in the month of June he made it

clear that his patience was exhausted. Henceforth he accepted Wolsey's

views of peace with France. If Charles was striving to make what he

could out of the captivity of the French king, then England might as

well join in the scramble. The misfortune of France was England's

opportunity. If Charles was not willing to share his gains with Henry,

then Henry must pick up what he could for himself. It was an unwelcome

conclusion for Charles, who hoped to bring the pressure of irresistible

necessity to bear on his captive. If England also joined in the bidding

its competition would run down his price.

Moreover, this resolution of Henry made a great change in his domestic

relations. Queen Katharine was devoted to her nephew's interests, and

had exercised considerable influence over her husband. They talked

together about politics, and Henry liked to move amidst acquiescent

admiration. All that was now at an end, as Katharine could not change

her sympathies, and had not the tact to disguise her disapprobation.

From this time forward Henry did not treat her with the affection and

familiarity which had been his wont, and when he made up his mind he did

not scruple to emphasise his decision by his acts. He had not been a

faithful husband, but hitherto his infidelity had not been a cause of

domestic discord. He had an illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, by

Elizabeth Blunt, one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting; and on 15th June

he created this boy of six years old Duke of Richmond. This he did with

a display of pomp and ceremony which must have been very offensive to

the Queen; nor was the offence diminished when, a month afterwards, the

boy was created Lord High Admiral of England. Such an act was, to say

the least, a taunt to Katharine that she had borne no son; it was a

public proclamation of the king's disappointment and discontent with his

matrimonial lot. The luckless Katharine could make no complaint, and was

forced to submit to the king's will; but we cannot doubt that she put

down to Wolsey what was not his due, and that Wolsey had to bear the

hatred of her friends for the king's change of policy, and all that

flowed from it.

However, Wolsey's course was now clearly to dissolve the imperial

alliance without causing a breach. For this purpose he used Charles's

desire for his Portuguese marriage. He offered to release Charles from

his engagement to Mary on condition that the treaty was annulled, that

he paid his debts to Henry, and concluded a peace with France to

England's satisfaction. Charles refused to take any step so decided, and

the negotiations proceeded. But Wolsey's attention was not so much

directed to Charles as to France, where Louise, the king's mother, was

desperately striving to procure her son's release. In their dealings

with France there was a keen rivalry between England and the Emperor,

which should succeed in making terms soonest. In this competition Wolsey

had one advantage; he had already learned the stubbornness of the

national spirit of France, and its willingness to submit to anything

rather than territorial loss. So, while Charles haggled for provinces,

Wolsey demanded money. He told the French envoys that in order to make

peace, without having won laurels to justify it, Henry could not take

less than 2,000,000 crowns, and he would hear of no abatement. There was

much discussion of all the old claims of England for compensation from

France, but Wolsey knew the necessity of the moment, and carried all his

points.

When the terms were agreed upon there was another discussion about the

security to be given. Francis was a prisoner in Spain, and though his

mother was regent, a doubt might be thrown upon her capacity to ratify

such an important treaty. Wolsey would admit no doubts in the matter. He

knew that peace with France would not be popular, but he was determined

that his master should see its advantage in the substantial form of

ready money with good security for its payment. Besides ratification by

the regent he demanded the personal security of several French nobles,

of towns and local estates. At length he was satisfied. The treaty was

signed on 30th August, and was published on 6th September. Henry was to

receive 2,000,000 crowns in annual instalments of 50,000; the treaty

included Scotland as an ally of France, and it was stipulated that the

Duke of Albany was not to return. Scotland, left unprotected, was bound

to follow France, and in January 1526 peace was signed with Scotland to

the satisfaction of both countries.

Wolsey could congratulate himself on the result of his work. Again he

had won for England a strong position, by setting her in the forefront

of the opposition to the overweening power of the empire. Again had

England's action done much to restore the equilibrium of Europe. This

had been achieved solely by Wolsey's diplomacy. Charles V. had received

a blow which he could neither parry nor resent. The French treaty with

England deprived Charles of the means of exercising irresistible

pressure upon Francis, and encouraged the Italian States to form an

alliance against the Emperor. Francis, weary of his long captivity,

signed the treaty of Madrid, and obtained his freedom in February 1526.

But he previously protested against it as extorted by violence, and

refused to surrender an inch of French territory notwithstanding his

promises. Charles gained little by his victory at Pavia. His hands were

again full, as the Turks invaded Hungary, and Francis joined the Italian

League against him. He still had every motive to keep on good terms with

England, and Wolsey had no desire to precipitate a breach.

So Wolsey's policy for the future was one of caution and reserve. The

king withdrew more and more from public affairs, and spent his time in

hunting. His relations with Katharine became day by day more irksome,

and he tried to forget his domestic life by leading a life of pleasure.

Wolsey strove to hold the balance between Charles and Francis without

unduly inclining to either side. Both wished to be on good terms with

England, for neither was free from anxiety. The sons of Francis were

hostages in Spain, and Charles was hampered by the opposition of the

Italian League. Of this League Henry VIII. was a member, but he declined

to give it any active support. The Italians, as usual, were divided, and

Clement VII. was not the man to direct their distracted councils

successfully. In September 1526 a small force of Spaniards, aided by a

party amongst the Roman barons, surprised Rome, sacked the papal palace,

and filled Clement with terror. Charles V. disavowed any share in this

attack, and excused himself before Henry's remonstrances. But as Clement

did not entirely amend his ways, the experiment was repeated on a larger

scale. In May 1527 the imperial troops under the Duke of Bourbon and the

German general George Frundsberg captured and plundered Rome, and took

the Pope prisoner. This unwonted deed filled Europe with horror. It

seemed as if the Emperor had joined the enemies of the Church.

During this period Wolsey had been cautiously drawing nearer to France.

At first he only contemplated strengthening the ties which bound the two

countries together; but in the beginning of 1527 he was willing to form

a close alliance with France, which must lead to a breach with the

Emperor. French commissioners came to London, and a proposal was made

that Francis should marry Mary, then a child of ten, though he was

betrothed to the Emperor's sister Eleanor. Wolsey's demands were high: a

perpetual peace between the two countries, a perpetual pension of 50,000

crowns to the English king, a tribute of salt, and the surrender of

Boulogne and Ardres. In the course of the discussion the son of Francis,

the Duke of Orleans, was substituted for the father as Mary's husband;

on all other points Wolsey had his will, and never did he show himself a

more consummate master of diplomacy. The treaty was signed on 30th

April. The debts of Charles were transferred to Francis, and Wolsey

could show that he had made a substantial gain.

Doubtless Wolsey intended that this peace with France should form the

basis of a universal peace, which he never ceased to pursue. The success

of Charles V. in Italy, and subsequent events at home, rapidly dispelled

his hopes. Already the selfwill of Henry VIII. had driven him to

consent to measures which were against his judgment; the same selfwill,

turned to domestic and personal affairs, was already threatening to

involve Wolsey in a matter whose far-reaching effects no man could

foresee.

CHAPTER VIII

WOLSEY'S DOMESTIC POLICY

We have been following the laborious career of Wolsey in his direction

of foreign affairs. He held in his hands the threads of complicated

negotiations, by which he was endeavouring to assure England's power on

the Continent, not by means of war but by skilful diplomacy. In doing

this he had to guard the commercial relations of England with the

Netherlands, and had also to bow before the selfwill of the king, who

insisted on pursuing fantastic designs of personal aggrandisement. Still

he steered a careful course amidst many difficulties, though when he

looked back upon his labours of thirteen years he must have owned to

serious disappointment. Perhaps he sometimes asked himself the question,

if foreign policy was worthy of the best attention of an English

minister, if he had not erred in adventuring on such large schemes

abroad. There was much to do at home; many useful measures of reform

awaited only a convenient season. He had hoped, when first he began his

course, to have seen England long before this time peaceful and

powerful, the arbiter of European affairs, a pattern to other kingdoms,

dealing honestly and sagaciously with the pressing needs of the time. He

had laboured incessantly for that end, but it was as far off as ever.

The year 1527 saw England exhausted by useless wars, and Europe plunged

in irreconcilable strife. Wolsey's dream of a united Europe, cautiously

moved by England's moderating counsels, had vanished before forces which

he could not control.

Meanwhile domestic reforms had been thrust into the background. Wolsey

was keenly alive to their importance, and had a distinct policy which he

wished to carry out. He had carefully gathered into his hands the power

which would enable him to act, but he could not find the time for

definite action. Something he contrived to do, so as to prepare the way

for more; but his schemes were never revealed in their entirety, though

he trained the men who afterwards carried them out, though in a crude

and brutal shape.

England was passing through a period of social change which necessitated

a re-adjustment of old institutions. The decay of feudalism in the Wars

of the Roses had been little noticed, but its results had been profound.

In the sphere of government the check exercised by the barons on the

Crown was destroyed. Henry VII. carefully depressed the baronage and

spared the pockets of the people, who were willing to have the conduct

of affairs in the hands of the king so long as he kept order and guarded

the commercial interests, which were more and more absorbing national

energies. The nation wished for a strong government to put down anarchy

and maintain order; but the nation was not willing to bear the cost of a

strong government on constitutional principles. Henry VII. soon found

that he might do what he liked provided he did not ask for money; he

might raise supplies by unconstitutional exactions on individuals

provided he did not embarrass the bulk of the middle classes, who were

busied with trade. The nobles, the rich landowners, the wealthy

merchants, were left to the king's mercies; so long as the pockets of

the commons were spared they troubled themselves no further.

Henry VII. recognised this condition of national feeling, and pursued a

policy of levelling class privileges and cautiously heeding the popular

interests; by these means he established the royal power on a strong

basis, and carried on his government through capable officials, who took

their instructions from himself. Some of the old nobles held office, but

they gradually were reduced to the same level as the other officials

with whom they consorted. The power of the old nobility passed silently

away.

With this political change a social change corresponded. The barons of

former years were great in proportion to the number of their retainers

and the strength of their castles. Now retainers were put down by the

Star Chamber; and the feudal lord was turned into the country gentleman.

Land changed hands rapidly; opulent merchants possessed themselves of

estates. The face of the country began to wear a new look, for the new

landlords did not desire a numerous tenantry but a large income. The

great trade of England was wool, which was exported to Flanders. Tillage

lands were thrown into pasture; small holders found it more difficult to

live on their holdings; complaints were heard that the country was being

depopulated. England was slowly passing through an economic change which

involved a displacement of population, and consequent misery on the

labouring classes. No doubt there was a great increase in national

prosperity; but prosperity was not universally diffused at once, and men

were keenly conscious of present difficulties. Beneath the surface of

society there was a widespread feeling of discontent.

Moreover, amongst thinking men a new spirit was beginning to prevail. In

Italy this new spirit was manifest by quickened curiosity about the

world and life, and found its expression in a study of classical

antiquity. Curiosity soon led to criticism; and before the new criticism

the old ideas on which the intellectual life of the Middle Ages was

built were slowly passing away. Rhetoric took the place of logic, and

the study of the classics superseded the study of theology. This

movement of thought slowly found its way to England, where it began to

influence the higher minds.

Thus England was going through a crisis politically, socially, and

intellectually, when Wolsey undertook the management of affairs. This

crisis was not acute, and did not call for immediate measures of

direction; but Wolsey was aware of its existence, and had his own plans

for the future. We must regret that he put foreign policy in the first

place, and reserved his constructive measures for domestic affairs. The

time seemed ripe for great achievements abroad, and Wolsey was hopeful

of success. He may be pardoned for his lofty aspirations, for if he had

succeeded England would have led the way in a deliberate settlement of

many questions which concerned the wellbeing of the whole of

Christendom. But success eluded Wolsey's grasp, and he fell from power

before he had time to trace decidedly the lines on which England might

settle her problems for herself; and when the solution came it was

strangely entangled in the personal questions which led to Wolsey's fall

from power. Yet even here we may doubt if the measures of the English

Reformation would have been possible if Wolsey's mind had not inspired

the king and the nation with a heightened consciousness of England's

power and dignity. Wolsey's diplomacy at least tore away all illusions

about Pope and Emperor, and the opinion of Europe, and taught Henry

VIII. the measure of his own strength.

It was impossible that Wolsey's powerful hand should not leave its

impression upon everything which it touched. If Henry VIII. inherited a

strong monarchy, Wolsey made the basis of monarchical power still

stronger. It was natural that he should do so, as he owed his own

position entirely to the royal favour. But never had any king so devoted

a servant as had Henry VIII., in Wolsey; and this devotion was not

entirely due to motives of selfish calculation or to personal

attraction. Wolsey saw in the royal power the only possible means of

holding England together and guiding it through the dangers of impending

change. In his eyes the king and the king alone could collect and give

expression to the national will. England itself was unconscious of its

capacities, and was heedless about the future. The nobles, so far as

they had any policy, were only desirous to win back their old position.

The Church was no longer the inspirer of popular aspirations or the

bulwark of popular freedom. Its riches were regarded with a jealous eye

by the middle classes, who were busied with trade; the defects of its

organisation had been deplored by its most spiritually-minded sons for a

century; its practices, if not its tenets, awakened the ridicule of men

of intelligence; its revenues supplied the king with officials more than

they supplied the country with faithful pastors; its leaders were

content to look to the king for patronage and protection. The traders of

the towns and the new landlords of the country appreciated the growth of

their fortunes in a period of internal quiet, and dreaded anything that

might bring back discord. The labouring classes felt that redress of

their grievances was more possible from a far-off king than from

landlords who, in their eyes, were bent upon extortion. Every class

looked to the king, and was confident in his good intentions. We cannot

wonder that Wolsey saw in the royal power the only possible instrument

strong enough to work reforms, and set himself with goodwill to make

that instrument efficacious.

So Wolsey was in no sense a constitutional minister, nor did he pay much

heed to constitutional forms. Parliament was only summoned once during

the time that he was in office, and then he tried to browbeat Parliament

and set aside its privileges. In his view the only function of

Parliament was to grant money for the king's needs. The king should say

how much he needed, and Parliament ought only to advise how this sum

might most conveniently be raised. We have seen that Wolsey failed in

his attempt to convert Parliament into a submissive instrument of royal

despotism. He under-estimated the strength of constitutional forms and

the influence of precedent. Parliament was willing to do its utmost to

meet the wishes of the king, but it would not submit to Wolsey's

high-handed dictation. The habits of diplomacy had impaired Wolsey's

sagacity in other fields; he had been so busy in managing emperors and

kings that he had forgotten how to deal with his fellow-countrymen. He

was unwise in his attempt to force the king's will upon Parliament as an

unchangeable law of its action. Henry VIII. looked on and learned from

Wolsey's failure, and when he took the management of Parliament into his

own hands he showed himself a consummate master of that craft. His skill

in this direction has scarcely been sufficiently estimated, and his

success has been put down to the servility of Parliament. But Parliament

was by no means servile under Wolsey's overbearing treatment. If it was

subservient to Henry the reason is to be found in his excellent tactics.

He conciliated different interests at different times; he mixed the

redress of acknowledged grievances with the assertion of far-reaching

claims; he decked out selfish motives in fair-sounding language; he led

men on step by step till they were insensibly pledged to measures more

drastic than they approved; he kept the threads of his policy in his own

hands till the only escape from utter confusion was an implicit

confidence in his wisdom; he made it almost impossible for those who

were dissatisfied to find a point on which they could establish a

principle for resistance. He was so skilful that Parliament at last gave

him even the power over the purse, and Henry, without raising a murmur,

imposed taxes which Wolsey would not have dared to suggest. It is

impossible not to feel that Henry, perhaps taught in some degree by

Cromwell, understood the temper of the English people far better than

Wolsey ever did. He established the royal power on a broader and securer

basis than Wolsey could have erected. Where Wolsey would have made the

Crown independent of Parliament, Henry VIII. reduced Parliament to be a

willing instrument of the royal will. Wolsey would have subverted the

constitution, or at least would have reduced it to a lifeless form;

Henry VIII. so worked the constitutional machinery that it became an

additional source of power to his monarchy.

But though Wolsey was not successful in his method of making the royal

power supreme over Parliament, he took the blame of failure upon

himself, and saved the king's popularity. Wolsey's devotion to his

master was complete, and cannot be assigned purely to selfish motives.

Wolsey felt that his opinions, his policy, his aspirations had been

formed through his intercourse with the king; and he was only strong

when he and his master were thoroughly at one. At first the two men had

been in complete agreement, and it cost Wolsey many a pang when he found

that Henry did not entirely agree with his conclusions. After the

imperial alliance was made Wolsey lost much of his brilliancy, his dash,

and his force. This was not the result of age, or fatigue, or

hopelessness so much as of the feeling that he and the king were no

longer in accord. Like many other strong men, Wolsey was sensitive. He

did not care for popularity, but he felt the need of being understood

and trusted. He gave the king his affection, and he craved for a return.

There was no one else who could understand him or appreciate his aims,

and when he felt that he was valued for his usefulness rather than

trusted for what he was in himself, the spring of his life's energy was

gone.

Still Wolsey laboured in all things to exalt the royal power, for in it

he saw the only hope of the future, and England endorsed his opinion.

But Wolsey was too great a man to descend to servility, and Henry always

treated him with respect. In fact Wolsey always behaved with a strong

sense of his personal dignity, and carried stickling for decorum to the

verge of punctiliousness. Doubtless he had a decided taste for splendour

and magnificence, but it is scarcely fair to put this down to the

arrogance of an upstart, as was done by his English contemporaries.

Wolsey believed in the influence of outward display on the popular mind,

and did his utmost to throw over the king a veil of unapproachable

grandeur and unimpeachable rectitude. He took upon himself the burden of

the king's responsibilities, and stood forward to shield him against the

danger of losing the confidence of his people. As the king's

representative he assumed a royal state; he wished men to see that they

were governed from above, and he strove to accustom them to the pomp of

power. In his missions abroad, and in his interviews with foreign

ambassadors, he was still more punctilious than in the matters of

domestic government. If the king was always to be regarded as the king,

Wolsey, as the mouthpiece of the royal will, never abated his claims

to honour only less than royal; but he acted not so much from

self-assertion as from policy. At home and abroad equally the greatness

of the royal power was to be unmistakably set forth, and ostentation was

an element in the game of brag to which a spirited foreign policy

inevitably degenerates. It was for the king's sake that Wolsey magnified

himself; he never assumed an independent position, but all his triumphs

were loyally laid at the king's feet. In this point, again, Wolsey

overshot the mark, and did not understand the English people, who were

not impressed in the manner which he intended. When Henry took the

government more directly into his own hands he managed better for

himself, for he knew how to identify the royal will with the aspirations

of the people, and clothed his despotism with the appearance of paternal

solicitude. He made the people think that he lived for them, and that

their interests were his, whereas Wolsey endeavoured to convince the

people that the king alone could guard their interests, and that their

only course was to put entire confidence in him. Henry saw that men were

easier to cajole than to convince; he worked for no system of royal

authority, but contented himself with establishing his own will. In

spite of the disadvantage of a royal education, Henry was a more

thorough Englishman than Wolsey, though Wolsey sprang from the people.

It was Wolsey's teaching, however, that prepared Henry for his task. The

king who could use a minister like Wolsey and then throw him away when

he was no longer useful, felt that there was no limitation to his

self-sufficiency.

Wolsey, indeed, was a minister in a sense which had never been seen in

England before, for he held in his hand the chief power alike in Church

and State. Not only was he chancellor, but also Archbishop of York, and

endowed beside with special legatine powers. These powers were not

coveted merely for purposes of show: Wolsey intended to use them, when

opportunity offered, as a means of bringing the Church under the royal

power as completely as he wished to subject the State. He had little

respect for the ecclesiastical organisation as such; he saw its obvious

weaknesses, and wished to provide a remedy. If he was a candidate for

the Papacy, it was from no desire to pursue an ecclesiastical policy of

his own, but to make the papal power subservient to England's interests.

He was sufficiently clear-sighted to perceive that national aspirations

could not much longer be repressed by the high-sounding claims of the

Papacy; he saw that the system of the Church must be adapted to the

conditions of the time, and he wished to avert a revolution by a quiet

process of steady and reasonable reform. He was perhaps honest in saying

that he was not greatly anxious for the Papacy; for he knew that England

gave him ample scope for his energies, and he hoped that the example of

England would spread throughout Europe. So at the beginning of his

career he pressed for legatine powers, which were grudgingly granted by

Leo X., first for one year, and afterwards for five; till the gratitude

of Clement VII. conferred them for life. Clothed with this authority,

and working in concert with the king, Wolsey was supreme over the

English Church, and perhaps dreamed of a future in which the Roman

Pontiff would practically resign his claims over the northern churches

to an English delegate, who might become his equal or superior in actual

power.

However this might be, he certainly contemplated the reform of the

English Church by means of a judicious mixture of royal and

ecclesiastical authority. Everything was propitious for such an

undertaking, as the position of the Church was felt to be in many ways

anomalous and antiquated. The rising middle class had many grievances to

complain of from the ecclesiastical courts; the new landlords looked

with contempt on the management of monastic estates; the new learning

mocked at the ignorance of the clergy, and scoffed at the superstitions

of a simpler past which had survived unduly into an age when criticism

was coming into fashion. The power of the Church had been great in days

when the State was rude and the clergy were the natural leaders of men.

Now the State was powerful and enjoyed men's confidence; they looked to

the king to satisfy their material aspirations, and the Church had not

been very successful in keeping their spiritual aspirations alive. It

was not that men were opposed to the Church, but they judged its

privileges to be excessive, its disciplinary courts to be vexatious, its

officials to be too numerous, and its wealth to be devoted to purposes

which had ceased to be of the first importance. There was a general

desire to see a re-adjustment of many matters in which the Church was

concerned; and before this popular sentiment churchmen found it

difficult to assert their old pretensions, and preferred to rest

contentedly under the protection of the Crown.

A trivial incident shows the general condition of affairs with

sufficient clearness. One of the claims which on the whole the clergy

had maintained was the right of trial before ecclesiastical courts; and

the greater leniency of ecclesiastical sentences had been a useful

modification of the severity of the criminal law, so that benefit of

clergy had been permitted to receive large extension of interpretation.

Further, the sanctity of holy places had been permitted to give rights

of sanctuary to criminals fleeing from justice or revenge. Both of these

expedients had been useful in a rude state of society, and had done much

to uphold a higher standard of humanity. But it was clear that they were

only temporary expedients which were needless and even harmful as

society grew more settled and justice was regularly administered. Henry

VII. had felt the need of diminishing the rights of sanctuary, which

gave a dangerous immunity to the numerous rebels against whom he had to

contend, and he obtained a bull for that purpose from Pope Innocent

VIII. The example which he set was speedily followed, and an Act was

passed by the Parliament of 1511, doing away with sanctuary and benefit

of clergy in the case of those who were accused of murder.

It does not seem that the Act met with any decided opposition at the

time that it was passed; but there were still sticklers for clerical

immunities, who regarded it as a dangerous innovation, and during the

session of Parliament in 1515 the Abbot of Winchcombe preached a sermon

in which he denounced it as an impious measure. Henry VIII. adopted a

course which afterwards stood him in good stead in dealing with the

Church; he submitted the question to a commission of divines and

temporal peers. In the course of the discussion Standish, the Warden of

the Friars Minors, put the point clearly and sensibly by saying, "The

Act was not against the liberty of the Church, for it was passed for the

weal of the whole realm." The clerical party were not prepared to face

so direct an issue, and answered that it was contrary to the decretals.

"So," replied Standish, "is the non-residence of bishops; yet that is

common enough." Baffled in their appeal to law the bishops fell back

upon Scripture, and quoted the text, "Touch not mine anointed." Again

Standish turned against them the new critical spirit, which destroyed

the old arguments founded on isolated texts. David, he said, used these

words of all God's people as opposed to the heathen; as England was a

Christian country the text covered the laity as well as the clergy. It

was doubtless galling to the clerical party to be so remorselessly

defeated by one of their own number, and their indignation was increased

when the temporal lords on the commission decided against the Abbot of

Winchcombe and ordered him to apologise.

The bishops vented their anger on Standish, and summoned him to answer

for his conduct before Convocation, whereon he appealed to the king.

Again Henry appointed a commission, this time exclusively of laymen, to

decide between Standish and his accusers. They reported that

Convocation, by its proceeding against one who was acting as a royal

commissioner, had incurred the penalties of præmunire, and they added

that the king could, if he chose, hold a parliament without the lords

spiritual, who had no place therein save by virtue of their temporal

possessions. Probably this was intended as a significant hint to the

spirituality that they had better not interfere unduly with

parliamentary proceedings. Moreover, at the same time a case had

occurred which stirred popular feeling against the ecclesiastical

courts. A London merchant had been arrested by the chancellor of the

Bishop of London on a charge of heresy, and a few days after his arrest

was found hanging dead in his cell. Doubtless the unhappy man had

committed suicide, but there was a suspicion that his arrest was due to

a private grudge on the part of the chancellor, who was accused of

having made away with him privily. Popular feeling waxed high, and the

lords who gave their decision so roundly against Convocation knew that

they were sure of popular support.

Henry was not sorry of an opportunity of teaching the clergy their

dependence upon himself, and he summoned the bishops before him that he

might read them a lesson. Wolsey's action on this occasion is

noticeable. He seems to have been the only one who saw the gravity of

the situation, and he strove to effect a dignified compromise. Before

the king could speak Wolsey knelt before him and interceded for the

clergy. He said that they had designed nothing against the king's

prerogative, but thought it their duty to uphold the rights of the

Church; he prayed that the matter might be referred to the decision of

the Pope. Henry answered that he was satisfied with the arguments of

Standish. Fox, Bishop of Winchester, turned angrily on Standish, and

Archbishop Warham plucked up his courage so far as to say feebly, "Many

holy men have resisted the law of England on this point and have

suffered martyrdom." But Henry knew that he had not to deal with a

second Becket, and that the days of Becket had gone by for ever. He

would have nothing to say to papal intervention or to clerical

privilege; the time had come for the assertion of royal authority, and

Henry could use his opportunity as skilfully as the most skilful priest.

"We," said he, "are by God's grace king of England, and have no superior

but God; we will maintain the rights of the Crown like our predecessors;

your decrees you break and interpret at your pleasure: but we will not

consent to your interpretation any more than our predecessors have

done." The immemorial rights of the English Crown were vaguer and more

formidable than the rights of the Church, and the bishops retired in

silence. Henry did not forget the service rendered him by Standish, who

was made Bishop of St. Asaph in 1518.

In this incident we have a forecast of the subsequent course of

events--the threat of præmunire, the assertion of the royal supremacy,

the submission of the clergy. Nothing was wanting save a sufficient

motive to work a revolution in the ancient relations between Church and

State. Wolsey alone seems to have seen how precarious was the existing

position of the Church. He knew that the Church was wrong, and that it

would have to give way, but he wished to clothe its submission with a

semblance of dignity, and to use the papal power, not as a means of

guarding the rights of the Church, but as a means of casting an air of

ecclesiastical propriety over their abandonment. Doubtless he proposed

to use his legatine power for that purpose if the need arose; but he was

loyal to the Church as an institution, and did not wish it to fall

unreservedly to the tender mercies of the king. He saw that this was

only to be avoided by a judicious pliancy on the Church's part, which

could gain a breathing-space for carrying out gradual reforms.

The fact that Wolsey was a statesman rather than an ecclesiastic gave

him a clear view of the direction which a conservative reformation

should pursue. He saw that the Church was too wealthy and too powerful

for the work which it was actually doing. The wealth and power of the

Church were a heritage from a former age, in which the care for the

higher interests of society fell entirely into the hands of the Church

because the State was rude and barbarous, and had no machinery save for

the discharge of rudimentary duties. Bishops were the only officials who

could curb the lawlessness of feudal lords; the clergy were the only

refuge from local tyranny; monks were the only landlords who cleared the

forests, drained the marshes, and taught the pursuits of peace;

monastery schools educated the sons of peasants, and the universities

gave young men of ability a career. All the humanitarian duties of

society were discharged by the Church, and the Church had grown in

wealth and importance because of its readiness to discharge them. But as

the State grew stronger, and as the power of Parliament increased, it

was natural that duties which had once been delegated should be assumed

by the community at large. It was equally natural that institutions

which had once been useful should outlast their usefulness and be

regarded with a jealous eye. By the end of the reign of Edward I.

England had been provided with as many monastic institutions as it

needed, and the character of monasticism began to decline. Benefactions

for social purposes from that time forward were mainly devoted to

colleges, hospitals, and schools. The fact that so many great churchmen

were royal ministers shows how the energy of the Church was placed at

the disposal of the State and was by it absorbed. The Church possessed

revenues, and a staff of officials which were too large for the time, in

which it was not the only worker in the field of social welfare. It

possessed rights and privileges which were necessary for its protection

in days of anarchy and lawlessness, but which were invidious in days of

more settled government. Moreover, the tenure of so much land by

ecclesiastical corporations like monasteries, was viewed with jealousy

in a time when commercial competition was becoming a dominant motive in

a society which had ceased to be mainly warlike.

From this point of view Wolsey was prepared for gradual changes in the

position of the Church; but he did not wish those changes to be

revolutionary, nor did he wish them to be made by the power of the

State. He knew the real weakness of the Church and the practical

omnipotence of the king; but he hoped to unite the interests of the

Crown and of the Church by his own personal influence and by his

position as the trusted minister of king and Pope alike.

He did not, however, deceive himself about the practical difficulties in

the way of a conservative reform, which should remove the causes of

popular discontent, and leave the Church an integral part of the State

organisation. He knew that the ecclesiastical system, even in its

manifest abuses, was closely interwoven with English society, and he

knew the strength of clerical conservatism. He knew also the dangers

which beset the Church if it came across the royal will and pleasure. If

any reform were to be carried out it must be by raising the standard of

clerical intelligence. Already many things which had accorded with the

simpler minds of an earlier age had become objects of mockery to

educated laymen. The raillery of Erasmus at the relics of St. Thomas of

Canterbury and the Virgin's milk preserved at Walsingham expressed the

difference which had arisen between the old practices of religion and

the belief of thoughtful men. It would be well to divert some of the

revenues of the Church from the maintenance of idle and ignorant monks

to the education of a body of learned clergy.

This diversion of monastic property had long been projected and

attempted. William of Wykeham endowed his New College at Oxford with

lands which he purchased from monasteries. Henry VI. endowed Eton and

King's College with revenues which came from the suppression of alien

priories. In 1497 John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, obtained leave to suppress

the decrepit nunnery of St. Rhadegund in Cambridge and use its site for

the foundation of Jesus College. Wolsey only carried farther and made

more definite the example which had previously been set when in 1524 he

obtained from Pope Clement VII. permission to convert into a college the

monastery of St. Frideswyde in Oxford. Soon after he obtained a bull

allowing him to suppress monasteries with fewer than seven inmates, and

devote their revenues to educational purposes.

Nor was Wolsey the only man who was of opinion that the days of

monasticism were numbered. In 1515 Bishop Fox of Winchester contemplated

the foundation of a college at Oxford in connection with the monastery

of St. Swithin at Winchester. He was dissuaded from making his college

dependent on a monastery by his brother bishop, Oldham of Exeter, who

said, "Shall we build houses and provide livelihoods for a company of

bussing monks, whose end and fall we ourselves may live to see? No, no:

it is meet to provide for the increase of learning, and for such as by

learning shall do good to Church and commonwealth." Oldham's advice

prevailed, and the statutes of Fox's college of Brasenose were marked by

the influence of the new learning as distinct from the old theology.

Still Wolsey's bull for the wholesale dissolution of small monasteries

was the beginning of a process which did not cease till all were swept

away. It introduced a principle of measuring the utility of old

institutions and judging their right to exist by their power of

rendering service to the community. Religious houses whose shrunken

revenues could not support more than seven monks, according to the

rising standard of monastic comfort, were scarcely likely to maintain

serious discipline or pursue any lofty end. But it was the very

reasonableness of this method of judgment which rendered it exceedingly

dangerous. Tried by this standard, who could hope to escape? Fuller

scarcely exaggerates when he says that this measure of Wolsey's "made

all the forest of religious foundations in England to shake, justly

fearing that the king would fell the oaks when the cardinal had begun to

cut the underwood." It would perhaps have required too much wisdom for

the monks to see that submission to the cardinal's pruning-knife was the

only means of averting the clang of the royal axe.

The method which Wolsey pursued was afterwards borrowed by Henry VIII.

Commissioners were sent out to inquire into the condition of small

monasteries, and after an unfavourable report their dissolution was

required, and their members were removed to a larger house. The work was

one which needed care and dexterity as well as a good knowledge of

business. Wolsey was lucky in his agents, chief amongst whom was Thomas

Cromwell, an attorney whose cleverness Wolsey quickly perceived. In fact

most of the men who so cleverly managed the dissolution of the

monasteries for Henry had learned the knack under Wolsey, who was fated

to train up instruments for purposes which he would have abhorred.

The immediate objects to which Wolsey devoted the money which he

obtained by the dissolution of these useless monasteries were a college

in his old university of Oxford and another in his native town of

Ipswich. The two were doubtless intended to be in connection with one

another, after the model of William of Wykeham's foundations at

Winchester and Oxford, and those of Henry VI. at Eton and Cambridge.

This scheme was never carried out in its integrity, for on Wolsey's fall

his works were not completed, and were involved in his forfeiture. Few

things gave him more grief than the threatened check of this memorial of

his greatness, and owing to his earnest entreaties his college at Oxford

was spared and was refounded. Its name, however, was changed from

Cardinal College to Christ Church, and it was not entirely identified

with Wolsey's glory. The college at Ipswich fell into abeyance.

Wolsey's design for Cardinal College was on a magnificent scale. He

devised a large court surrounded by a cloister, with a spacious

dining-hall on one side. The hall was the first building which he took

in hand, and this fact is significant of his idea of academic life. He

conceived a college as an organic society of men living in common, and

by their intercourse generating and expressing a powerful body of

opinion. Contemporaries mocked and said, "A fine piece of business; this

cardinal projected a college and has built a tavern." They did not

understand that Wolsey was not merely adding to the number of Oxford

colleges, but was creating a society which should dominate the

University, and be the centre of a new intellectual movement. For this

purpose Wolsey devised a foundation which should be at once

ecclesiastical and civil, and should set forward his own conception of

the relations between the Church and the intellectual and social life of

the nation. His foundation consisted of a dean, sixty canons, six

professors, forty petty canons, twelve chaplains, twelve clerks, and

sixteen choristers; and he proposed to fill it with men of his own

choice, who would find there a fitting sphere for their energies.

Wolsey was a man well adapted to hold the balance between the old and

the new learning. He had been trained in the theology of the schools,

and was a student of St. Thomas Aquinas; but he had learned by the

training of life to understand the new ideas; he grasped their

importance, and he foresaw their triumph. He was a friend of the band of

English scholars who brought to Oxford the study of Greek, and he

sympathised with the intellectual aspirations of Grocyn, Colet, More,

and Erasmus. Perhaps he rather sympathised than understood; but his

influence was cast on their side when the opposition to the new learning

broke out in the University and the Trojans waged a desperate and at

first a successful war against the Greeks. The more ignorant among the

clerical teachers objected to any widening of the old studies, and

resented the substitution of biblical or patristic theology for the

study of the schoolmen. They dreaded the effects of the critical method,

and were not reassured when Grocyn, in a sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral,

declared that the writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite were

spurious. A wave of obscurantism swept over Oxford, and, as Tyndale puts

it, "the barking curs, Dun's disciples, the children of darkness, raged

in every pulpit against Greek, Latin, and Hebrew." Wolsey used the

king's authority to rebuke the assailants of learning; but the new

teachers withdrew from Oxford, and Wolsey saw that if the new learning

was to make way it must have a secure footing. Accordingly he set

himself to get the universities into his power, and in 1517 proposed to

found university lectureships in Oxford. Hitherto the teaching given in

the universities had been voluntary; teachers arose and maintained

themselves by a process of natural selection. Excellent as such a system

may seem, it did not lead to progress, and already the Lady Margaret,

Countess of Richmond, Henry VII.'s mother, had adopted the advice of

Bishop Fisher, and founded divinity professorships in the two

universities. Wolsey wished to extend this system and organise an entire

staff of teachers for university purposes. We do not know how far he

showed his intention, but such was his influence that Oxford submitted

its statutes to him for revision. Wolsey's hands were too full of other

work for him to undertake at once so delicate a matter; but he meant

undoubtedly to reorganise the system of university education, and for

this purpose prevailed on Cambridge also to entrust its statutes to his

hands. Again he had prepared the way for a great undertaking, and had

dexterously used his position to remove all obstacles, and prepare a

field for the work of reconstruction. Again he was prevented from

carrying out his designs, and his educational reform was never actually

made. We can only trace his intentions in the fact that he brought to

Oxford a learned Spaniard, Juan Luis Vives, to lecture on rhetoric, and

we may infer that he intended to provide both universities with a staff

of teachers chosen from the first scholars of Europe.

Another matter gives another indication of Wolsey's desire to remove the

grievances felt against the Church. If the monasteries were survivals of

a time when the Church discharged the humanitarian duties of society,

the ecclesiastical courts were in a like manner survivals of a time when

the civil courts were not yet able to deal with many points which

concerned the relations between man and man, or which regulated

individual conduct. Thus marriage was a religious ceremony, and all

questions which arose from the marriage contract were decided in the

ecclesiastical courts. Similarly wills were recognised by the Church, as

resting on the moral basis of mutual confidence, long before the State

was prepared to acknowledge their validity. Besides these cases which

arose from contract, the Church exercised a disciplinary supervision

over its members for the good of their souls, and to avoid scandals in a

Christian community. On all these points the principles of the Church

had leavened the conceptions of the State, and the civil jurisdiction

had in many matters overtaken the ecclesiastical. But the clerical

courts stood stubbornly upon their claim to greater antiquity, and the

activity of ecclesiastical lawyers found plenty of work to do.

Disciplinary jurisdiction was unduly extended by a class of trained

officials, and was resented by the growing independence of the rising

middle class. No doubt the ecclesiastical courts needed reform, but the

difficulties in the way of reforming legal procedure are always great.

Wolsey faced the problem in a way which is most characteristic of his

statesmanship. He strove to bring the question to maturity for solution

by getting the control of the ecclesiastical courts into his own hands.

For this purpose he used his exceptional position as Papal Legate, and

instituted a legatine court which should supersede the ordinary

jurisdiction. Naturally enough this brought him into collision with

Archbishop Warham, and his fall prevented him from developing his

policy. His attempt only left the ecclesiastical courts in worse

confusion, and added to the strength of the opposition, which soon

robbed them of most of their powers. It added also to Wolsey's

unpopularity, and gave a shadow of justice to the unworthy means which

were used for his destruction.

In fact, wherever we look, we see that in domestic affairs Wolsey had a

clear conception of the objects to be immediately pursued by a

conservative reformer. But a conservative reformer raises as much

hostility as does a revolutionist, for the mass of men are not

sufficiently foreseeing or sufficiently disinterested willingly to

abandon profitable abuses. They feel less animosity against the open

enemy who aims avowedly at their destruction, than against the seeming

friends who would deprive them of what they consider to be their rights.

The clergy submitted more readily to the abolition of their privileges

by the king than they would have submitted to a reform at the hands of

Wolsey. They could understand the one; they could not understand the

other. This was natural, for Wolsey had no lofty principles to set

before them; he had only the wisdom of a keen-sighted statesman, who

read the signs of the times. Indeed he did not waste his time in trying

to persuade others to see with his eyes. He could not have ventured to

speak out and say that the Church must choose between the tender mercies

of the royal power and submission to the discretion of one who, standing

between the king and the Pope, was prepared to throw a semblance of

ecclesiastical recognition over reforms which were inevitable. It is

clear that Wolsey was working for the one possible compromise, and he

hoped to effect it by his own dexterity. Secure of the royal favour,

secure through his political importance of the papal acquiescence in the

use which he made of his legatine power, standing forward as the chief

ecclesiastic in England, he aimed at accomplishing such reforms as would

have brought into harmony the relations between Church and State. He did

not hope to do this by persuasion, but by power, and had taken steps to

lay his hand cautiously on different parts of the ecclesiastical

organisation. With this idea before him we may safely acquit Wolsey of

any undue ambition for the papal office; he doubted whether his

influence would be increased or not by its possession.

In everything that Wolsey did he played for the highest stakes, and

risked all upon the hope of ultimate success. He trusted to justify

himself in the long-run, and was heedless of the opposition which he

called forth. Resting solely upon the royal favour, he did not try to

conciliate, nor did he pause to explain. Men could not understand his

ends, but they profoundly disliked his means. The suppression of small

monasteries, which might be useless but served to provide for younger

sons or dependants of country families, was very unpopular, as coming

from a cardinal who enjoyed the revenues of many ecclesiastical offices

whose duties he did not discharge. The setting up of a legatine court

was hateful to the national sentiment of Englishmen, who saw in it only

another engine of ecclesiastical oppression. The pomp and magnificence

wherewith Wolsey asserted a greatness which he mainly valued as a means

of doing his country service, was resented as the vulgar arrogance of an

upstart. Wolsey's ideas were too great to pay any heed to the prejudices

of Englishmen which, after all, have determined the success of all

English ministers, and which no English statesman has ever been powerful

enough to disregard.

CHAPTER IX

THE KING'S DIVORCE

1527-1529

If Wolsey hoped that the peace with France, which he had so successfully

concluded in the beginning of 1527, would enable him to reassert

England's influence on the Continent, and would give him an opportunity

for the work of domestic reform, he was sorely disappointed. A new

matter arose, not entirely unexpected, but which widened into unexpected

issues, and consumed Wolsey's energies till it led to his fall. The

project of the king's divorce was suddenly mooted; and this personal

matter, before it was ripe for settlement, gradually drew into its

sphere all the questions concerning England's foreign and domestic

policy which Wolsey's statesmanship had been trying to solve by wise and

well-considered means. Wolsey had been gathering into his hands the

threads of a complicated policy, each one of which required dexterous

handling, in accordance with a great design. He found himself suddenly

called upon to act precipitately for the accomplishment of a small

matter, which brought all the difficulties of his position prominently

forward, and gave him no time for that skilful diplomacy in which he

excelled. Moreover, when the project was started neither Henry nor

Wolsey could have foreseen the complications which would arise; still

less could Wolsey have known the obstinacy which the faintest opposition

to the royal will would develop in the king, or the extent to which he

could persuade himself that the satisfaction of the royal pleasure was

the sole purpose of the existence of the power of the State. At first

Henry had sympathised with Wolsey's far-reaching schemes. Latterly he

had at all events been willing to allow Wolsey to have his own way on

the whole. The time came when he showed himself a hard taskmaster, and

demanded that Wolsey should at all costs satisfy his personal desires in

a matter which he persuaded himself was all-important to the nation at

large.

Viewed according to the general notions of the time, there was nothing

very surprising in the fact that Henry VIII. should wish for a divorce.

Royal marriages were made and unmade from motives of expediency; it was

only a question of obtaining a decent plea. The sons of Katharine had

died in infancy, and Mary was the only heir of the English throne; it

was a matter of importance to the future of England that the succession

to the throne should be clearly established. If Henry had remained

attached to his wife this consideration would not have been put forward;

but Henry was never famed for constancy. He was in the prime of life,

while Katharine was over forty. He had developed in character, not for

the better, while she remained true to the narrow traditions of her

early training. She was an excellent housewife, conscientious, decorous,

and capable; but she was devoted to the political interests of Spain,

and admired her nephew Charles. While the imperial alliance was warmly

pursued by Henry she was happy; when Henry's zeal for Charles began to

fade she felt offended, and was not judicious in the display of her

political bias. Henry was more and more annoyed by his wife's

discontent, and the breach between them rapidly widened. When Henry

broke with Charles and allied himself with France he seems to have felt

that his domestic peace was at an end, and he was not the man to shrink

from the effort to re-establish it upon another basis.

Perhaps none of these considerations would have moved Henry to take

prompt action if his desires had not been kindled by a new object of his

affection. He had not been a faithful husband, and Katharine seems to

have been indulgent to his infidelities. In the course of 1526 he was

captivated by the charms of Anne Boleyn, as he had formerly been

captivated by her sister Mary. But Anne had learned that the king was

fickle, and she resolved that she would not be so easily won as to be

lightly abandoned. She skilfully managed to make herself agreeable to

the king till his passion for her became so violent that he was prepared

to accept her terms and make her his lawful wife.

Wolsey was not in favour of this plan; but he was not opposed to getting

rid of the political influence of Katharine, and he believed that the

king's fancy for Anne Boleyn would rapidly pass away. Whatever his own

personal opinion might be, he did not venture to gainsay the king in a

matter on which he was resolved, and he lent himself to be an instrument

in a matter which involved him in measures which became more and more

discreditable. The first idea of the king was to declare his marriage

with Katharine unlawful, on the ground that she had previously been his

brother's wife; but he was cognisant of that when he married her and had

applied for a papal dispensation to remedy that source of invalidity.

Doubtless some plea might be discovered to enable the Pope to set aside

the dispensation granted by his predecessor. But whatever technical

grounds might be used to justify the Pope's decision in the king's

favour, the Pope could not be expected to act in such a manner as to

offend the Powers of Europe and shock the moral sense of Englishmen.

Wolsey did not hide from himself that there were three hindrances in the

way of legalising the king's divorce. The opinion of England was not in

its favour; Charles V. was likely to resent the affront which it would

put upon his aunt, and the Pope could not afford to alienate one who was

becoming all-powerful in Italy that he might win the distant friendship

of the English king; Francis I. had just made a treaty with Henry VIII.,

by which the hand of Mary had been promised to his son, and he was not

likely to wish to see Mary declared to be illegitimate. These were

serious elements of opposition, which it would require considerable

skill to overcome.

The first measure which suggested itself to Henry and Wolsey was to put

the king's plea into shape, and endorse it with the authority of the

English Church. For this purpose a suit was secretly instituted against

the king in Wolsey's legatine court. Henry was solemnly informed that a

complaint had been made to Wolsey, as censor of public morals, that he

had cohabited for eighteen years with his brother's wife. Henry

consented that Archbishop Warham should be joined with Wolsey as

assessor, and named a proctor who should plead his cause. Three sessions

of this court were held with the profoundest secrecy in May; but in

spite of all the attempts at secrecy the imperial ambassador discovered

what was going on. The object of this procedure seems to have been to

produce a sentence from the legate's court in England which should be

confirmed by the Pope without right of appeal. If the Pope had been a

free agent he might conceivably have adopted this course; but the news

soon reached England that Rome had been sacked by Bourbon, and that the

Pope was trembling before Charles V. In this turn of affairs it was

useless to proceed farther on the supposition that he would

unhesitatingly comply with the wishes of Henry and Wolsey. A court

sitting in secret would have no influence on English opinion, and Wolsey

proposed that its sittings should be suspended, and the opinions of the

English bishops be taken as a means of educating public opinion.

But Katharine had been informed of the king's intentions concerning her,

and showed a purpose of defending her rights. It would be very awkward

if she were the first to make the matter public, and were to appeal to

the Pope or her kinsman Charles. The question would then become a

political question, and Henry was not prepared with allies. So on 22d

June the king broached his difficulties to Katharine. He told her of his

scruples, and of his intentions of submitting them to the decision of

canonists and theologians; meanwhile they had better live apart.

Katharine burst into tears, and the king vaguely tried to assure her

that all was being done for the best, and begged her to keep the matter

secret. His only object was to prevent her from taking any open steps

till he had assured himself of the countenance of the French king to his

plans. For this purpose Wolsey was sent on an embassy, ostensibly to

settle some questions raised by the French treaty, really to concert

with Francis I. a scheme for bringing to bear upon the Pope a pressure

which should be strong enough to counteract the influence of Charles V.

So, on 3d July, Wolsey left London on his last diplomatic mission. Men

who saw Wolsey set out with more than his accustomed state, escorted by

nine hundred horsemen, thought, doubtless, that the cardinal's greatness

was as high as ever; but those who watched more closely saw him in the

splendid ceremonial of the Church of Canterbury "weep very tenderly,"

for his mind was ill at ease. He must have felt that he was going to use

his talents for a bad end, and that all patriotism and nobility had

vanished from his aim. On his way to Dover he had a conference with

Archbishop Warham, whom he instructed about the conduct to be observed

towards the queen. Then at Rochester he sounded Bishop Fisher, the most

holy and upright of the English bishops, who had already been asked by

Katharine to give her counsel, though she had not ventured to tell him

what was the subject on which she wished for his advice. So Wolsey told

his own story; that the king's conscience was disquiet, and that he

wished to have his scruples set at rest by the opinions of learned men.

He represented that Katharine by her hastiness was throwing difficulties

in the way of the king's considerate procedure, and threatened to

publish the matter, and so create an open scandal. Fisher believed

Wolsey's tale, and was beguiled into a belief of the king's good

intentions, which the queen could not understand. About the validity of

Henry's marriage Wolsey could not get from Fisher an opinion contrary to

the authority of a papal dispensation; but he contrived to alienate

Fisher from sympathy with Katharine, and so left the queen without a

friend while he proceeded to machinate against her in France.

We have from one of Wolsey's attendants, George Cavendish, his

gentleman-usher, a full account of Wolsey's journey in France. On one

point he gives us valuable insight into Wolsey's character where Wolsey

has been much misrepresented. He tells us how at Calais he summoned his

attendants and addressed them about their behaviour. He explained that

the services which he required from them were not personal but official,

and his words were those of a statesman who understood, but did not

over-estimate, the value of external things. "Ye shall understand," he

said, "that the king's majesty, upon certain weighty considerations,

hath for the more advancement of his royal dignity assigned me in this

journey to be his lieutenant-general, and what reverence belongeth to

the same I will tell you. That for my part I must, by virtue of my

commission of lieutenantship, assume and take upon me, in all honours

and degrees, to have all such service and reverence as to his highness's

presence is meet and due, and nothing thereof to be neglected or omitted

by me that to his royal estate is appurtenant. And for my part, ye shall

see me that I will not omit one jot thereof." Then he added some wise

advice about the courtesies to be observed in their intercourse with the

French.

When matters of etiquette had thus been arranged, Wolsey rode out of

Calais on 22d July, and pursued his journey to Abbeville, where he

awaited the arrival of Francis I. at Amiens. On 4th August he entered

Amiens, and was received with royal honours. His interviews with Francis

and the queen-mother were most satisfactory on matters of general

policy: the English alliance was firmly accepted, and all questions

between the two Crowns were in a fair way towards settlement. Wolsey

waited till the political alliance was firmly established before he

broached the personal matter of the divorce. Meanwhile he meditated on

the schemes which might be pursued by the allied kings to satisfy

Henry's desires. He proposed that they should join in demanding from

Charles V. that he should restore the Pope's independence, in the hope

that the Pope when freed from constraint would be willing to show his

gratitude by complying with Henry's demands. If they failed in procuring

the Pope's release, they should declare the papal power to be in

abeyance, and summon the cardinals to meet at Avignon, where, under

Wolsey's presidency, they should transact such business as the Pope in

his captivity was unable to discharge.

Either of these methods was technically decorous; but they did not much

commend themselves to Henry VIII., whose passion for Anne Boleyn daily

increased, and who was impatient of any procedure that involved delay.

So Henry listened coldly to Wolsey's proposals for a "sure, honourable,

and safe" termination of the "king's matter," as the divorce was now

called: he wished for a "good and brief conclusion," and gave ear to the

advice of Anne Boleyn and her friends. It was easy for them to point out

that Wolsey was an old-fashioned statesman, full of prejudice where the

Church was concerned. They urged that the king could do better for

himself, and could deal more expeditiously with the Pope than could a

churchman who was bound to adopt a humble attitude towards his

ecclesiastical superior. So Henry determined to take the matter into his

own hands, and send his secretary Knight to negotiate with the Pope

without Wolsey's intervention.

Wolsey, meanwhile, in ignorance of the King's intentions, but distressed

at the difficulties which he foresaw, followed the French Court to

Compiegne, where he divided his time between diplomatic conflicts,

festivities, and the despatch of business. One morning, Cavendish tells

us, "He rose early about four of the clock, sitting down to write

letters into England unto the king, commanding one of his chaplains to

prepare him to mass, insomuch that the said chaplain stood revested

until four of the clock at afternoon; all which season my lord never

rose once even to eat any meat, but continually wrote his letters, with

his own hands, having all that time his nightcap and kerchief on his

head. And about the hour of four of the clock, at afternoon, he made an

end of writing, and commanded one Christopher Gunner, the king's

servant, to prepare him without delay to ride empost into England with

his letters, whom he despatched away or ever he drank. And that done he

went to mass, and said his other divine service with his chaplain, as he

was accustomed to do; and then went straight into a garden; and after he

had walked the space of an hour or more, and said his evensong, he went

to dinner and supper all at once; and making a small repast, he went to

his bed, to take his rest for the night."

While Wolsey was thus labouring in this thorny matter, he received a

visit from Knight on his way to Rome. Knight's instructions were to

demand from the Pope a dispensation for Henry to marry again before the

divorce from Katharine had been pronounced; failing this, to marry

immediately after his marriage with Katharine was declared invalid.

Further, he was to ask the Pope to issue a bull delegating his spiritual

authority to Cardinal Wolsey during his captivity. No doubt this was an

expeditious way to cut existing difficulties; but it was too expeditious

to suit the traditions of the Papal Court. Its obvious clumsiness showed

that it was not the work of Wolsey's hand; and it was unwise for the

king to inform the Pope that he was trying to act without Wolsey's

knowledge.

Though Wolsey was left in ignorance of the nature of Knight's

instructions, he could not but suspect that the king was acting without

his full knowledge. He finished his work at Compiegne and returned to

England at the end of September. He at once repaired to the Court at

Richmond, and sent to tell the king of his arrival. Hitherto the king

had always retired to a private room when he received the cardinal

alone. Now Anne Boleyn was with the king in the great hall, and scarcely

had Wolsey's message been delivered than she broke in, "Where else

should the cardinal come than here where the king is?" The king

confirmed her command, and Wolsey found himself ushered into the hall,

where Henry sat amusing himself with Anne and his favourites. Serious

talk was out of the question. Wolsey was no longer first in the king's

confidence. He went away feeling that Anne Boleyn was his political

rival, whom he could only overcome by serving better than she could

serve herself. Henceforth he had two masters instead of one, and he did

not deceive himself that the continuance of his power depended solely on

his usefulness in the matter of the divorce.

As Wolsey showed himself compliant, Anne Boleyn treated him graciously

while she waited to hear the result of Knight's mission to Rome. It was

not easy for him to enter the city, which was in possession of the

Spaniards, and when he entered it he could not hold any personal

communication with Clement VII., who was shut up in the Castle of St.

Angelo. On 9th December Clement escaped to Orvieto, where Knight soon

joined him, and showed his incapacity for the work which had been

confided to him by revealing to the papal officials the whole details of

the matter, which he ought to have kept secret. Clement saw at once the

value of Henry's conscientious scruples, and learned that he was moved

solely by a desire to marry Anne Boleyn, a connection which could not be

excused by any paramount reasons of political expediency. However

anxious the Pope might be to oblige the English king, there were limits

to his complacency, and Knight had not the wits to cast a fair

appearance over a disgraceful matter. Yet Clement did not wish to offend

Henry by refusing his request at once. The demand for a dispensation

empowering the king to marry at once had already been dropped at

Wolsey's instance. Knight carried with him a form of dispensation

allowing Henry to marry as soon as his marriage with Katharine was

dissolved. This form was amended by one of the cardinals, and was signed

by the Pope. Knight started back to England, convinced that he had done

his business excellently, and was bearing to the king the permission

which he desired.

When the documents were placed in Wolsey's hands he saw at once that

they were worthless. What Henry wanted was permission for Wolsey to

decide the question in the Pope's behalf, and permission for himself to

act at once as soon as Wolsey's decision was pronounced. The documents

which he received did not bar Katharine's right of appeal; consequently

Wolsey's decision would be of no effect, and the king could not lawfully

marry again pending the appeal. In fact, the Pope reserved the entire

decision of the matter in his own hand.

It was a small matter for Wolsey to triumph over a man like Knight; but

Knight's failure showed Henry and Anne Boleyn that they must put their

confidence in Wolsey after all. So in February 1528 Wolsey had to begin

again from the beginning, and had to undo the mischief which Knight's

bungling had made. He chose as his agents his secretary, Stephen

Gardiner, and Edward Foxe, one of the king's chaplains. They were

instructed to ask that the Pope would join with Wolsey some special

legate, and give them power to pronounce a final judgment. For this

purpose they were to plead Henry's cause with all earnestness, and say

that the king was moved only by the scruples of his conscience; at the

same time they were to praise the virtues of Anne Boleyn, and say that

the king was solely moved by considerations of his duty to his country

in his desire to marry her. Further, they were to insist on the

dishonour which would be done to the Holy See if the Pope, through fear

of Charles V., were to refuse to do justice. If the king could not

obtain justice from the Pope he would be compelled to seek it elsewhere,

and live outside the laws of Holy Church; and however reluctant, he

would be driven to this for the quiet of his conscience.

Truly these pleas were sorely contradictory. Henry was ready to

acknowledge to the fullest extent the papal power of granting

dispensations, and was ready to submit to the justice of the Pope as the

highest justice upon earth. But this was solely on condition that the

Pope gave decision according to his wishes. He regarded the Papacy as an

excellent institution so long as it was on his own side. If it refused

to see the justice of his pleas, then he fell back as strenuously as did

Luther on the necessity of satisfying his own conscience, and to do so

he was ready, if need were, to break with the Church. Truly the movement

in Germany had affected public opinion more than was supposed when

Wolsey could hold such language to the Pope. He did not know what a

terrible reality that curious conscience of Henry would become. His

words were a truer prophecy than he dreamed.

However, this line of argument was stubbornly pursued by Gardiner even

in the Pope's presence. Clement at Orvieto was not surrounded by the

pomp and splendour customary to his office. The English envoys found him

in a little room, seated on a wooden bench which was covered with "an

old coverlet not worth twenty pence." But he did not see his way to a

restoration of his dignity by an unhesitating compliance with the

demands of the English king; on the other hand, the mere fact that his

fortunes had sunk so low demanded greater circumspection. He was not

likely to escape from dependence on Charles V. by making himself the

tool of Francis I. and Henry VIII.; such a proceeding would only lead to

the entire destruction of the papal authority. Its restoration must be

achieved by holding the balance between the opposing Powers of Europe,

and Henry VIII.'s desire for a divorce gave the Pope an opportunity of

showing that he was still a personage of some importance. Dynastic

questions still depended on his decree, and he could use Henry's

application as a means of showing Charles that he had something to fear

from the Papacy, and that it was his policy to make the Papacy friendly

to himself. So Clement resolved to adopt a congenial course of

temporising, in the hope that he might see his advantage in some turn of

affairs. No doubt he thought that Henry's matter would soon settle

itself; either his passion for Anne Boleyn would pass away, or he would

make her his mistress. The stubbornness of Henry, his strange hold upon

formal morality while pursuing an immoral course of conduct, his

imperious selfwill, which grew by opposition--these were incalculable

elements which might have upset the plans of wiser men than Clement VII.

So the Pope acted the part of the good simple man who wishes to do what

is right. He lamented his own ignorance, and proposed to consult those

who were more learned in canon law than himself. When Gardiner said that

England asked nothing but justice, and if it were refused would be

driven to think that God had taken away from the Holy See the key of

knowledge, and would begin to adopt the opinion of those who thought

that pontifical laws, which were not clear to the Pope himself, might

well be committed to the flames, Clement sighed, and suggested a

compromise. Then he added, with a smile, that though canonists said "the

Pope has all laws in the cabinet of his breast," yet God had not given

him the key to open that cabinet; he could only consult his cardinals.

Gardiner's outspoken remonstrances were useless against one who pleaded

an amiable incompetence. Against the churnings of Henry's conscience

Clement set up the churnings of his own conscience, and no one could

gainsay the Pope's right to a conscience as much as the English king.

After pursuing this course during the month of March the Pope at length

with sighs and tears devised a compromise, in which he feared that he

had outstepped the bounds of discretion. He accepted one of the

documents which the English envoys had brought, the permission for the

king to marry whom he would as soon as his marriage with Katharine had

been dissolved. He altered the terms of the other document, which

provided for the appointment of a commission with plenary powers to

pronounce on the validity of the king's marriage; he granted the

commission, but did not give it plenary power; at the same time he chose

as the commissioner who was to sit with Wolsey Cardinal Campeggio, who

was the protector of England in the Papal Court, and who was rewarded

for his services by holding the bishopric of Hereford. In this way he

showed every mark of goodwill to Henry short of acquiescing entirely in

the procedure which he proposed; but he kept the final decision of the

matter in his own hands.

Gardiner was not wholly pleased with this result of his skill and

firmness: after all his efforts to obtain a definite solution the Pope

had managed to escape from giving any binding promise. Still, Foxe put a

good face on Gardiner's exploits when he returned to England in the end

of April. Henry and Anne Boleyn were delighted, and Wolsey, though he

was more dissatisfied than Gardiner, thought it best to be hopeful. He

tried to bind the Pope more firmly, and instructed Gardiner to press

that the law relating to Henry's case should be laid down in a papal

decretal, so that the legates should only have to determine the question

of fact; this decretal he promised to keep entirely secret; besides

this, he urged that there should be no delay in sending Campeggio.

During these months of expectancy Wolsey condescended to ingratiate

himself with Anne Boleyn, who had become a political personage of the

first importance. Anne was sure of Wolsey's devotion to her interests so

long as they were also the king's, and could not dispense with Wolsey's

skill. So she was kindly, and wrote friendly letters to Wolsey, and

asked for little gifts of tunny-fish and shrimps. The English Court

again resembled an amiable family party, whose members were all of one

mind. In the course of the summer they were all thrown into terror by an

outbreak of the "Sweating Sickness," which devastated the country. Anne

Boleyn was attacked, though not severely; and Henry showed that his

devotion to her did not proceed to the length of risking his own

precious life for her sake. He fled to Waltham, and Anne was left with

her father; Henry protested by letter his unalterable affection, but

kept out of harm's way till all risk of infection was past. At the same

time he showed great solicitude for Wolsey's health, as did also Anne

Boleyn. It seemed as though Wolsey were never more useful or more highly

esteemed.

Yet, strangely enough, this outbreak of the plague drew upon Wolsey the

most significant lesson which he had yet received of his own real

position and of Henry's resoluteness to brook no check upon his royal

will. Amongst others who perished in the sickness was the Abbess of

Wilton, and Anne Boleyn wished that the vacant office should be given to

one of the nuns of the abbey, Eleanor Carey, sister of William Carey,

who had married Anne's sister Mary. Wolsey was informed of the wishes of

Anne and of the king on this point; but on examination found that

Eleanor's life and character were not such as to fit her for the office.

He therefore proposed to confer it on the prioress, Isabella Jordan. It

would seem, however, that Eleanor's friends were determined to efface in

some degree the scandal which their unwise haste had occasioned, and

they retaliated by spreading reports injurious to the character of the

prioress. Wolsey did not believe these reports; but Anne Boleyn and the

king agreed that if their nominee was to be set aside, the cardinal's

nominee should be set aside likewise, and Wolsey was informed of the

king's decision. Perhaps Wolsey failed to understand the secret motives

which were at work; perhaps he had so far committed himself before

receiving the king's message that he could not well go back; perhaps he

conscientiously did what he thought right. Anyhow, he appointed Isabella

Jordan, and sent her appointment to the king for confirmation; further,

he gave as his excuse that he had not understood the king's will in the

matter.

To his extreme surprise and mortification the king took the opportunity

thus afforded of reading him a lecture on his presumption, and reminding

him that he was expected to render implicit obedience. Matters were no

longer arranged between Henry and Wolsey alone; Anne Boleyn was a third

party, and the king's pride was engaged in showing her that his word was

law. When Henry took his pen in hand he assumed the mantle of royal

dignity, and he now gave Wolsey a sample of the royal way of putting

things which was so effectual in his later dealings with his Parliament.

He began by assuring Wolsey that the great love he bore him led him to

apply the maxim, "Whom I love I chasten;" he spoke therefore not in

displeasure but for Wolsey's good. He could not but be displeased that

Wolsey had acted contrary to his orders; he was the more displeased that

Wolsey had pleaded ignorance as an excuse for his disobedience. He

overwhelmed him with quotations from his letters on the subject, and

went on, "Ah, my lord, it is a double offence both to do ill and colour

it too; but with men that have wit it cannot be accepted so. Wherefore,

good my lord, use no more that way with me, for there is no man living

that more hateth it." He then went on to tell Wolsey that there were

many rumours current about the means which he was employing to raise

money from religious houses for the foundation of his new colleges; he

told him this because "I dare be bolder with you than many that mumble

it abroad." He showed that he had not forgotten the refusal of the

monasteries to help in the Amicable Grant: why should they now give

money to Wolsey unless they had some interested motive in doing so? He

advised Wolsey to look closely into the matter, and ended, "I pray you,

my lord, think not that it is upon any displeasure that I write this

unto you. For surely it is for my discharge afore God, being in the room

that I am in; and secondly, for the great zeal I bear unto you, not

undeserved on your behalf. Wherefore, I pray you, take it so; and I

assure you, your fault acknowledged, there shall remain in me no spark

of displeasure; trusting hereafter you shall recompense that with a

thing much more acceptable to me."

This letter came upon Wolsey as a sudden revelation of his true

position. It showed him the reality of all the vague doubts and fears

which he had for some time been striving to put from him. He was crushed

into abjectness, which he did not even strive to conceal from others. He

took the immediate matters of complaint seriously to heart, and wished

to annul the appointment of Isabella Jordan, which the king ruled to be

unnecessary; on that point he was satisfied with having asserted a

principle. But he advised Wolsey to receive no more gifts for his

colleges from religious houses, and Wolsey promised not to do so.

"Thereby I trust, nor by any other thing hereafter unlawfully taken,

your poor cardinal's conscience shall not be spotted, encumbered, or

entangled; purposing, with God's help and your gracious favour, so to

order the rest of my poor life that it shall appear to your Highness

that I love and dread God and also your Majesty." This was a lamentable

prostration of the moral authority of the chief churchman in England

before the king, and showed Wolsey's weakness. He knew that he had not

demeaned himself as befitted his priestly office; and though he may have

felt that no man in England had less right than the king to reprove his

conduct on moral grounds, still he could not plead that he was above

reproach. In the particular matter of which he was accused--extorting

money from the religious houses in return for immunities granted in

virtue of his legatine power--there is no evidence that Wolsey was

guilty. But he could not say that he had a conscience void of offence;

he had acted throughout his career as a statesman and a man of the

world. If the king chose to hold him up to moral reprobation he had no

valid defence to offer. He had disregarded the criticisms of others that

he might serve the king more faithfully; but if the king took upon

himself the office of critic he had nothing to urge. It was because

Henry had taken the measure of churchmen such as Wolsey that he ventured

in later times to hold such lofty language in addressing the clergy.

Henry was always superior to the weakness of imagining that his own

conduct needed any defence, or his own motives any justification.

Wolsey, though forgiven with royal graciousness, was profoundly

depressed, and could not recover his sense of security. The future was

to him big with menaces, and perhaps he looked most sadly upon his

designs which yet remained unrealised. He saw that his activity must

henceforth work in a smaller sphere, and that he must make haste to

finish what he had on hand. The ugly business of the divorce looked to

him still uglier. Either he would fail in his efforts to move the Pope,

in which case he lost his hold upon the king at once, or, if he

succeeded, he saw that the reign of Anne Boleyn meant the end of his own

uncontested influence. The king's letter was at least significant of

that: he would never have raised a question about so trivial a matter if

he had not wished to justify his absolute power in the eyes of one who

was to him all-important.

So Wolsey faced the future; he put his aspirations on a lower level, and

wished only to garner certainly some of the fruits of his life-long

labour. He told the French ambassador, Du Bellay, "that if God permitted

him to see the hatred of these two nations (France and England)

extinguished, and firm amity established, as he hopes it will shortly

be, with a reform of the laws and customs of the country, such as he

would effect if peace were made, and the succession of the kingdom

assured, especially if this marriage took place, and an heir male were

born of it, he would at once retire, and serve God for the rest of his

life; and that, without any doubt, on the first honourable occasion he

could find, he would give up politics." Doubtless Wolsey was genuine in

these utterances, and felt that he was resigning much when he reduced

his designs within the limits which he here set forth. But limited as

they were, they still contained an entire scheme for the reconstruction

of English politics. Wolsey's plans remained complete, however much he

might be willing to reduce them; he was incapable of being a mere

attendant upon chance.

For the present he was awaiting with growing anxiety the coming of

Cardinal Campeggio, which was delayed, according to the Pope's policy of

procrastination. First the cardinal had to contend against the

difficulties created by the disorderly state of Italy; then he was

delayed by an attack of the gout, which made his movements slow; and he

did not reach London till 8th October. When he came he was not prepared

to act at once, nor did he treat Wolsey as an equal but rather as a

subordinate in the work of the commission. In fact, Campeggio behaved as

judge, and Wolsey as the king's advocate. Campeggio's instructions were

first to try and persuade the king to lay aside his purpose of a

divorce. He soon saw that this was useless, and Wolsey plainly warned

him with prophetic instinct. "Most reverend lord, beware lest, in like

manner as the greater part of Germany, owing to the harshness and

severity of a certain cardinal, has become estranged from the Apostolic

See and the faith, it should be said that another cardinal has given the

same occasion to England, with the same result."

Failing to shake the king's determination, the next course which

Campeggio was ordered to pursue was to persuade the queen to comply with

the king's wishes. Katharine was still treated with outward respect, but

was cut off from all friends and advisers, and subjected to a secret and

galling persecution. Still she maintained a resolute spirit, and

withstood the pleadings of Wolsey and Campeggio, who urged her to give

way and withdraw to a monastery, for the quieting of the king's

conscience. Katharine replied that there was nothing of which his

conscience need be afraid, and that she intended "to live and die in the

estate of matrimony to which God had called her." The obstinacy of

Katharine was as invincible as the obstinacy of Henry; and Katharine had

right on her side.

Nothing remained save for the legates to proceed to the trial of the

case; and in the trial Campeggio's instructions bade him procrastinate

to the utmost in hopes the king might give way before the long delay.

Wolsey had foreseen this possibility when he demanded that Campeggio

should bring with him a decretal defining the law as applicable to the

case. This decretal Campeggio was instructed to show the king, but keep

in his own hands, so that it was useless for Wolsey's purpose. His first

object was to get hold of this decretal, and he wrote urgently to the

Pope asking that it should be delivered into the king's hands, and shown

to the Privy Council. "Without the Pope's compliance," he sadly wrote,

"I cannot bear up against this storm." But Clement VII. felt that he was

more dependent on Charles V. than on Henry VIII., and declared that he

had granted the decretal merely to be shown to the king and then burned;

he had never consented that it be shown to the king's counsellors. When

he was further pressed he tossed his arms and said, with great

agitation, "I do consider the ruin that hangs over me; I repent what I

have done. If heresies arise, is it my fault? My conscience acquits me.

None of you have any reason to complain. I have performed my promise,

and the king and the cardinal have never asked anything in my power

which I have not granted with the utmost readiness; but I will do no

violence to my conscience. Let them, if they like, send the legate back

again, on the pretext that he will not proceed in the cause, and then do

as they please, provided they do not make me responsible for injustice."

Here the Pope touched upon a noticeable feature of the case. Henry was

bound upon a course which was neither legally nor morally right, though

national interests might to some degree be pleaded in its behalf. He

was, however, resolved to be legally and morally justified in his own

eyes and in the eyes of others. He would not content himself with

setting aside the law, and leaving it to others to prove him in the

wrong. The Papal Court was slow to justify him; it would have been

slower to condemn him. Most men would have been satisfied with this

knowledge, and would have acted upon it. But Henry was not only minded

to do what he wished, but was resolved that what he wished should be

declared absolutely right. He was determined that there should be no

doubt about the legitimacy of his children by Anne Boleyn; and some

recognition is due to him for not allowing his desires to overcome his

patriotism, and leave to England the deplorable legacy of a disputed

succession. As a man, Henry did not strive to subject his desires to the

law of right; as a king, he was bent upon justifying his own caprice so

that it should not do hurt to his royal office, or offend his duty to

his kingdom. Henry sinned, but he was bent on sinning royally, and

believed that so he could extenuate his sin.

Not only was Campeggio ordered not to part with the decretal, but he was

bidden to destroy it. Meanwhile a new feature of the case emerged. It

became known that, besides the bull of dispensation granted to Henry

VII., an ampler brief had been issued in confirmation of it to Ferdinand

of Spain, of which the original was contained in the Spanish archives.

Henry VIII. insisted on its production, in the hopes of destroying it or

casting doubts on its authenticity, and new negotiations were begun

about this brief, which had the effect of wasting time and deferring the

trial of the case. Further, on Clement VII.'s return to Rome in May he

was attacked by illness, and his death was reported. Nothing could be

done by the legates till they were assured of his recovery.

Meanwhile Henry was growing more and more impatient, and made it clear

to Wolsey that if the proceedings did not lead to his divorce all the

blame would be laid at Wolsey's door. Anne Boleyn also began to suspect

Wolsey's good intentions towards herself, and thought that he was

responsible for these repeated delays. Wolsey could no longer doubt that

his all was staked on the issue of the trial, which at length began at

Blackfriars on 18th June 1529. Katharine appeared, and protested against

the jurisdiction of the court. For the purpose of deciding this point it

was necessary that both parties should appear in person; and on 21st

June Henry and Katharine both were present. The king demanded instant

judgment for the easing of his conscience; Katharine first knelt before

the king and asked for pity, then she appealed to Rome, where only the

cause could be decided without partiality or suspicion. The legates

overruled her appeal, and on her non-appearance declared her

contumacious.

The summoning of the king and queen was merely a formal incident in the

procedure of the court, but it strangely impressed itself upon men's

minds. The king, whom they regarded as the fountain of law, was called

to plead before one of his own subjects and a foreign priest. Apart from

any thought of the question at issue, or its rights and wrongs,

Englishmen marvelled at this indignity, and felt that ecclesiastical law

was some foreign thing which they could not fathom. No doubt the

impression then wrought upon their minds accounts in some measure for

the acceptance of the royal supremacy, as being at least more

intelligible than the actual working of the outworn theory of the

supremacy of the Pope.

Moreover, the suppliant attitude of Katharine awakened a strong feeling

of compassion, which on 28th June found expression from the upright

Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher, who appeared to plead Katharine's

cause, and declared himself ready to follow the example of John the

Baptist and lay down his life, if need be, to maintain the sanctity of

matrimony. Others followed his example, and the signs of some dislike to

the king's proceedings amongst Englishmen encouraged Campeggio to fall

back upon his policy of procrastination, which the impetuous zeal of

Wolsey was striving to overcome.

Henry grew more and more angry at the signs of opposition to his will

which met him on every side, and Wolsey had to bear the brunt of the

royal wrath. Cavendish tells how one day Wolsey left the king's presence

and took his barge. The Bishop of Carlisle, who was with him, remarked

that the day was hot. "Yea," quoth my lord cardinal, "if ye had been as

well chafed as I have been within this hour ye would say it was very

hot." He went home "to his naked bed," where in two hours' time he was

found by Lord Wiltshire, who brought a message from the king, bidding

him and Campeggio "repair unto the queen at Bridewell, into her chamber,

to persuade her by their wisdoms, advising her to surrender the whole

matter unto the king's hands by her own will and consent, which should

be much better to her honour than to stand to the trial of law and be

condemned, which would seem much to her slander and defamation." Wolsey

vainly complained of the folly of the lords of the Council in putting

such fancies into the king's head: he was bound to rise and obey. Sadly

he sought Campeggio, and with a sense of deep humiliation the two judges

set out to make another attempt to browbeat an accused who had already

refused to submit to their judicial authority.

On 23d July it was expected that the court would give its decision. The

king was present in a gallery, and after the reading of the pleas his

counsel demanded judgment. Campeggio rose and declared that as the

vacation of the Roman courts began at the end of July and lasted till

October, he must follow that custom, and adjourn the sittings of the

court for two months. On this the Duke of Suffolk slapped the table and

exclaimed, "It was never merry in England whilst we had cardinals among

us." Wolsey was not the man to brook an insult, especially from one whom

he had greatly benefited. "Sir," he said, "of all men within this realm

ye have least cause to dispraise or be offended at cardinals: for if I,

a simple cardinal, had not been, you should have had at this present no

head upon your shoulders, wherein you should have a tongue to make any

such report of us, who intend you no manner of displeasure."

But though Wolsey could still wear a bold face when attacked, he knew

that the future was hopeless. His enemies were daily gaining ground. His

place, as the king's trusted counsellor, was taken by Stephen Gardiner,

whom he had trained, and who was now the king's secretary and Anne

Boleyn's chief agent. The old nobles, headed by the Duke of Norfolk, had

made common cause with the relations of Anne Boleyn, and saw their

opportunity of avenging themselves for all the slights which Wolsey had

put upon them. Henry was unwilling to abandon all hopes of his divorce

through the legatine court, and spared Wolsey for a time; but Wolsey

knew that the ground was slipping from under him. The Pope resolved to

revoke the cause to Rome, and recall the powers granted to the legates;

it required all Wolsey's efforts to prevent the issue of a citation to

Henry to appear before the Roman court.

Moreover, Wolsey had the additional pang of seeing all the fruits of his

diplomatic activity abandoned before the absorbing interest of this

miserable matter of the king's domestic life. If there was one object

which was dear to Wolsey's heart, it was to secure England's power in

Europe by a close alliance with France. For this purpose he had made

great sacrifices, and he thought that he had some claim on Francis I.'s

gratitude. Yet Francis was negotiating for peace with Charles V., and a

conference was being held at Cambrai between his mother Louise and

Charles's aunt Margaret. Wolsey sorely longed to be present at that

conference and protect the interests of England; but Henry VIII. had no

interest in such matters, and only regarded Wolsey's wish as a sign that

he was lukewarm in his efforts for the divorce. Moreover, Francis I.

defamed him to the English envoy, the Duke of Suffolk, and did his best

to foster the king's suspicion of Wolsey's zeal in "the great matter."

He knew that to deprive Henry of his acute adviser was the readiest

means of hiding his own proceedings. The conference at Cambrai was an

abandonment of the methods of diplomacy and a return to the old usages

of the days of chivalry. Two women took counsel together about family

affairs, and their object was to remove domestic difficulties. Really

Francis I. was weary of a profitless warfare, and agreed to abandon

Italy to Charles V. Henry VIII. was appeased by a transference of the

debt of Charles V. to the shoulders of Francis I., and this promise of

more money seems to have satisfied the English king. Early in August the

peace was signed, and Henry was included in its provisions. If a

testimony were needed that entirely English diplomacy depended upon

Wolsey, it would be found in Henry's short-sightedness at this time. He

did not try to influence the proceedings at Cambrai, but allowed himself

to be hoodwinked by Francis I., even in the point about which he was

most interested. The peace of Cambrai left Charles V. supreme in Italy,

and restored in name the authority of the Pope, which the two sovereigns

declared themselves resolved to maintain. Its practical result was to

make the Pope more anxious to please Charles, who was now most closely

connected with his political interests, and to free him from the dread

of an alliance between Henry and Francis, which might have brought

pressure to bear upon his action in the divorce. Clement had now no

special motive for trying to conciliate the English king, and it was

clear to all Europe that Wolsey no longer guided England's policy.

It was not only that Wolsey had failed in the matter of the divorce, but

his failure had brought to light the true nature of the policy which he

was pursuing, and had shown that it was not adapted to the turn which

affairs were taking under the influence of the king's personal desires.

Wolsey had planned a conservative reform, to be carried out gradually.

England, respected on the Continent, and holding the balance between

France and the Empire, was gradually to assert its power and

independence by setting up a strong monarchy which should overawe the

Papacy, and without any formal breach with past traditions, should

remodel its ecclesiastical institutions, and put its relations to the

Papacy on a new footing. Henry VIII. had so far entered into the spirit

of this plan as to regard the existing state of things as of little

moment, and his wishes led him to try and anticipate the future. This

was the most disastrous thing that could have befallen Wolsey: it is the

danger which besets all attempts at conservative reform. It is hard to

train men in the ideas of future change, and expect them to submit

patiently to present fetters. Henry brusquely demanded too much from the

Pope, and the Pope in his alarm offered too little. Wolsey tried to

mediate, but he was too closely allied with Henry for the Pope to trust

him, and when his object was clearly seen in a small matter he was

deprived of the means by which he hoped to win. His method was framed

for large operations on a large field; it was not suited for the petty

task which was suddenly imposed upon him. Yet if it failed there it was

sure to be condemned altogether, and the future would belong to the more

revolutionary forces which he had been trying to hold in check.

So in proportion as Wolsey failed about the divorce, the threads of his

different but converging schemes fell from his hands. What was the

profit to Henry of Wolsey's intricate foreign policy if it did not allow

him to get a divorce when he pleased? Why should he deal tenderly with

the papal authority when it threw such obstacles in his way? Why should

he spare the Church when its bishops protested against him? Why should

he permit the slow transformation of the monasteries when with a little

trouble their spoil would fall into his hands? Why should he trust to

Wolsey, who had already failed him in his need, when he had men like

Gardiner, with clear heads about matters of details, to serve him at his

need? Above all, why should Wolsey's fine-drawn plans stand between him

and his people's affections, and lead him to do what Englishmen neither

understood nor approved? These were the questions with which Henry was

plied. Wolsey had been only too successful and too consistent. If his

policy was abandoned in aught, it must be abandoned in all. When Henry

let fall Wolsey's foreign policy, and made no effort to influence the

peace of Cambrai, there was no further need of Wolsey in England's

councils, and his rule was practically at an end.

Still Wolsey was permitted to retain his offices. Campeggio had not yet

departed; something might still be done. The king had for some time

avoided seeing Wolsey, and was engaged in wandering from place to place

in the company of Anne Boleyn. At last, in the middle of September,

Campeggio prepared to return to Rome, and accompanied by Wolsey went to

take leave of the king, who was then at Grafton in Northamptonshire.

There they arrived on 19th September, and Campeggio was shown to his

room, but Wolsey was informed that there was no room provided for him.

He was relieved from his astonishment by a groom of the stole, who said,

"I assure you, sir, here is very little room in this house, scantly

sufficient for the king. However, I beseech your grace to accept mine

for a season." When Wolsey and Campeggio were ushered into the king's

presence they found the lords of the Council eagerly watching the king's

behaviour. If they expected any signs of the royal displeasure they were

disappointed, as Henry received Wolsey most graciously, and drew him

aside into a window, where he talked with him privately.

The king dined privately with Anne Boleyn, and Wolsey dined with the

lords of the Council. In course of conversation he hinted at his own

intentions for the future by saying, "It were well done if the king

would send his chaplains and bishops to their cures and benefices." The

Duke of Norfolk eagerly assented, and Wolsey went on to say that he

would gladly go to his bishopric of Winchester. Then Norfolk showed his

fears by saying, "Nay, to your see of York, whence comes both your

greatest honour and charge." Already Wolsey's foes were scheming to

remove him as far as possible from the royal presence.

Every one was eagerly watching and listening for the smallest

indications of the royal pleasure; and Cavendish was told that Anne

Boleyn at dinner with the king showed her dissatisfaction at Wolsey's

kindly reception. She denounced the cardinal in no measured terms, but

without any immediate result, as after dinner the king called Wolsey

into his private room and talked with him for some time; "the which

blanked his enemies very sore, and made them to stir the coals, being in

doubt what this matter would grow into, having now none other refuge to

trust to but Mistress Anne, in whom was all their whole and firm trust

and affiance." Wolsey rode off to "Master Empson's house, called Euston,

three miles from Grafton," where he spent the night, and received a

visit from Gardiner, who was thought to come as a spy; but Wolsey talked

to him about indifferent subjects, and showed that his sense of personal

dignity was still strong.

Next morning he rode early to the Court, and saw the king for a short

time; but Anne Boleyn had prepared a picnic at Hatwell Park, and carried

off Henry with her, that Wolsey might not have much opportunity for

private talk. The king bade a hurried farewell to Wolsey and Campeggio,

and then rode away with Anne, while the legates returned to London.

Campeggio did not reach Dover till 8th October, and before he was

allowed to embark his luggage was ransacked by the king's officials.

This extraordinary violation of the privileges of an ambassador was

characteristic of the unscrupulous meanness to which Henry was now ready

to descend. He hoped to find amongst Campeggio's papers the Pope's

decretal about the law of the divorce. If he had found it Wolsey might

still have been useful. He might have been compelled to continue the

proceedings of the legatine court, and give judgment in Henry's favour,

sheltering himself under the terms of the commission, and applying the

interpretation of the decretal. In this way the first measures wrung out

of the Pope when he wished to be conciliating might have been used in a

high-handed fashion against the conclusions of his settled policy. But

Campeggio had already been instructed by the Pope to burn the decretal.

Nothing was found as the result of the search, which only revealed the

cardinal's poverty. He had come to England ill provided, and had gained

nothing from the royal bounty.

This unworthy device seems to have been of Henry's own devising; and as

soon as he heard of its failure Wolsey's doom was sealed. The king had

treated him graciously, to the dismay even of Anne Boleyn, a few days

before; now he abandoned him to his enemies, who had their weapons of

attack in readiness. On 9th October the king's attorney sued for a writ

of \_præmunire\_ against Wolsey, on the ground that his acts done as

legate were contrary to the statute. After this Wolsey's ruin was a

foregone conclusion.

CHAPTER X

THE FALL OF WOLSEY

1529-1530

When the storm broke over his head Wolsey had no hope of escape. His

position as an English minister was due entirely to the king's favour,

and when that favour was withdrawn he was entirely helpless. Outside the

king there was no motive power in English politics at this period. There

was no party in the State strong enough to bring any influence to bear

upon him: he was likely to be moved by nothing save the dread of a

popular rising, and there was no chance of a popular rising in Wolsey's

favour. On the other hand, Wolsey had been contented to take upon his

own shoulders the responsibility of all that was most unpopular in the

king's proceedings. The demands created by the king's extravagance were

put down to his extortionate nature; the debts incurred by a policy

which he disapproved were supposed to be the results of his influence;

even the divorce was attributed to his ill-will against the Emperor and

his love for France. The current of popular opinion ran strong against

Wolsey. He had made few friends and many enemies. His enemies were

powerful, his friends were powerless. No one in England could lend him

any help.

It is true that the charge brought against him was most iniquitous. He

had obtained his legatine authority through the king's urgent request;

he had used it solely at the king's orders, and in the king's behalf.

But he knew that such a plea would not be regarded, as the king's courts

would simply register the king's will. There was no other course than

entire submission, and before the king Wolsey had no thought of personal

dignity. He wrote to Henry as a lowly suppliant, "For surely, most

gracious king, the remembrance of my folly, with the sharp sword of your

Highness's displeasure, hath so penetrated my heart that I cannot but

lamentably cry, It is enough; now stay, most merciful king, your hand."

Such loyalty, such entire submission, is to our minds inconceivable, and

only shows how the possession of absolute power debases not only those

who are invested with it but those who are brought in contact with them.

Wolsey might indeed lament his "folly" in putting any trust in princes;

he had served his master only too well, and met with the basest

ingratitude for all the sacrifices of his own wishes and his own

principles.

Still he hoped by his submission to save something. If sentence were

pronounced against him, under the charge of \_præmunire\_, his goods would

be forfeited, and his acts invalidated. If he threw himself upon the

king's mercy he might at least save his two colleges, and might be

permitted to serve his country on a smaller scale. What was coming he

could not foresee. There would be open war between Henry and the Papacy,

waged with new weapons and fraught with danger to the English Church.

"It is the intention of these lords," wrote the French ambassador, "when

Wolsey is dead or destroyed, to get rid of the Church and spoil the

goods of both. I suppose they mean to do grand things." The days of

revolution were at hand, and Wolsey might still have some power to check

its excesses.

His submission led to no immediate results. On 16th October the Dukes of

Norfolk and Suffolk demanded the surrender of the great seal, and

ordered Wolsey to depart to his house at Esher. Wolsey would humble

himself before the king, but not before others, and calmly asked them

for their authority. They answered that they had the king's commission

by word of mouth. "The great seal of England," said Wolsey, "was

delivered me by the king's own person, to enjoy during my life, with the

ministration of the office and high room of chancellorship of England;

for my surety whereof I have the king's letters-patent to show." High

words were used by the dukes, but in the end they departed, and

reappeared next day with letters from the king. On reading them Wolsey

delivered up the seal, and expressed himself content to withdraw to

Esher.

Before departing he made an inventory of all his plate and tapestries,

that it might be ready for the king to take possession. He further

signed an indenture acknowledging that on the authority of bulls

obtained from Rome, which he published in England contrary to the

statute, he had unlawfully vexed the prelates of the realm and other of

the king's subjects, thereby incurring the penalties of \_præmunire\_, by

which also he deserved to suffer perpetual imprisonment at the king's

pleasure, and to forfeit all his lands, offices, and goods. He besought

the king, in part recompense of his offences, to take into his hands all

his temporal possessions. Then he entered his barge in the presence of a

crowd, which was sorely disappointed not to see him take the way to the

Tower.

When Wolsey arrived at Putney he was greeted by a messenger from the

king, who brought him as a token a ring, with a message "that the king

bade him be of good cheer, for he should not lack. Although the king

hath dealt with you unkindly, he saith that it is for no displeasure

that he beareth you, but only to satisfy the minds of some which he

knoweth be not your friends. Also ye know right well that he is able to

recompense you with twice as much as your goods amounteth unto: and all

this he bade me that I should show you. Therefore, sir, take patience;

and for my part, I trust to see you in better estate than ever ye were."

When Wolsey heard this he dismounted from his mule and knelt in the mud

in sign of thankfulness. He gave a present to the messenger, and grieved

that he had no worthy gift to send to the king. Presently he bethought

himself of a jester belonging to his household. "If ye would at my

request present the king with this poor fool, I trust his Highness would

accept him well, for surely for a nobleman's pleasure he is worth a

thousand pounds." It is a relief to find in this dismal story some signs

of human feeling. "The poor fool took on so, and fired so in such a rage

when he saw that he must needs depart from my lord," that six tall

yeomen had to be sent as an escort to convey him safely to the Court.

It is needless to seek for a motive for Henry's conduct in sending this

delusive message; probably he did it through an amiable desire to make

himself generally agreeable. No man likes to feel that he is acting

villainously; perhaps Henry's conscience felt all the pleasure of having

performed a virtuous action when he heard of Wolsey's gratitude for such

a small mercy. Henry VIII. was nothing if he was not conscientious; but

he made large drafts on his conscience, and paid them back in small

coin. Probably we have here the record of such a payment.

Certainly Henry did nothing to give his goodwill towards Wolsey any

practical expression; he did not even send him any money to provide his

household with the necessaries of life. For a month they remained

"without beds, sheets, tablecloths, cups, and dishes to eat their meat

or lie in," and ultimately had to borrow them. What most distressed

Wolsey, who had been accustomed to munificence, was that he had not even

money to pay the wages of his household before he dismissed them sadly

from his service. In his straits one of his officials came to his aid,

and showed his tact and management in affairs of business. Thomas

Cromwell, the son of a London citizen, spent an adventurous youth in

business on the Continent, and settled in London as a small attorney and

a money-lender. Wolsey had found out his ability, and employed him to

manage the dissolution of the monasteries, and transact the business

connected with the foundation of his colleges. No doubt this gave him

opportunities of spreading his own business, and making himself useful

friends. In anticipation of the future he contrived to get himself

elected as member of the Parliament for which Henry VIII. issued writs

upon the suspension of the legatine court.

Cromwell accompanied Wolsey to Esher, and was much moved by the thought

of the loss which his patron's fall was likely to inflict upon himself.

On 1st November Cavendish found him leaning in the window "with a primer

in his hand, saying our Lady mattins. He prayed not more earnestly than

the tears distilled from his eyes." He lamented that he was in disdain

with most men for his master's sake, and surely without just cause; but

he was resolved that afternoon to ride to London, and so to the Court,

"where I will either make or mar, or I come again." After dinner he

talked with Wolsey about his household, and then showed his power of

gaining popularity at the expense of others. "Have you not," he

exclaimed, "a number of chaplains, to whom ye have departed very

liberally with spiritual promotions? and yet have your poor servants

taken much more pains for you in one day than all your idle chaplains

have done in a year. Therefore if they will not freely and frankly

consider your liberality, and depart with you of the same goods gotten

in your service, now in your great indigence and necessity, it is pity

that they live." Wolsey agreed; he summoned his household, and addressed

them in a dignified speech; he gave them a month's holiday, that they

might seek some more profitable service. Then Cromwell said that they

lacked money, and himself tendered five pounds towards their payment,

adding, "Now let us see what your chaplains will do." The example was

contagious, and contributions poured in. The household was paid, and

departed full of thankfulness to Cromwell. Then, after a private

conversation with Wolsey, Cromwell rode off to London to "make or mar."

Parliament met on 3d November, and Wolsey's enemies hoped that its first

business would be Wolsey's impeachment. For this, however, Henry VIII.

was not prepared, though he did not openly forbid it. He was not sure of

the capacity of his new advisers, and perhaps felt that he might have

further need of Wolsey's services. Anyhow it was better to keep his

opponents in constant fear of his return to power. They were bound

together rather by opposition to Wolsey than by any agreement amongst

themselves; and Henry was not very sanguine about their administrative

success. The Duke of Norfolk, the uncle of Anne Boleyn, was president of

the Council, and Suffolk was vice-president. The chancellorship was

given to Sir Thomas More, who was well fitted by his literary reputation

and high character to calm the fears of moderate men, and show

Europe that the English king had no lack of eminent servants. The

chancellorship of the duchy of Lancashire was given to the treasurer of

the household, Sir William Fitzwilliam, a capable official. Gardiner

preferred an ecclesiastical post, and succeeded to the bishopric of

Winchester, which Wolsey was bidden to resign. It still remained to be

seen if Norfolk, Suffolk, and More could fill the place of Wolsey.

Parliament was opened by the king; and the chancellor, according to

custom, made a speech. In the course of it More showed that a man of

letters does not necessarily retain his literary taste in politics, and

that high character does not save a statesman from the temptation to

catch a passing cheer by unworthy taunts at his defeated adversary. He

spoke of the king as shepherd of his people, and went on, "As you see

that amongst a great flock of sheep some be rotten and faulty, which the

good shepherd sendeth from the good sheep, so the great wether which is

of late fallen, as you all know, so craftily, so scabbedly, yea, and so

untruly juggled with the king, that all men must needs guess and think

that he thought in himself that he had no wit to perceive his crafty

doing, or else that he presumed that the king would not see nor know his

fraudulent juggling and attempts. But he was deceived; for his Grace's

sight was so quick and penetrating that he saw him, yea, and saw through

him, both within and without, so that all things to him were open; and

according to his deserts he hath had a gentle correction."

This speech of More served as introductory to a Bill which was brought

into the Upper House for disabling Wolsey from being restored to his

former dignities and place in the king's Council. It was founded upon a

series of articles which had been drawn up by his enemies long before,

and were a tissue of frivolous or groundless charges. The Bill passed

the Lords, but on its introduction into the Commons was opposed by

Cromwell, who knew that the king did not wish it to be passed. It

answered its purpose of casting a stigma on Wolsey, and justifying

Henry's conduct towards him; but Henry did not intend to deprive himself

of the power of employing Wolsey again if he should prove useful. So

Cromwell served the king while he served Wolsey, and served himself at

the same time by a display of zeal for his fallen master which raised

him in men's esteem, "so that at length, for his honest behaviour in his

master's cause, he grew into such estimation in every man's opinion,

that he was esteemed to be the most faithfullest servant to his master

of all others, wherein he was of all men greatly commended." Moreover,

he managed to make friends by the sure tie of self-interest. He advised

Wolsey to buy off the hostility of important men by granting them

pensions out of the revenues of his see: as he chose the recipients of

the money and negotiated the grants he gained more gratitude than Wolsey

gained profit out of the transaction. Wolsey believed that his prospects

depended on Cromwell's zeal, and the great cardinal became submissive to

the direction of one whom he had raised. He abode at Esher in a state of

feverish anxiety, sometimes receiving a present and a gracious message

from the king, often irritated by Cromwell, who deluded him by a cheap

display of zeal, grieving most of all at the uncertainty of the fortunes

of his great colleges, which he still wished to leave as a memorial to

posterity of the schemes which he intended.

Parliament was prorogued in the middle of December, and the Bill against

Wolsey was allowed to drop. The king and Anne Boleyn were delighted with

the cardinal's house at York Place, of which they took possession, and

Wolsey was still left in uncertainty about his future. Anxiety preyed

upon his health, and at Christmas he fell ill. The news of his illness

seems to have brought some remorse to Henry, who sent his own physician,

and eagerly asked for tidings, saying, "I would not lose him for twenty

thousand pounds." Doctor Buttes answered, "Then must your Grace send him

some comfortable message as shortly as is possible." The king gave

Buttes a favourite ring from his own finger, saying, "Tell him that I am

not offended with him in my heart nothing at all, and that shall he

perceive, and God send him life very shortly." He asked Anne Boleyn to

send also a "token with comfortable words," and Anne at his command

obeyed, overcoming her reluctance by the thought that the cardinal was

on his deathbed.

Doctor Buttes's prescription was a good one, and with revived hopes

Wolsey speedily recovered. On 2d February 1530 the king sent him some

furniture for his house and chapel. On 12th February he received a full

pardon for his offences, and on 14th February was restored to the

archbishopric of York and its possessions excepting York Place, which

the king retained for himself. He entreated to be allowed to keep also

the bishopric of Winchester and the Abbey of St. Alban's; but Gardiner

had his eye on Winchester, and the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk were

anxious that Wolsey should not hold a post which might bring him into

the neighbourhood of the king. He was compelled to resign both these

offices, and recognised in this the power of his foes.

The damp air of Esher was hurtful to his health, and he received

permission to change his residence to Richmond Lodge. There he stayed

until the state of the roads allowed him to take his journey northwards,

which the Duke of Norfolk pressed him to do in forcible language. "Show

him," he said to Cromwell, "that if he go not away shortly, I will,

rather than he should tarry still, tear him with my teeth." When Wolsey

heard this he said, "Marry, Thomas, then it is time to be going, if my

lord of Norfolk take it so. Therefore I pray you go to the king and say

that I would with all my heart go to my benefice at York but for want of

money." Wolsey's immediate necessities were grudgingly supplied by the

lords of the Council, and in the beginning of Passion Week he began his

journey to York. He was received with courtesy by the gentry on the way.

The manor-house at Southwell, where he resolved to live, required some

repairs, and he could not occupy it till 5th June.

In his house at Southwell Wolsey received the neighbouring gentry, and

made himself popular amongst them. He lived simply, and applied himself

to the discharge of the duties of his office with great success. A

pamphlet published in 1536 says of him: "Who was less beloved in the

north than my lord cardinal before he was amongst them? Who better

beloved after he had been there a while? He gave bishops a right good

example how they might win men's hearts. There were few holy days but he

would ride five or six miles from his house, now to this parish church,

now to that, and there cause one or other of his doctors to make a

sermon unto the people. He sat amongst them and said mass before all the

parish; he saw why churches were made; he began to restore them to their

right and proper use; he brought his dinner with him, and bade divers of

the parish to it. He inquired whether there were any debate or grudge

between any of them. If there were, after dinner he sent for the parties

to the church and made them all one." It is an attractive picture of

episcopal activity which is here set before us. We wish that Wolsey had

been great enough to realise the pleasure of these simple duties so

thoroughly as to wean himself from the allurements of political

ambition. But Wolsey in his retirement was something like Machiavelli in

exile: he found some satisfaction for his activity in the doings of

peasants, but he went home and hankered for the great life of politics

which was denied him. He meditated still how he could overthrow his

enemies and return to the more complex problems in which he had been

trained.

At the end of the summer Wolsey removed from Southwell to another

manor-house at Scrooby, where he continued the same mode of life. All

this time his actions were jealously watched by his enemies, who

suspected him of trying to gain popularity and raise up a party in his

favour. They did their best to keep him in perpetual annoyance by

threats of legal proceedings touching the possessions of the see of

York. The king paid no heed to him save to exact all the money he could

from his forfeiture. Amongst other things which the king claimed was the

payment of Wolsey's pension from the French king; and his care for

Wolsey's health at Christmas may have been due to the fact that he

thought that Wolsey's life had a pecuniary value to himself. He

presently dissolved Wolsey's college at Ipswich, and seized all its

lands and possessions. It was a bitter blow to Wolsey to see his plans

thus overthrown. He had hoped to found an institution which should

promote education where it was sorely needed in the eastern counties. It

was the beginning of a project which would have led to the foundation of

local universities, which it has been reserved to our own day to revive.

If Wolsey had remained in power monastic revenues would have been

increasingly diverted to educational purposes, and England would have

been provided with colleges which would have grown with local needs. The

dissolution of the college at Ipswich checked this process at the

beginning, and negatived any scheme for the slow transformation of the

monasteries into institutions which were in accordance with national

needs.

Cardinal College at Oxford met with better fortune. Wolsey pleaded hard

for its preservation, and the authorities of the college made a stand in

its behalf. The king was not yet prepared to seize the lands of the

dissolved monastery of St. Frideswyde, or of the old Canterbury Hall,

which had been absorbed, and it could be shown that he would lose as

much as he would gain by attempting an accurate division of the property

of the college. He agreed to "have an honourable college there, but not

so great and of such magnificence as my lord cardinal intended to have,

for it is not thought meet for the common weal of our realm." The site

of the college and a portion of its revenues were saved from the

commissioners who were realising Wolsey's forfeiture; but the name of

Christ Church obliterated that of Cardinal College, and Henry VIII.

endeavoured as far as he could to associate the foundation with himself

and dissociate it from Wolsey.

This persistent disregard of the ideas which Wolsey had striven to put

forward weighed heavily on his spirits. "I am put from my sleep and

meat," he wrote, "for such advertisements as I have had of the

dissolution of my colleges." It was not only the sense of personal

disappointment which afflicted him; it was the hopeless feeling that all

his policy was being reversed. Wolsey was in his way a churchman, and

hoped as a statesman to bring the Church into accordance with the

national needs. He saw that only in this way could the existing

resources of the Church be saved from the hand of the spoiler. The

king's desire to seize upon the revenues of his colleges showed him that

Henry had cast away the principles which Wolsey had striven to enforce,

that he had broken through the limits which Wolsey had endeavoured to

set, and that when once he had tasted his prey his appetite was likely

to be insatiable. This taught Wolsey that his own future was hopeless.

On the lower level to which the king had sunk he was not likely to need

the cardinal's aid. Wolsey's great schemes for the future were to make

way for a policy mainly dictated by present greed. Henry VIII. had

discovered how great his power was, and intended to use it for the

satisfaction of his own desires.

So Wolsey turned himself more attentively to the duties of his episcopal

office, hoping thereby to make some amends for past neglect, and fill up

with useful work the remainder of his days. His poverty had prevented

him from taking possession of his cathedral, as he had no money to

defray the expenses of his installation. By the end of September he had

managed to scrape together £1500, and set out from Scrooby to York. On

his way he was busied with confirmations. At St. Oswald's Abbey he

confirmed children from eight in the morning till noon; after dinner he

returned to the church at one, and continued his confirmation till four,

when he was constrained for weariness to sit down in a chair. Next

morning before his departure he confirmed a hundred children more; and

as he rode on his way he found at Ferrybridge two hundred children

waiting for confirmation at a stone cross standing upon the green. It

was late in the evening before he reached Cawood Castle, seven miles

from York. There he was visited by the Dean of York, and made

arrangements for his installation.

This ceremony, however, was not to take place. Wolsey's enemies were

implacable, especially the Duke of Norfolk, who was alarmed at the

renewal of Wolsey's popularity in the north, and at the signs of vigour

which he showed. His actions were jealously watched and eagerly

criticised to find some opportunity for a charge against him, which was

at last found in Wolsey's communications with foreign envoys. It would

seem that Wolsey could not reconcile himself to political inactivity,

and trusted that the influence of Francis I., for whom he had done so

much, would be used in his favour. But Francis treated Wolsey with the

proverbial ingratitude of politicians. Wolsey had been a friend of

France, but his friendship had been costly, and Francis I. found that

the new ministers were equally friendly to France, and did not demand so

much in return. In truth, Henry, though he had abandoned Wolsey for his

failure in the matter of the divorce, had not been better served by his

new advisers, who had no other course to follow than that which Wolsey

had marked out--to use the close alliance with France as a means of

bringing pressure to bear upon the Pope. So Norfolk was obsequious to

Francis, who preferred to deal with a man of Norfolk's calibre rather

than acknowledge a master in Wolsey.

Of this Wolsey was ignorant; and he no longer showed his old dexterity

in promoting his own interests. He made the mistake of trusting to the

old methods of diplomacy when his position was no longer that of a

minister, and when he had been removed from actual touch of current

affairs. He opened up communications with the French envoy by means of a

Venetian physician, Agostino, who was a member of his household. He even

communicated with the imperial envoy as well. However harmless these

communications might be, they were certainly indiscreet, and were

capable of being represented to the king as dangerous. Norfolk gained

some information, either from the French envoy or from Agostino, and

laid before the king charges against Wolsey, "that he had written to

Rome to be reinstated in his possessions, and to France for its favour;

and was returning to his ancient pomp, and corrupting the people." There

was not much in these charges; but Norfolk was afraid of Wolsey in the

background, and quailed before the king's bursts of petulance, in which

he said that the cardinal knew more about the business of the State than

any of his new advisers. Henry was quite satisfied with the proceeds of

spoiling Wolsey, and was glad to keep him in reserve; but the suggestion

that Wolsey was intriguing with foreign Courts sorely angered him, and

he gave orders that Wolsey be brought to trial to answer for his conduct.

So Sir Walter Walshe was sent with a warrant to the Earl of

Northumberland, and arrived as Wolsey was busied at Cawood with the

preliminaries of his installation. On 4th November, when Wolsey had

retired from dinner and was sitting in his own room over his dessert,

the Earl of Northumberland appeared, and demanded the keys of the castle

from the porter. He entered the hall, and posted his servants to guard

all the doors. Wolsey, in ignorance of what was in store for him, met

Northumberland and offered him hospitality, expressing his delight at

the unexpected visit. When they were alone the Earl, "trembling, said,

with a very faint and soft voice, unto my lord, laying his hand upon his

arm, 'My lord, I arrest you of high treason.'" For a time Wolsey stood

speechless with astonishment, then he asked to see the warrant, which

Northumberland had not brought with him. As he was speaking Sir Walter

Walshe opened the door and thrust into the room the physician Agostino,

whom he had made prisoner. Wolsey asked him about the warrant, and when

he recognised him as one of the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber,

he submitted to the royal commands without asking further for the

production of the warrant. Then he delivered up his keys to

Northumberland.

Agostino was at once sent to London tied under a horse's belly--a mode

of conveyance which was doubtless calculated to refresh his memory. When

he arrived in London he was taken to the Duke of Norfolk's house, and

showed himself ready to bear witness against Wolsey. "Since they have

had the cardinal's physician in their hands," writes the imperial envoy,

"they have found what they sought. Since he has been here he has lived

in the Duke of Norfolk's house like a prince, and is singing the tune

they wished."

There was not the same need of haste in bringing Wolsey to London, for

even with Agostino's help Norfolk was doubtful if the evidence against

Wolsey would be sufficient to ensure his condemnation to death; and he

did not wish to give Wolsey the opportunity of a trial when he might

still be formidable. His imprisonment in the Tower at the royal pleasure

would only bring him nearer to the king, who might at any moment make

use of him as he threatened. Really, Norfolk was somewhat embarrassed at

the success of his scheme; and Wolsey, in a conversation with Cavendish,

showed a flash of his old greatness. "If I may come to my answer," he

said, "I fear no man alive; for he liveth not upon the earth that shall

look upon this face and shall be able to accuse me of any untruth; and

that know my enemies full well, which will be an occasion that I shall

not have indifferent justice, but they will rather seek some other

sinister way to destroy me."

It was this thought that unnerved Wolsey, worn out as he was by

disappointment, humiliated by his helplessness, and harassed by a sense

of relentless persecution. Still he retained his dignity and kindliness,

and when on the evening of 7th November he was told to prepare for his

journey, he insisted upon bidding farewell to his household. The Earl of

Northumberland wished to prevent this, and only gave way through fear of

a tumult if he persisted in his refusal. The servants knelt weeping

before Wolsey, who "gave them comfortable words and worthy praises for

their diligent faithfulness and honest truth towards him, assuring them

that what chance soever should happen unto him, that he was a true man

and a just to his sovereign lord." Then shaking each of them by the hand

he departed.

Outside the gate the country folk had assembled to the number of three

thousand, who cried, "God save your grace. The foul evil take all them

that hath thus taken you from us; we pray God that a very vengeance may

light upon them." Thus they ran crying after him through the town of

Cawood, they loved him so well. After this moving farewell Wolsey rode

through the gathering darkness to Pomfret, where he was lodged in the

abbey. Thence he proceeded through Doncaster to Sheffield Park, where he

was kindly received by the Earl of Shrewsbury, whose guest he was for

eighteen days. Once a day the earl visited him and tried to comfort him,

but Wolsey refused all human comfort, and applied himself diligently to

prayer. While he was at Sheffield Park his health, which never had been

good, began to give way, and he suffered from dysentery, which was

aggravated by an unskilful apothecary.

As he was thus ailing there arrived Sir William Kingston, Constable of

the Tower, with a guard of twenty-four soldiers; he had received a

commission from the king to bring Wolsey as a prisoner to the Tower. It

would seem from this that Agostino's confessions had been skilfully

raised to fan the royal wrath, and Henry gave this sign that he was

prepared to treat his former minister as a traitor. The Earl of

Shrewsbury did his best to treat the coming of Kingston as a trivial

incident, and sent Cavendish to break the news gently to his master.

Cavendish gave the message as he was bidden. "Forsooth my lord of

Shrewsbury, perceiving by your often communication that ye were always

desirous to come before the king's Majesty, and now as your assured

friend, hath travailed so with his letters unto the king, that the king

hath sent for you by Master Kingston and twenty-four of the guard to

conduct you to his Highness." Wolsey was not deceived. "Master

Kingston," he repeated, and smote his thigh. When Cavendish made a

further attempt to cheer him he cut him short by saying, "I perceive

more than you can imagine or can know. Experience hath taught me." When

Kingston was introduced and knelt before him, Wolsey said, "I pray you

stand up, and leave your kneeling unto a very wretch replete with

misery, not worthy to be esteemed, but for a vile object utterly cast

away, without desert; and therefore, good Master Kingston, stand up, or

I will myself kneel down by you." After some talk Wolsey thanked

Kingston for his kind words. "Assure yourself that if I were as able and

as lusty as I have been but of late, I would not fail to ride with you

in post. But all these comfortable words which ye have spoken be but for

a purpose to bring me to a fool's paradise; I know what is provided for

me."

With a mind thus agitated the sufferings of the body increased. When

Wolsey took his journey next day all regarded him as a dying man. The

soldiers of the guard, "as soon as they espied their old master in such

a lamentable estate, lamented him with weeping eyes. Whom my lord took

by the hands, and divers times by the way as he rode he would talk with

them, sometime with one and sometime with another." That night he

reached Hardwick Hall, in Notts, a house of the Earl of Shrewsbury, and

the next day rode to Nottingham. On the way from thence to Leicester he

was so feeble that he could scarcely sit upon his mule. It was dark on

Saturday night when he reached Leicester Abbey, where the abbot greeted

him by torchlight. "Father Abbot," he said, "I am come hither to leave

my bones among you." Kingston had to carry him upstairs to his bed,

which he never quitted again.

All Sunday his malady increased, and on Monday morning Cavendish, as he

watched his face, thought him drawing fast to his end. "He perceiving my

shadow upon the wall by his bedside asked who was there. 'Sir, I am

here,' quoth I. 'What is it of the clock?' said he. 'Forsooth, sir,'

said I, 'it is past eight of the clock in the morning.'--'Eight of the

clock, eight of the clock,' said he, rehearsing divers times. 'Nay, nay,

it cannot be eight of the clock; for by eight of the clock ye shall lose

your master, for my time draweth near that I must depart out of this

world.'"

But the dying man was not to depart without a reminder of the pitiless

character of the master whom he had served so well. When Wolsey left

Cawood the Earl of Northumberland remained behind to examine his papers;

amongst them he found a record that Wolsey had in his possession £1500,

but he reported to the king that he could not find the money. Such was

Henry's keenness as his own minister of finance that he could not await

Wolsey's arrival in London, but wrote off instantly to Kingston, bidding

him examine Wolsey how he came by the money, and discover where it was.

In obedience to the royal command Kingston reluctantly visited the dying

man, who told him that he had borrowed the money of divers friends and

dependants whom he did not wish to see defrauded; the money was in the

keeping of an honest man, and he asked for a little time before

disclosing where it was.

In the night he often swooned, but rallied in the morning and asked for

food. Some chicken broth was brought him, but he remembered that it was

a fast-day, being St. Andrew's Eve. "What though it be," said his

confessor, "ye be excused by reason of your sickness."--"Yea," said he,

"what though? I will eat no more." After this he made his confession,

and about seven in the morning Kingston entered to ask further about the

money. But seeing how ill Wolsey was, Kingston tried to comfort him.

"Well, well," said Wolsey, "I see the matter against me how it is

framed, but if I had served God so diligently as I have done the king,

he would not have given me over in my gray hairs. Howbeit, this is the

just reward that I must receive for my worldly diligence and pains that

I had to do him service, only to satisfy his vain pleasure, not

regarding my godly duty. Wherefore, I pray you, with all my heart, to

have me most humbly commended unto his royal Majesty, beseeching him in

my behalf to call to his most gracious remembrance all matters

proceeding between him and me from the beginning of the world unto this

day, and the progress of the same, and most chiefly in the weighty

matter now depending (\_i.e.\_ the divorce); then shall his conscience

declare whether I have offended him or no. He is sure a prince of a

royal courage, and hath a princely heart; and rather than he will either

miss or want any part of his will or appetite he will put the loss of

one-half of his realm in danger. For I assure you I have often kneeled

before him in his privy chamber on my knees the space of an hour or two,

to persuade him from his will and appetite; but I could never bring to

pass to dissuade him therefrom. Therefore, Master Kingston, if it chance

hereafter you to be one of his Privy Council, as for your wisdom and

other qualities ye are meet to be, I warn you to be well advised and

assured what matter ye put in his head, for ye shall never put it out

again." He went on to bid him warn the king against the spread of the

pernicious sect of Lutherans as harmful to the royal authority and

destructive of the order of the realm. Then as his tongue failed him he

gasped out, "Master Kingston, farewell. I can no more, but wish all

things to have good success. My time draweth on fast. I may not tarry

with you. And forget not, I pray you, what I have said and charged you

withal, for when I am dead ye shall peradventure remember my words much

better." His breath failed him and his eyes grew fixed. The abbot came

to administer supreme unction, and as the clock struck eight Wolsey

passed away. "And calling to our remembrance his words the day before,

how he said that at eight of the clock we should lose our master, one of

us looked upon another supposing that he prophesied of his departure."

Kingston sent a message to tell the king of Wolsey's death, and hastened

the preparations for his funeral. His body was placed in a coffin of

boards, vested in his archiepiscopal robes, with his mitre, cross, and

ring. It lay in state till five in the afternoon, when it was carried

into the church and was placed in the Lady Chapel, where it was watched

all night. At four in the morning mass was sung, and by six the grave

had closed over the remains of Wolsey.

It would be consoling to think that a pang of genuine sorrow was felt by

Henry VIII. when he heard of the death of Wolsey; but unfortunately

there is no ground for thinking so, and all that is on record shows us

that Henry's chief care still was to get hold of the £1500, which was

all that remained of Wolsey's fortune. Cavendish was taken by Kingston

to Hampton Court, where he was summoned to the king, who was engaged in

archery in the park. As Cavendish stood against a tree sadly musing

Henry suddenly came behind him and slapped him on the back, saying, "I

will make an end of my game, and then I will talk with you." Soon he

finished his game and went into the garden, but kept Cavendish waiting

for some time outside. The interview lasted more than an hour, "during

which time he examined me of divers matters concerning my lord, wishing

that liever than twenty thousand pounds that he had lived. Then he asked

me for the fifteen hundred pounds which Master Kingston moved to my lord

before his death." Cavendish told him what he knew about it, and said

that it was deposited with a certain priest. "Well, then," said the

king, "let me alone, and keep this gear secret between yourself and me,

and let no man be privy thereof; for if I hear more of it, then I know

by whom it is come to knowledge. Three may keep counsel if two be away;

and if I thought that my cap knew my counsel I would cast it into the

fire and burn it." Henry spoke freely, and these words disclose the

secret of his strength. Every politician has a method of his own by

which he hides his real character and assumes a personality which is

best fitted for his designs. Henry VIII. beneath an air of frankness and

geniality concealed a jealous and watchful temperament, full of crafty

designs for immediate gain, resolute, avaricious, and profoundly

self-seeking.

As we have been so much indebted to Cavendish for an account of Wolsey's

private life, especially in his last days, it is worth while to follow

Cavendish's fortunes. The king promised to take him into his own

service, and to pay him his wages for the last year, amounting to £10.

He bade him ask it of the Duke of Norfolk. As he left the king he met

Kingston coming from the Council, whither Cavendish also was summoned.

Kingston implored him to take heed what he said. The Council would

examine him about Wolsey's last words; "and if you tell them the truth

you shall undo yourself." He had denied that he heard anything, and

warned Cavendish to do the same. So Cavendish answered the Duke of

Norfolk that he was so busied in waiting on Wolsey that he paid little

heed to what he said. "He spoke many idle words, as men in such

extremities do, the which I cannot now remember." He referred them to

Kingston's more accurate memory. It is a dismal picture of Court life

which is here presented to us. On every side was intrigue, suspicion,

and deceit. Wolsey's last words were consigned to oblivion; for the

frankness that was begotten of a retrospect in one who had nothing more

to hope or fear was dangerous in a place whence truth was banished.

When the Council was over Norfolk talked with Cavendish about his

future. Cavendish had seen enough of public life, and had no heart to

face its dangers. The figure of Wolsey rose before his eyes, and he

preferred to carry away into solitude his memories of the vanity of

man's ambition. His only request was for a cart and horse to carry away

his own goods, which had been brought with Wolsey's to the Tower. The

king was gracious, and allowed him to choose six cart-horses and a cart

from Wolsey's stable. He gave him five marks for his expenses, paid him

£10 for arrears of wages, and added £20 as a reward. "I received all

these things accordingly, and then I returned into my country."

It says much for Wolsey that he chose as his personal attendant a man of

the sweet, sensitive, retiring type of George Cavendish, though it was

not till after his fall from power that he learned the value of such a

friend. No less significant of the times is the profound impression

which Wolsey's fate excited on the mind of Cavendish, who in the

retirement of his own county of Suffolk lived with increasing sadness

through the changes which befell England and destroyed many of the

memories which were dearest to his heart. No one then cared to hear

about Wolsey, nor was it safe to recall the thought of the great

Cardinal of England to the minds of men who were busied in undoing his

work. Not till the days of Mary did Cavendish gather together his notes

and sketch the fortunes of one whose figure loomed forth from a distant

past, mellowed by the mists of time, and hallowed by the pious

resignation which was the only comfort that reflection could give to the

helpless recluse. The calm of a poetic sadness is expressed in the pages

of Cavendish's \_Memoir\_. Wolsey has become to him a type of the vanity

of human endeavour, and points the moral of the superiority of a quiet

life with God over the manifold activities of an aspiring ambition. But

Cavendish did not live to see the time when such a sermon, preached on

such a text, was likely to appeal to many hearers. His work remained in

manuscript, of which copies circulated amongst a few. One such copy, it

is clear, must have reached the hands of Shakespeare, who, with his

usual quickness of perception, condensed as much as his public could

understand into his portrait of Wolsey in the play of \_Henry VIII.\_ When

the \_Memoir\_ was first printed in 1641 it was garbled for party

purposes. The figure of Wolsey was long left to the portraiture of

prejudice, and he was regarded only as the type of the arrogant

ecclesiastic whom it was the great work of the Reformation to have

rendered impossible in the future. Wolsey, the most patriotic of

Englishmen, was branded as the minion of the Pope, and the upholder of a

foreign despotism. When Fiddes, in 1724, attempted, on the strength of

documents, to restore Wolsey to his due position amongst England's

worthies, he was accused of Popery. Not till the mass of documents

relating to the reign of Henry VIII. was published did it become

possible for Dr. Brewer to show the significance of the schemes of the

great cardinal, and to estimate his merits and his faults.

CHAPTER XI

THE WORK OF WOLSEY

"No statesman of such eminence ever died less lamented," is Dr. Brewer's

remark on Wolsey's death. Indeed, the king had forgotten his old

servant; his enemies rejoiced to be rid of a possible rival; the men

whom he had trained in politics were busy in seeking their own

advancement, which was not to be promoted by tears for a fallen

minister; the people had never loved him, and were indifferent about one

who was no longer powerful. In a time of universal uncertainty every one

was speculating on the future, and saw that the future was not to be

determined by Wolsey or by Wolsey's ideas. Not without reason has the

story of Wolsey's fall passed into a parable of the heartlessness of the

world.

For Wolsey lived for the world as few men have ever done; not for the

larger world of intellectual thought or spiritual aspiration, but for

the actual, immediate world of affairs. He limited himself to its

problems, but within its limits he took a wider and juster view of the

problems of his time than any English statesman has ever done. For

politics in the largest sense, comprising all the relations of the

nation at home and abroad, Wolsey had a capacity which amounted to

genius, and it is doubtful if this can be said of any other Englishman.

There have been many capable administrators, many excellent organisers,

many who bravely faced the difficulties of their time, many who

advocated particular reforms and achieved definite results. But Wolsey

aimed at doing all these things together and more. Taking England as he

found her, he aimed at developing all her latent possibilities, and

leading Europe to follow in her train. In this project there was nothing

chimerical or fantastic, for Wolsey's mind was eminently practical.

Starting from the existing condition of affairs, he made England for a

time the centre of European politics, and gave her an influence far

higher than she could claim on material grounds. Moreover, his

far-reaching schemes abroad did not interfere with strict attention to

the details of England's interests. His foreign policy was to promote

English trade, facilitate the union of Scotland, keep peace at small

expense, prepare the way for internal re-organisation, and secure the

right of dealing judiciously with ecclesiastical reform. Wolsey's plans

all hung together. However absorbed he might be in a particular point it

was only part of a great design, and he used each advantage which he

gained as a means of strengthening England's position for some future

undertaking. He had a clear view of the future as a whole; he knew not

only what he wished to make of England but of Europe as well. He never

worked at a question from one motive only; what failed for one purpose

was made useful for another; his resources were not bounded by the

immediate result.

Politics to him was not a pursuit, it was a passion. He loved it as an

artist loves his art, for he found in it a complete satisfaction for his

nature. All that was best, and all that was worst, in Wolsey sprang from

this exceptional attitude towards statecraft, which he practised with

enthusiasm, not in the spirit of cold calculation. The world is

accustomed to statesmen who clothe the results of calculation in the

language of enthusiasm; Wolsey's language was practical and direct, his

passionate aspirations were restrained within his own bosom.

Thus there is a largeness and distinction about Wolsey's aims, a

far-reaching patriotism, and an admirable lucidity. He was indeed a

political artist, who worked with a free hand and a certain touch. He

was absorbed in his art as a painter over his picture, and he did not

shrink as the full size of his canvas was gradually enrolled. He set

himself to dominate Europe, and was fearless and self-contained. He gave

himself entirely to his work, and in his eyes the nobility of his end

justified any means. But he was sensitive, as all artists are, and could

not work under cramped conditions. When he was restricted to the small

matter of the divorce his hand lost its cunning. He was, though he knew

it not, fitted to serve England, but not fitted to serve the English

king. He had the aims of a national statesman, not of a royal servant.

Wolsey's misfortune was that his lot was cast on days when the career of

a statesman was not distinct from that of a royal servant. He owed his

introduction to politics solely to royal favour, and neither had nor

could obtain any other warrant for his position. For good or evil

England was identified with her king, and it was long before it could be

otherwise. Certainly Wolsey had no wish that it should be otherwise, and

his subservience to the royal will seems to us to be unworthy of his

greatness. But Wolsey associated his political life with the king's

goodwill, and Henry was to him a symbol of all that was best and most

intelligent in England. His deviations from his own policy in obedience

to the king were not more degrading or more inevitable than are the

calculations of the modern statesman about the exact limits of the field

of practical politics. A statesman has not only to form projects, he has

to secure a force behind him which will enable him to give them effect.

Each age recognises this fact, and acts accordingly. There is nothing

more intrinsically base in Wolsey's subservience to the royal will than

in the efforts of modern statesmen to bid against one another for an

opportunity of carrying out what they think to be the will of the

people. No politician has a complete command of his field of action; his

high-mindedness and purity must be tested by the degree of compromise

which consciously or unconsciously he makes between his love of power

and his knowledge or his conscience. The utmost that can be demanded of

him is that he should not, to keep his place, deliberately act contrary

to what he believes to be wise or knows to be right.

In his general conduct of politics Wolsey was true to his principles,

and though occasionally thwarted, he still pursued the same ends. The

matter of the divorce was sprung upon him, and it would have been well

for Wolsey's fame if he had retired rather than involve himself in the

unworthy proceedings to which it led. But the temptation to all men to

think themselves necessary in the sphere which they have made their own

is a subtle one; and those who begin by hoping that they may minimise

inevitable mischief, end by being dragged into the mire. To a statesman

this temptation is great in proportion to the largeness of his ultimate

aim. He resents that his schemes should be ruined by a temporary

derangement of the perspective of affairs; he believes that his

practised hand can easily solve a trumpery difficulty; the excellence of

his intentions in the long-run justifies an occasional sacrifice on the

shrine of present necessity. If he does some things amiss, after all he

is not responsible for them; they are disagreeable incidents in his

tenure of office.

So Wolsey regarded the divorce; and he is not greatly to be blamed for

agreeing to promote it. He saw great national advantages in a divorce;

he knew that it would be well for England if Henry VIII. left male

issue; he did not like the political influence of Katharine; he saw that

Henry was not likely to be happy in her society. It would have been

difficult for him to find in the proposal itself a sufficient reason for

withdrawing from politics even if he could have done so with safety. Not

even Wolsey could foresee the king's obstinacy and tenacity of purpose,

the depth of meanness to which he would sink, and to which he would drag

all around him. Wolsey found himself powerless to resist, and the

growing consciousness of moral turpitude practised to no purpose

degraded him in his own eyes and robbed him of his strength. When once

the divorce question was started Wolsey was pushed on to his ruin by a

power of imperious wickedness which debased others without losing its

own self-respect. The dictates of public opinion are, after all, not so

very different from the commands of an absolute king. Both may destroy

their victims, and go on their own way with heads erect.

So when we speak of the fall of Wolsey we mean more than his irrevocable

loss of power. He had lost his inner strength, and no longer kept his

hold upon affairs. He knew that he was sullied and unnerved; that he had

sunk from the position of a leader to that of one who tremblingly

follows and devises shifty plans that he may still exercise the

semblance of his old authority. He knew that in his negotiations about

the divorce he staked everything that he had gained, and that the

result, whatever it was, would be disastrous to his great designs. If he

had succeeded he would have degraded the Papacy; and when Henry had once

learned how easy it was for him to get his own way, he would have used

his knowledge to the full, and Wolsey would have been powerless to

direct him. When Wolsey became the instrument of the king's selfwill,

he hoped that a few disappointments would wear out his obstinacy; when

he saw Henry's growing resoluteness and complete selfwill he knew that

for himself the future was hopeless. Still he had not the magnanimity to

resign himself to his disappointment. He clung to power when power had

ceased to be useful for his plans. He clung to power, because the habits

of office had become to him a second nature. He vainly strove to find

satisfaction in the discharge of his episcopal duties; he vainly tried

to content himself with the simple affairs of simple men. He had given

himself entirely to the material world, and had estranged himself from

the spiritual world, which was to him thin and unsubstantial to the

last. He could not refrain from casting longing glances behind him, and

his last days are pitiable. The words of the dying man are often quoted

as showing the misery of those who trust in princes' favour. But they

are not merely an echo of a far-off state of things which has passed by

for ever. "To serve one's country" may have a loftier and more noble

sound than "to serve one's king," but the meaning is not necessarily

different. The thought in Wolsey's heart was this--"If I had served the

spiritual interests of my country as I have striven to serve its

material interests my conscience would be more at rest." For Wolsey was

a true patriot, and had noble aims. Much as he might deaden his

conscience, he did not extinguish it; and his last judgment of himself

expressed the sad conviction that neither his patriotism nor the

nobility of his aims had saved him from actions which he could not

justify, and which his conscience loudly condemned.

We have called Wolsey a political artist: and this, which makes his

career attractive, is the secret of his unpopularity. Wolsey's designs

did not arise from the pressure of absolute necessity, and their meaning

was not apparent to his contemporaries. Englishmen thought then, as they

think now, that England should disregard foreign affairs and develop her

own resources; or if foreign affairs are undertaken they demand the

success of English arms, and claim to be repaid in current coin or

palpable advantages. Wolsey believed that the establishment of England's

power on the Continent was necessary for the increase of English trade,

and was a preliminary for the wise solution of those questions which

were most urgent in domestic politics. He was the last English statesman

of the old school, which regarded England not as a separate nation, but

as an integral part of Western Christendom. He did not look upon

questions as being solely English questions: he did not aim merely at

reforming English monasteries or asserting a new position for the

English Church. But he thought that England was ripe for practically

carrying out reforms which had long been talked of, and remedying abuses

which had long been lamented; and he hoped that England in these

respects would serve as a model to the rest of Europe. Only if England

was in full accord with European sentiment, was powerful, and was

respected, could this be done. Wolsey did not prefer foreign politics on

their own account, but he found them to be the necessary preliminary for

any lasting work on the lines which he contemplated. As regards Church

matters he was strictly practical. He had no belief in reforming

councils, or pragmatic sanctions, or Gallican liberties; he cared little

for England's weapon of \_præmunire\_. He did not look upon the Pope as a

powerful adversary who was to be held at arm's length; he regarded him

as a man to be managed and converted into a useful ally. Wolsey was

entirely Erastian. Power was to him the important thing in human

affairs, and all power was the same; he believed much more in the divine

right of Henry VIII. than in the divine right of Clement VII. merely

because Henry's power seemed to him practically to be greater. However

poetical Wolsey's main ideas might be, he had no illusions about the

actual facts of politics.

The Englishmen of his own day did not appreciate Wolsey's aims, and

supposed that his foreign policy was for the gratification of his own

vanity, or was the result of a desire to gain the Papacy. No one

understood him in his own time. He bore the burden of everything that

was done, and all the causes of popular discontent were laid at his

door. If the loyalty of Wolsey seems strange to our eyes, still more

inexplicable is the loyalty of the English people, who could believe in

Henry's good intentions, and could suppose that he was entirely ruled by

Wolsey contrary to his own inclinations. Wolsey was universally hated;

by the nobles as an upstart, by the people as a tyrant, by Churchmen as

a dangerous reformer, by the Lutherans as a rank Papist. While he was in

power he kept in restraint various elements of disorder; but he shared

the fate of those who rule without identifying themselves with any

party. When his power came to an end no minister could assume his place

or pick up the threads which fell from his hands. It was left to Henry

VIII., who had learned more from Wolsey than any one else, to direct

England's fortunes on a lower level of endeavour. We may admire his

clear head and his strong hand; we may even prefer the results of his

solution to those which Wolsey would have wrought; but we must confess

that personal motives held the chief place in his mind, and that

considerations of the common weal came only in the second place. For

Henry VIII. abandoned Wolsey's idea of a European settlement of

ecclesiastical questions, and gradually undertook a national settlement

on lines drawn solely with reference to his own desires and his own

interest. In this simpler matter it was possible for him to enjoy some

measure of success, and this was chiefly due to the preparation which

Wolsey had made. For the work of a statesman is never entirely thrown

away; if his own plans fail, he leaves the way open for others who may

use his means for widely different ends.

Wolsey was the creator of the forces which worked the great change in

England in the sixteenth century. He obtained for England a position in

the esteem of Europe which he had meant to use for the direction of

Europe generally. Henry used that position for the assertion of

England's right to settle its own affairs for itself; and the position

proved strong enough to ward off foreign interference, and to carry

England safely through the first period of a dangerous crisis. It was

because Wolsey had laid a sure foundation that England emerged from her

separatist policy, isolated, it is true, but not excluded from European

influence. Again, Wolsey exalted the royal power, because he believed

that it alone could rise above the separate interests of classes, and

could give a large expression to the national weal. Henry profited by

Wolsey's labours to pursue exclusively his own interests, yet he learned

enough to interweave them dexterously with some national interests in

such a way that they could not practically be disentangled, and that he

had sufficient adherents to put down opposition when it arose. Even the

preliminary steps which Wolsey had taken were carefully followed. His

scheme for the gradual conversion of monasteries into more useful

institutions was revived, and men believed that it would be imitated:

the very agents that he had trained for the work of turning monasteries

into educational establishments were employed in sweeping the monastic

revenues into the royal coffers. So it was with all other things. Henry

learned Wolsey's methods, and popularised Wolsey's phrases. He clothed

his own self-seeking with the dignity of Wolsey's designs; the hands

were the hands of Henry, but the voice was an echo of the voice of

Wolsey.

The new England that was created in the sixteenth century was strangely

unlike that which Wolsey had dreamed of, yet none the less it was

animated by his spirit. His ideal of England, influential in Europe

through the mediatorial policy which her insular position allowed her to

claim, prosperous at home through the influence which she obtained by

her far-sighted wisdom and disinterestedness--this is Wolsey's permanent

contribution to the history of English politics.

INDEX

Adrian VI., Pope, election of, 87, 88;

enters league against France, 96;

death of, 99.

Agostino, Wolsey's physician, 199, 200.

Albany, James, Duke of, made Regent of Scotland, 69;

allied with Queen Margaret, 91;

retreats before Lord Dacre, 92;

retires from Wark, 98;

recalled to France, 107.

Alcock, John, Bishop of Ely, 141.

Amicable Loan, 111, 112.

Angus, Archibald, Earl of, marries Queen-Dowager Margaret, 69;

in France and England, 107.

Ardres, fortification of, 68.

Bainbridge, Thomas, Archbishop of York, 29-39.

Blunt, Elizabeth, 118.

Boleyn, Anne, Henry VIII.'s passion for, 152;

her influence over Henry VIII., 159, 160, 165-168.

Bourbon, Constable of, revolts from Francis I., 94;

negotiations of Pace with, 106, 107;

in Italy, 121.

Bruges, Wolsey meets Charles V. at, 77, 78.

Buckingham, Duke of, executed, 70, 71.

Buttes, Doctor, 192, 193.

Calais, meeting of Henry VIII. and Charles V. at, 63;

conference at, 73-82.

Cambrai, League of, 8, 9, 14, 15;

conference at, 177, 178.

Campeggio, Cardinal, sent to England, 164, 165;

his action about the divorce, 171-173;

his interview with Henry VIII., 181;

seizure of his baggage, 182, 183.

Cardinal College, 143, 144, 196.

Carey, Eleanor, 166.

Cavendish, George, memoir of Wolsey quoted, 156, 158, 175, 200-205;

his interview with Henry VIII., 207, 208;

later life of, 209.

Cawood Castle, Wolsey at, 197, 199-201.

Charles, Prince of Castile, betrothed to Mary of England, 32;

betrothed to Renée of France, 37;

King of Spain, 44;

goes to Spain, 46;

elected Emperor Charles V., 52-54;

seeks interview with Henry VIII., 58;

pensions Wolsey, 59;

in England, 61;

meets Henry VIII. at Calais, 63;

his marriage projects, 67;

attacked by Francis I., 72;

meets Wolsey at Bruges, 77, 78;

his policy in papal election, 85-88;

visits London, 89;

allied with Henry VIII., 90;

negotiations with, about marriage, 116-118;

makes peace of Cambrai, 178.

Charles VIII., 6.

Chièvres, death of, 74.

Clement VII., Pope, attacked in Rome, 121;

visited by Knight at Orvieto, 160;

embassy of Gardiner to, 163, 164;

his hesitation about the divorce, 172.

Cromwell, Thomas, early life of, 188;

parts from Wolsey, 189;

speaks in Wolsey's behalf, 191.

Dacre, Lord, Warden of the Western Marches, 70;

defends Carlisle against Albany, 92.

De Praet, 108, 109.

Dorset, Marquis of, 19;

commands in Guienne, 23.

Erasmus, 140.

Esher, Wolsey at, 189, 192, 193.

Ferdinand, King of Aragon, 5;

allied with Maximilian, 14;

joins Holy League, 16;

deserts Henry VIII. in Guienne, 23;

allies with France, 27;

dies, 44.

Fisher, John, Bishop of Rochester, 145, 155, 156, 175.

Fitzroy, Henry, Duke of Richmond, 118.

Flodden Field, Battle of, 26.

Fox, Richard, Bishop of Winchester, 20, 22, 137, 141.

Francis I., King of France, accession of, 35, 36;

wins Duchy of Milan, 38;

makes treaty of Noyon, 44;

candidate for the empire, 52-55;

seeks interview with Henry VIII., 57;

pensions Wolsey, 59;

at Field of Cloth of Gold, 62;

attacks Charles V., 72;

his unpopularity, 90;

captured at Pavia, 109;

signs treaty of Madrid, 120;

makes peace with England, 122;

interview of Wolsey with, at Amiens, 157;

makes peace of Cambrai, 178.

Frundsberg, George, 121.

Gardiner, Stephen, ambassador to Clement VII., 161-163;

king's favourite, 176;

made Bishop of Winchester, 190.

Gattinara, Ercurino della, negotiates with Tunstal, 68;

his position with Charles V., 75;

at conference of Calais, 76, 77, 79, 80.

Gigli, Silvestro dei, Bishop of Worcester, 29, 38.

Greene, John, 113.

Guienne, scheme for conquest of, 16, 17;

its failure, 23.

Guisnes, 61, 62.

Hampton Court, 116.

Henry VII., policy of, 10, 11, 20, 21-30, 124.

Henry VIII., accession of, 11;

joins Holy League, 16;

his Council, 22;

his expedition into France, 25;

abandoned by Ferdinand and Maximilian, 28;

allies with Louis XII., 32-35;

asks for Wolsey's cardinalate, 33, 39;

his dealings with Maximilian, 41-45;

a candidate for the empire, 53-55;

allies with Charles V., 90;

costliness of his policy, 102;

his management of Parliament, 129;

question of his divorce, 151;

rebukes Wolsey, 167-170;

his last interview with Wolsey, 181, 182.

Howard, Sir Edward, 24.

Ipswich, 18;

college of, 143, 195.

Isabella of Portugal, 117.

James V., set up King of Scotland, 108.

Jordan, Isabella, 166.

Julius II., Pope, and Italian politics, 9, 15.

Katharine, Queen of England, 13, 16;

confides in Wolsey, 25;

Regent of England, 26;

opposed to French alliance, 60;

signs of her breach with king, 118;

divorce question moved, 151-153;

her attitude before the legatine court, 174.

Kingston, Sir William, 202-207.

Knight, secretary, sent to Rome, 158-161.

Lady Margaret Professorships, 145.

League, the Italian, 6, 7.

---- of Cambrai, 8, 9, 14, 15.

---- the Holy, 16.

Legate, Wolsey nominated, 50;

his legatine courts, 147.

Leicester Abbey, death of Wolsey at, 203-206.

Leo X., Pope, accession of, 27;

refuses Wolsey's cardinalate, 33, 34;

creates Wolsey cardinal, 39;

annoyed at Wolsey's success, 50;

sides with Charles V., 66, 73, 74;

death of, 85.

Lincoln, Wolsey Dean of, 22;

Bishop of, 29.

Longueville, Duke of, 32.

Louis XI., King of France, his policy, 5.

Louis XII., King of France, and League of Cambrai, 9, 10;

his dealings with Julius II., 15;

defeated in Italy, 25;

makes truce with Ferdinand and Maximilian, 28;

marries Mary of England, 33;

dies, 34.

Louise of Savoy, mother of Francis I., makes peace with England, 119.

Lymington, Wolsey Vicar of, 19.

Madrid, Treaty of, 120.

Magdalen College, Oxford, 18, 19.

Margaret, queen of James IV. of Scotland, marries Earl of Angus, 69;

allies with Albany, 91;

managed by Wolsey, 108.

Marignano, battle of, 38.

Mary, Princess, daughter of Henry VII., married to Louis XII., 32;

marries Duke of Suffolk, 37.

Mary, Princess, daughter of Henry VIII., married by proxy to Dauphin, 49;

betrothed to Charles V., 63, 64;

betrothed to Duke of Orleans, 122.

Maximilian, Emperor, joins Italian League, 6;

allied with Ferdinand, 14;

relations of Henry VII. with, 21;

at Terouenne, 25;

deserts Henry VIII., 27, 28;

makes a futile expedition against Milan, 40-42;

signs peace of Noyon, 45;

dies, 52.

Medici, Guilio dei, candidate for the Papacy, 87;

elected Clement VII., 99, 100.

Montdidier, capture of, 97.

More, Sir Thomas, Speaker in 1523, 103-105;

Chancellor, 190.

Nanfan, Sir Richard, 19.

Norfolk, Thomas Howard I., Duke of, 30, 34.

Norfolk, Thomas Howard II., Duke of, puts down tumult, 113, 114;

plots against Wolsey, 177, 181;

receives great seal from Wolsey, 186;

president of the Council, 190.

Norwich, tumult in, 113.

Noyon, Treaty of, 44, 45.

Oxford, Wolsey's influence in, 145-147.

Pace, Richard, his mission to Maximilian, 41-43;

mission to the German Elector, 55;

mission to Venice, 95;

mission to Bourbon, 106, 107.

Parliament, of 1523, 103, 105;

Wolsey's attitude to, 129, 130.

Paulet, Sir Amyas, 19.

Pavia, battle of, 109.

Picardy, invasion of, 90.

Putney, Wolsey at, 187.

Rhodes, captured by Turks, 93.

Richmond Lodge, Wolsey at, 193.

Ruthal, Bishop of Durham, 22.

St. Alban's, Wolsey made Abbot of, 83.

Sanctuary, right of, 135.

Scrooby, Wolsey at, 195.

Sheffield Park, Wolsey at, 202.

Southwell, Wolsey at, 194.

Spinelly, Thomas, 31.

Standish, Henry, 135-138.

Stile, John, 31.

Suffolk, Charles Brandon, Duke of, 30;

ambassador to France, 36;

marries Mary of England, 37;

commander in France, 97;

insults Wolsey, 176;

receives great seal from Wolsey, 186.

Surrey, Thomas Howard I., Earl of, member of Henry VII.'s Council, 22, 23;

created Duke of Norfolk (\_q.v.\_) 1514.

Surrey, Thomas Howard II., Earl of, commander in France, 90, 91;

put in charge of the Border, 92;

takes the field against Albany, 98;

succeeded Duke of Norfolk (\_q.v.\_) 1524.

Swiss troops in Milan, 38, 41, 42.

Terouenne, capture of, 25.

Tournai, capture of, 25;

Wolsey, Bishop of, 29;

ceded to France, 47-49;

captured by, 81.

Tunstal, Cuthbert, ambassador to Charles V., 67, 68;

speech as chancellor, 103.

Venice, attacked by League of Cambrai, 8, 9;

England's dealings with, 95, 96.

Vives, Juan Luis, 146.

Walshe, Sir Walter, 199.

Walsingham, Wolsey's pilgrimage to, 47.

Warham, Archbishop, 20, 147, 154, 155.

Wingfield, Sir Richard, 31, 41-43, 116.

Worms, Diet of, 73.

Wykeham, William of, 141.

York, archbishopric of, given to Wolsey, 29.

THE END

\_Printed by\_ R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, \_Edinburgh\_.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

HISTORY OF ROME. By Rev. M. CREIGHTON, M.A. of Oxford and Cambridge,

D.C.L. of Durham, LL.D. of Glasgow and Harvard. With Maps. Eleventh

Edition. Pott 8vo. 1s. [\_Literature Primers.\_]

\_SATURDAY REVIEW.\_--"Mr. Creighton is constantly stopping to gather up

the threads into his reader's hands, to mark 'noticeable points,' to

give systematic little bits of generalisation about causes, and little

lists of questions that a boy should bear in mind throughout; and all

this is consistently couched in the \_lenior imperativus\_ of the

lecturer.... The book is, as a rule, uniformly good, and far ahead of

any small school histories that have appeared before."

\_ACADEMY.\_--"Mr. Creighton's 'History of Rome' reminds us once more

that, in the matter of historical handbooks at least, we boast to be

much better than our fathers. At the outset he touches the right chord

by pointing out that the explanation of many important facts in modern

Europe is to be sought in the history of old Rome, and he proceeds by a

judicious selection of facts to bring into relief those social and

political changes which are the true subjects of history. But Mr.

Creighton takes care not to fall into the mistake of omitting the tales

which have been enjoyed by so many generations, and in spite of his

cramped space he finds room for Cincinnatus at the Plough and the

Schoolmaster of Falerii."

\_SCHOOL BOARD CHRONICLE.\_--"The author has been curiously successful in

telling in this intelligent way the story of Rome from first to last in

a rudimentary shilling book of little more than a hundred and twenty

pages, with maps, tables, and a brief chronology."

=Twelve English Statesmen.=

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY.

\_Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. each.\_

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR. By EDWARD A. FREEMAN, D.C.L., LL.D.

\_TIMES.\_--"Gives with great picturesqueness ... the dramatic incidents

of a memorable career far removed from our times and our manner of

thinking."

HENRY II. By Mrs. J. R. GREEN.

\_TIMES.\_--"It is delightfully real and readable, and in spite of severe

compression has the charm of a mediæval romance."

EDWARD I. By T. F. TOUT, M.A., Professor of History, The Owens College,

Manchester.

\_SPEAKER.\_--"A truer or more life-like picture of the king, the

conqueror, the overlord, the duke, has never yet been drawn."

HENRY VII. By JAMES GAIRDNER.

\_ATHENÆUM.\_--"The best account of Henry VII. that has yet appeared."

CARDINAL WOLSEY. By Bishop CREIGHTON, D.D.

\_SATURDAY REVIEW.\_--"Is exactly what one of a series of short

biographies of English Statesmen ought to be."

ELIZABETH. By E. S. BEESLY, M.A.

\_MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.\_--"It may be recommended as the best and briefest

and most trustworthy of the many books that in this generation have

dealt with the life and deeds of that 'bright Occidental Star, Queen

Elizabeth of happy memory.'"

OLIVER CROMWELL. By FREDERIC HARRISON.

\_TIMES.\_--"Gives a wonderfully vivid picture of events."

WILLIAM III. By H. D. TRAILL.

\_SPECTATOR.\_--"Mr. Traill has done his work well in the limited space at

his command. The narrative portion is clear and vivacious, and his

criticisms, although sometimes trenchant, are substantially just."

WALPOLE. By JOHN MORLEY.

\_ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.\_--"It deserves to be read, not only as the work of

one of the most prominent politicians of the day, but for its intrinsic

merits. It is a clever, thoughtful, and interesting biography."

PITT. By Lord ROSEBERY.

\_TIMES.\_--"Brilliant and fascinating.... The style is terse, masculine,

nervous, articulate, and clear; the grasp of circumstance and character

is firm, penetrating, luminous, and unprejudiced; the judgment is broad,

generous, humane, and scrupulously candid.... It is not only a luminous

estimate of Pitt's character and policy; it is also a brilliant gallery

of portraits. The portrait of Fox, for example, is a masterpiece."

PEEL. By J. R. THURSFIELD, M.A.

\_DAILY NEWS.\_--"A model of what such a book should be. We can give it no

higher praise than to say that it is worthy to rank with Mr. John

Morley's \_Walpole\_ in the same series."

CHATHAM. By FREDERIC HARRISON.

\_ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.\_--"It comes near the model of what such a book

should be."

=Foreign Statesmen Series.=

Edited by J. B. BURY, M.A., Regius Professor of Modern History

at Cambridge.

\_Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. each.\_

CHARLES THE GREAT. By THOMAS HODGKIN, D.C.L., Author of \_Italy and Her

Invaders\_, etc.

PHILIP AUGUSTUS. By Rev. W. H. HUTTON, Fellow and Tutor of St. John's

College, Oxford.

WILLIAM THE SILENT. By FREDERIC HARRISON.

PHILIP THE SECOND OF SPAIN. By Colonel MARTIN HUME.

RICHELIEU. By R. LODGE, Professor of History in the University of

Edinburgh.

MARIA THERESA. By J. FRANCK BRIGHT, D.D.

JOSEPH II. By J. FRANCK BRIGHT, D.D.

MIRABEAU. By P. F. WILLERT, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford.

COSIMO DE MEDICI. By Miss K. D. EWART.

CAVOUR. By the Countess MARTINENGO CESARESCO.

MAZARIN. By ARTHUR HASSALL, Student and Tutor of Christ Church, Oxford.

CATHERINE II. By J. B. BURY, Regius Professor of Modern History in the

University of Cambridge. [\_In the Press.\_]

=English Men of Letters.=

NEW SERIES

\_Crown 8vo. Gilt tops. Flat backs. 2s. net each.\_

MATTHEW ARNOLD. By HERBERT W. PAUL.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE. By EDMUND GOSSE.

BROWNING. By G. K. CHESTERTON.

FANNY BURNEY. By AUSTIN DOBSON.

CRABBE. By ALFRED AINGER.

MARIA EDGEWORTH. By the Hon. EMILY LAWLESS.

GEORGE ELIOT. By Sir LESLIE STEPHEN, K.C.B.

EDWARD FITZGERALD. By A. C. BENSON.

HAZLITT. By AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C.

HOBBES. By Sir LESLIE STEPHEN, K.C.B.

ANDREW MARVELL. By AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C.

THOMAS MOORE. By STEPHEN GWYNN.

WILLIAM MORRIS. By ALFRED NOYES.

WALTER PATER. By A. C. BENSON.

RICHARDSON. By AUSTIN DOBSON.

ROSSETTI. By A. C. BENSON.

RUSKIN. By FREDERIC HARRISON.

SHAKESPEARE. By WALTER RALEIGH.

ADAM SMITH. By FRANCIS W. HIRST.

SYDNEY SMITH. By GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL.

JEREMY TAYLOR. By EDMUND GOSSE.

TENNYSON. By Sir ALFRED LYALL.

JAMES THOMSON. By G. C. MACAULAY.

\_IN PREPARATION.\_

MRS. GASKELL. By CLEMENT SHORTER.

BEN JONSON. By Prof. GREGORY SMITH.

=English Men of Letters.=

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY

\_Library Edition. Crown 8vo. Gilt tops. Flat backs. 2s. net.\_

\_Popular Edition. Crown 8vo. Cloth, 1s. 6d. Paper covers, 1s.\_

\_Pocket Edition. Fcap. 8vo. Special Cover Design. Cloth, 1s. net.\_

ADDISON. By W. J. COURTHOPE.

BACON. By Dean CHURCH.

BENTLEY. By Sir RICHARD JEBB.

BUNYAN. By J. A. FROUDE.

BURKE. By JOHN MORLEY.

BURNS. By Principal SHAIRP.

BYRON. By Professor NICHOL.

CARLYLE. By Professor NICHOL.

CHAUCER. By Dr. A. W. WARD.

COLERIDGE. By H. D. TRAILL.

COWPER. By GOLDWIN SMITH.

DEFOE. By W. MINTO.

DE QUINCEY. By Professor MASSON.

DICKENS. By Dr. A. W. WARD.

DRYDEN. By Professor G. SAINTSBURY.

FIELDING. By AUSTIN DOBSON.

GIBBON. By J. COTTER MORISON.

GOLDSMITH. By W. BLACK.

GRAY. By EDMUND GOSSE.

HAWTHORNE. By HENRY JAMES.

HUME. By Professor HUXLEY, F.R.S.

JOHNSON. By Sir LESLIE STEPHEN, K.C.B.

KEATS. By SIDNEY COLVIN.

LAMB, CHARLES. By Canon AINGER.

LANDOR. By SIDNEY COLVIN.

LOCKE. By THOMAS FOWLER.

MACAULAY. By J. COTTER MORISON.

MILTON. By MARK PATTISON.

POPE. By Sir LESLIE STEPHEN, K.C.B.

SCOTT. By R. H. HUTTON.

SHELLEY. By J. A. SYMONDS.

SHERIDAN. By Mrs. OLIPHANT.

SIDNEY. By J. A. SYMONDS.

SOUTHEY. By Professor DOWDEN.

SPENSER. By Dean CHURCH.

STERNE. By H. D. TRAILL.

SWIFT. By Sir LESLIE STEPHEN, K.C.B.

THACKERAY. By ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

WORDSWORTH. By F. W. H. MYERS.

=English Men of Action Series.=

\_Crown 8vo. Cloth. With Portraits. 2s. 6d. each.\_

COLIN CAMPBELL. By ARCHIBALD FORBES.

CLIVE. By Sir CHARLES WILSON.

CAPTAIN COOK. By Sir WALTER BESANT.

DAMPIER. By W. CLARK RUSSELL.

DRAKE. By JULIAN CORBETT.

DUNDONALD. By the Hon. J. W. FORTESCUE.

GENERAL GORDON. By Sir W. BUTLER.

WARREN HASTINGS. By Sir A. LYALL.

SIR HENRY HAVELOCK. By ARCHIBALD FORBES.

HENRY V. By the Rev. A. J. CHURCH.

LORD LAWRENCE. By Sir RICHARD TEMPLE.

LIVINGSTONE. By THOMAS HUGHES.

MONK. By JULIAN CORBETT.

MONTROSE. By MOWBRAY MORRIS.

SIR CHARLES NAPIER. By Sir W. BUTLER.

NELSON. By Sir J. K. LAUGHTON.

PETERBOROUGH. By W. STEBBING.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH. By Sir RENNELL RODD.

RODNEY. By DAVID HANNAY.

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH. By A. G. BRADLEY.

STRAFFORD. By H. D. TRAILL.

WARWICK, the King-Maker. By C. W. OMAN.

WELLINGTON. By GEORGE HOOPER.

WOLFE. By A. G. BRADLEY.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

End of the Project Gutenberg EBook of Cardinal Wolsey, by Mandell Creighton

\*\*\* END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CARDINAL WOLSEY \*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* This file should be named 53526-8.txt or 53526-8.zip \*\*\*\*\*

This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:

http://www.gutenberg.org/5/3/5/2/53526/

Produced by Cathy Maxam, Chris Pinfield and the Online

Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net (This

file was produced from images generously made available

by The Internet Archive)

Updated editions will replace the previous one--the old editions will

be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright

law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works,

so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United

States without permission and without paying copyright

royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part

of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm

concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark,

and may not be used if you charge for the eBooks, unless you receive

specific permission. If you do not charge anything for copies of this

eBook, complying with the rules is very easy. You may use this eBook

for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports,

performances and research. They may be modified and printed and given

away--you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks

not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the

trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free

distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work

(or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project

Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full

Project Gutenberg-tm License available with this file or online at

www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm

electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to

and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property

(trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all

the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or

destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your

possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a

Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound

by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the

person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph

1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be

used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who

agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few

things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works

even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See

paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this

agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm

electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the

Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection

of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual

works in the collection are in the public domain in the United

States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the

United States and you are located in the United States, we do not

claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing,

displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as

all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope

that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting

free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm

works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the

Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily

comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the

same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when

you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern

what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are

in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States,

check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this

agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing,

distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any

other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no

representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any

country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other

immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear

prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work

on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the

phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed,

performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and

most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no

restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it

under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this

eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the

United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you

are located before using this ebook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is

derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not

contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the

copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in

the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are

redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project

Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply

either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or

obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm

trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted

with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution

must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any

additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms

will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works

posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the

beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm

License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this

work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this

electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without

prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with

active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project

Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary,

compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including

any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access

to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format

other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official

version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site

(www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense

to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means

of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain

Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the

full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying,

performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works

unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing

access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works

provided that

\* You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from

the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method

you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed

to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has

agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid

within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are

legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty

payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in

Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg

Literary Archive Foundation."

\* You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies

you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he

does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm

License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all

copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue

all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm

works.

\* You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of

any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the

electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of

receipt of the work.

\* You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free

distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than

are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing

from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and The

Project Gutenberg Trademark LLC, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm

trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable

effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread

works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project

Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm

electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may

contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate

or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other

intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or

other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or

cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right

of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project

Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project

Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all

liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal

fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT

LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE

PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE

TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE

LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR

INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH

DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a

defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can

receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a

written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you

received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium

with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you

with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in

lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person

or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second

opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If

the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing

without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth

in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO

OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT

LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied

warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of

damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement

violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the

agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or

limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or

unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the

remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the

trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone

providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in

accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the

production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm

electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses,

including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of

the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this

or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or

additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any

Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of

electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of

computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It

exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations

from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the

assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's

goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will

remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project

Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure

and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future

generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary

Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see

Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at

www.gutenberg.org

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit

501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the

state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal

Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification

number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary

Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by

U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is in Fairbanks, Alaska, with the

mailing address: PO Box 750175, Fairbanks, AK 99775, but its

volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous

locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt

Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to

date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and

official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby

Chief Executive and Director

gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg

Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide

spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of

increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be

freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest

array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations

($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt

status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating

charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United

States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a

considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up

with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations

where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND

DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular

state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we

have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition

against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who

approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make

any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from

outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation

methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other

ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To

donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project

Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be

freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and

distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of

volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed

editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in

the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not

necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper

edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search

facility: www.gutenberg.org

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm,

including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary

Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to

subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.