TUDOR ENGLAND.

THE NATION AND ITS RULERS IN THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION.

SOCIAL ENGLAND. A Record of the Progress of the People in Religion, Laws, Learning, Arts, Industry, Commerce, Science, Literature and Manners, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. By Various Writers. Edited by H. D. Traill, D. C. L., Sometime Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford. Volume III. From the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of Elizabeth. Pp. xii, 551. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

This volume carries the history of England in almost all its aspects beyond the boundaries of mediaevalism. Many years were yet to elapse before the hideous punishments of ancient law would be put away. There were times still to come after the death of Elizabeth when the rack and the boot and other instruments of the torture-chamber would be used to force confessions from accused persons and from witnesses. One of the most scandalous outbreaks of fanaticism that the world ever saw—the witchcraft de'usion—was still a thing of the future. But mediaevalism as a system was past when Henry VIII came to the English throne, and much of the ruin it left was cleared away before Elizabeth disappeared from the scene. The puzzle of the thing is that in times when England was advancing so rapidly, growing in power, in numbers, in wealth, in external influence and in the sense of individual freedom, its rulers should have been more despotic than they had been for generations. But this phenomenon had not been unknown in earlier times. A harsh and cruel series of monarchs had ruled England from the time of William the Conqueror to that of Henry II, and yet the period had been one of remarkable progress. With evil times came weak monarchs. And now after the long anarchy of the Wars of the Roses, England grew united and prosperous under the rule of a family whose past was dubious and whose conduct on the throne was marked by dangerous eccentricities. Henry VII and his granddaughter Elizabeth were miserly to a degree. Henry VIII and his daughter Mary were swift to shed blood. In all four self-esteem was almost a mania. But their vices as well as their virtues contributed in a way to the welfare of England. Henry VII left an overflowing treasury, and in spending the money Henry VIII, by his magnificence, laid the foundations of a popularity that just outlasted the arbitrariness of his life. His habits became those of a spendthrift. But if his expenses had not grown with his years he might not have thought of attacking the religious houses in the way he did, and England might have continued indefinitely to be burdened with what was foreign to her modes of thought.

In the volume in hand Henry gets all the credit he deserves for the work he did. But he is not praised for his good intentions. It happened that his desire for personal aggrandizement met the desire of his subjects to exclude all foreign authority and influence from their island. England for the English was in effect what they insisted upon, and they were for the moment indifferent to the fact that his version was England for Henry. Instinctively he went as far in the matter of religious reform as the majority of Englishmen in his day wished and no further. They were, in general, contented with the doctrines of the Church as they had received them. The endless disputations of a later age had not yet opened their eyes to the possibility of difference. But they had always been jealous of the rights of the English Church, they wanted no usages that could be described to them merely as foreign, and they were determined to have no meddling from without in their affairs if they could avoid it. Henry's learning, which was indeed marvellous for a King, made him an intelligent defender of the faith; while the incidents of his career and his own passions led him to assert a personal authority which accomplished for the Church what his subjects on the whole desired. His success and the subsequent failure of the Regent Somerset are contrasted to show the condition of thought in England in those times. The latter meant apparently to carry out the policy of Henry. But he meddled with doctrine, and acts of repression which in Henry's case could be made to seem politically necessary became with him mere persecution for differences of religious opinion. When it came to methods for getting money, Henry was equally fortunate. It was necessary for him to bear lightly upon the middle classes. They were the first to feel the weight of a tax, and they were under no obligations to the Crown which might keep them from complaining or even from resisting an imposition which they deemed unjust. If Henry pressed money from the nobility and from the rich, he took only what he or his predecessor had put in their way. But it was different with those who earned what they had, and none was more conscious of this than the earners themselves. As to the nobility, Henry was fortunate in the fact that the Wars of the Roses had destroyed nearly all the ancient houses. Those in existence were a Tudor creation, and their life and power were bound upon the support of the dynasty. It was to their interest to be loyal, even when the King became a bloody tyrant. Henry was also lucky in his favorites. In the magnificence of Wolsey and the craft of Cromwell, he could experiment on the people, testing at every point the limit of their endurance. Wolsey was as arrogant as his master, but he found his match in the Parliament which would only grant the subsidies he demanded after they themselves had fixed the terms on which they should be paid. He did not understand the English Nation, and he interpreted literally the claim of absolute power on the part of the King. On the other hand, the people understood very well that they, too, had power to constrain royalty when the necessity to do so became unavoidable. The picture given of Wolsey in this volume is not an unattractive one. If he was despotic, he was also kindly. He meant to be of use to the people, though his manner was that of one giving alms rather than that of a man who was performing a duty. In Henry it is hard to see anything but utter selfishness, skilful in the use of instruments, careful of his own personal satisfaction, bringing about the good of the realm because somehow that accorded with his own cherished desires. If it had happened that his personal wishes and the best interests of his kingdom had been opposed to each other, he would certainly have been a tyrant. As matters stood, there was room for two opinions about him, and both have been exploited. In the present volume a balance is fairly struck between the two extremes of praise and blame.

If it had not been for the religious houses, Henry's spendthrift habits would certainly have led him to acts of oppression, from which he happily escaped. That much suffering was caused by their destruction is certain. But the suffering was such as the nation felt only indirectly. These houses had filled a place which afterward had to be filled by legislation. They had taken care of the poor for ages, and when they were gone the want of them was evinced by Poor Laws and statutes against sturdy beggars and vagabonds. Not only those who subsisted on the gifts of the monasteries, but also the monastics themselves, were turned out to beg or starve. But the people at large hardly observed this fact as one which was certain in the end to affect their own well-being. What they saw was that institutions which had never been deemed English, and were industriously vilified as the homes of indolence, corruption and nameless crime, were to be blotted out. The number of men with money was rapidly increasing, and the desire to own land was universal. Farming throughout the Tudor period was of a kind only imperfectly known to preceding ages. The profit of wool-growing had grown enormously, and those who had money to buy land, or the power to inclose what had hitherto been held in common, became wealthy with comparatively little trouble or industry. The abbey lands were eagerly taken up by rich men who cared nothing for the poor. The movement was noteworthy, for it revealed the beginnings of the modern commercial spirit, with its tendencies in favor of the strong and the capable and its contempt for the weak. Agriculture made hardly any progress. The country was filled with the clamor of men turned out of their holdings, and of laborers for whom there was no work. Even royalty had to listen to this outcry, especially when it led, as it did on several occasions in the times of Henry and Mary, to open rebellion. But in fact the tendency was one which could not be resisted. It was part of the evolution of individualism, against which the communal ideas inherited from the Middle Ages, and from still earlier times, were powerless. But the opening up of the abbey lands was naturally a relief. It retarded by so much the process of inclosure and was of similar value to the farmer and cotter that the confiscation of plate, jewels and other movables from the monastic house was to the middle-class contributor to royal subsidies. It put off an evil day that was felt to be coming and it saved the popularity of the king. What would have happened if he had lived to do as he meant to do, namely, to lay hands on the surplus of the universities, can only be imagined. Henry had found the treasury rich, he left it poor. But the country was growing richer daily, not through his magnificence and luxury, but in spite of it. It was growing more intelligent. It was replete with ideas which were soon to be embodied in the grandest body of literature known to history. Still the universities decayed. The new learning which had sprung up under the influence of Erasmus, when the king was in the heyday of youthful enthusiasm, withered away or was cultivated only by the few. But the memory of it spread. There was an endless amount of translation and imitation. The classics were as much the subject of every-day conversation as the lightest literature is at the present day. Society was saturated with what it took to be learning. Perhaps it was no loss in the end that the universities lost ground for a time. In the eager disputation that went on everywhere else, in the taste for novelty and for display, there lay a capacity which would soon produce a host of poets and dramatists. For this, almost the whole Tudor period was merely a time of preparation. It was not till toward the close of Elizabeth's reign that the plant which had been so long cultivated began to bloom in perfection.

With all the wish and the opportunity to be tyrants, there was one thing which would in any case have kept the Tudors from wielding absolute power. They were not military. Henry invaded France with an army hampered by his personal attendants and belongings to such a degree that he is sarcastically compared in this book to that proverb of luxury and incompetence, the Persian Xerxes. Neither he nor Elizabeth paid those who fought their battles on land and sea if they could help it. Had it not been for the patriotism of private individuals the Armada might not have been defeated. No persuasions and no urgency sufficed to open the Queen's purse-strings wide enough to victual the ships in a proper manner. This trait of parsimony was the worse in both father and daughter, because they had done away completely with all the mediaeval incentives to loyalty on the part of the soldier. The retainer of a feudal lord had to be faithful. If he failed in his duty he became a homeless outcast. But the soldiery of the Tudors were, in theory at least, adherents solely of the monarch. They bore no device except that of national import. Their loyalty was unduly tested when they were forced to serve without pay and often with nothing to eat. In two cases whole armies deserted their colors. Such incidents add grim force to the curious arguments which led to the casting aside of the long bow as a weapon of war. The very fact that throughout almost the whole of the Tudor period archers continued to form a large part of English armies in spite of the improvement in firearms, and in spite of the universal change on the Continent, shows how indifferent the English rulers really were to military affairs. True, the long bow was an efficient weapon. The hand gun of the period only proved its superiority very gradually. But the long bow was efficient just in proportion to the strength of the archer. If he was ill-fed and barely able to stand, then he could not draw his bow. In a vast number of cases he was rendered incapable by the neglect and parsimony of those for whom he fought. So the advocates of the use of firearms in war argued that the condition of the soldiers required the use of a weapon which did not depend for its efficiency on physical strength. It must have appealed sooner or later to a Tudor to think that his soldiers might be enabled to fight even though they were starving.

The fact is impressed on the mind that England, under those famous princes of the Renaissance and the Reformation, would have been great without them. The very diseases from which the population suffered, those mysterious epidemics which still followed each other as they had done in the Middle Ages, sufficed merely to clear off those who were a hindrance to their stronger contemporaries. The numbers of the people increased at a rapid rate, and while complaints were endless, it is plain that the added millions lived on the average as long as the rest. Competition stirred the race out of the slow life of an earlier time. The people awoke to all that was going on about them. They turned their faces away from the hopeless task of getting a foothold in Europe, and betook themselves to Ireland, to the ocean, to the New World. It was not the cautious and timorous policy of the rulers that accomplished this, but the adventurous spirit of the people themselves. While royalty was meddling with the navy, the great free-booters of the Spanish Main were making one, "singeing the King of Spain's beard," capturing his treasure fleets, destroying his colonies, acting the very part of the dragon they were supposed by superstitious Spaniards to resemble. The nation, pushing upward on every side, raised its princes to prominence. It endured their absolutism inasmuch as this was, for the time being, a stimulus to its own activity. It saw a number of persons murdered with every degree of cruelty for their religious convictions, and it did not murmur overmuch. It was fond of bear-baiting, and may have taken pleasure for a time in the baiting of heretics. But before the period was ended which this volume describes, a stop was put upon much of this judicial cruelty. The nation was getting too serious to be trifled with. If men could not agree about religion, more especially if they mixed it with politics, sooner or later they would have to fight out their differences. Already one begins to feel premonitions of a Cromwell different from the one who served Henry VIII, and of a time when Parliament would try to do without kings, as kings had hitherto tried to do without Parliament. Tudor absolutism was well enough, while the nation was prosperous; the case was different with Stuart absolutism, when the nation felt that it could hardly afford the luxury of maintaining a tyrant.

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REAL ESTATE.

BUSINESS AT THE EXCHANGES.

There was a long list of offerings at the auction rooms yesterday. The parcels were diversified in character and were scattered throughout almost every section of the city. The crowds in front of the auctioneers' rostrums were fairly large, but except in one or two instances the bidding was dull.

At the Broadway salesrooms Smyth & Ryan sold in partition proceedings Nos. 161 and 163 Lewis-st., four and five story front and rear buildings, lots 25 and 22.6x100 respectively, to the plaintiff, Elizabeth A. Falvey, for $22,850.

James L. Wells sold at voluntary sale No. 349 East Fifty-third-st., three-story and basement dwelling, lot 21x about 99x81.10½, to T. J. Drummond for $7,500; also under foreclosure proceedings three lots, 25x100.2 each, on the east side of Eagle-ave., 425 feet south of one-hundred-and-fifty-sixth-st., to A. Bussing for $5,450; also three lots, each 25x115.3, abutting in the rear and fronting on Caldwell-ave., to A. Bussing for $1,675; also the southeast corner of One-hundred-and-fifty-sixth-st. and Eagle-ave., 25x100x24.98x99, and two lots adjoining, each 25x91.08, to same person for $2,875; also the lot adjoining to H. A. Van Vlen, for $900.

William Kennelly sold six lots on the north side of Sherman-ave., 100 feet west of Dyckman-st., each 25x150, to W. I. Fox for $1,050 each.

Bryan L. Kennelly sold under foreclosure proceedings Nos. 1,464, 1,466 and 1,470 Amsterdam-ave., three five-story brick flats, the first two 25x100 each and the last 24.11x100, as follows: No. 1,464 to Poland S. Pettit for $23,000; No. 1,466, to the plaintiff, George F. Anger, for $24,500 and No. 1,470 to the same party for $24,000; also under same proceedings, No. 247 Delancey-st. and Nos. 44 and 44½ Sheriff-st., two five-story brick tenements, irregular plot, to Louis Levy for $30,500.

L. J. Phillips & Co. sold under foreclosure Nos. 617 and 619 East One-hundred-and-sixty-first-st., two-story frame factory and stable, land 50x100.5x50x102.5, to the plaintiff, Henry M. Goble, for $5,053.

At the Liberty Street Exchange R. V. Harnett & Co. sold No. 230 East One-hundred-and-seventy-first-st., lot 24x100.11x20.11x100.11, to William Quackenbush for $2,750; Nos. 29 and 41 East Seventy-fifth-st., two four-story brownstone dwellings, the first 18.6½x102.2, and the other 15.11x102.2, as follows: No. 29 to Newman Cowen for $23,700, and No. 41 to J. Cohen for $22,100; No. 195 Alexander-ave., three-story and basement brick dwelling, lot 16.6x45x75, to Henry Hosking for $6,275. The other parcels were adjourned, old in or withdrawn.

The parcels Nos. 530 and 532 West Thirty-seventh-st., two four-story brick tenements, each 12.6x60x82.8, which, it was announced, would be sold at the Broadway Salesroom to-day, were sold at private contract by E. H. Ludlow & Co. for Julia M. Rabine to M. L. Rickerson for $8,750.

The house of the late Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, No. 104 West Eighty-sixth-st., will be sold to-day at the Broadway Salesroom; also the estate of Ernste Kelly, deceased.

Algernon P. Collins has sold No. 505 Fifth-ave., a four-story brownstone business building 45 feet north of Forty-sixth-st. for $80,000. He bought it in September, 1891, for $39,000. The lot is 18.11½. No. 504, 24x60, was transferred in 1883 for $105,000.

Daniel Whitford has sold for $80,250 two four-story brick buildings, Nos. 62 and 64 East One-hundred-and-twenty-fifth-st., 50x100.11, to M. J. Adrian. Mr. Whitford bought the property in 1882 for $55,000. No. 66, 25x100.11, was sold in 1883 for $29,000. The plot is 214.6 feet west of Fourth-ave.

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS.

86th-st., s s, 238.10 ft e of 6th-ave, 16.8x100.5; Alexander Carmichael, jr., to William P. Lyndon	$1
2d-st., n s, 100 ft e of Lexington-ave, 25x85; Charles W. Cooper and wife to Julia Cooper	1
6th-st., n s, 100 ft w of Avenue A, 20.5x75; 6th-st., s s, 100 ft w of Avenue A, 20.5x75;