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ARTICLE III.

THE RISE OF THE TOLERATION MOVEMENT.

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DOWN to the opening of the seventeenth century, religious intolerance was the order of the day. The human mind was held fast under the thrall of the spiritual power, and confined to a narrow channel to abandon which was perilous in the extreme. With sword and fagot the church maintained its claim to divine authority; but, in thus appealing to human weapons, it entirely ignored the human side of the question. However, this spiritual intolerance was not the exclusive possession of medieval ecclesiasticism. The maternal hierarchy had well instructed its offspring in the use of weapons which they, in their turn, were not slow to wield in upholding the authority of their own doctrines. And, even when transplanted to a new soil, whither they had sailed to escape persecution for maintaining offensive dogmas at home, and to obtain, in that distant wild, "freedom to worship God" according to their own interpretation of it, these very sectaries, despite their former sufferings for their religious belief, there failed to learn the lesson of toleration. "When the charge of persecution," observes Guizot, "was applied to the ruling party in the Reformation, not by its enemies, but by its own offspring; when the sects, denounced by that party, said, 'We are doing just what you did; we separate ourselves from you, just as you separated yourselves from the Church of Rome'; this ruling party was still more at a loss

to find an answer; and frequently the only answer they had to give was an increase of severity." The very liberty of conscience which they had demanded for themselves, did they, when their opportunity came, deny to all who should differ from them. The reconciliation of the different religious sectaries belonged to a period in the dim future.

But the Reformation was not altogether a religious movement, as it marked a great and far-reaching crisis in human thought. It constituted the first successful attempt to throw off the shackles whereby the human mind might regain its freedom. The first step made towards the accomplishment of this result was the overthrow of that spiritual power that had for centuries sat like an incubus on humanity and precluded all hope of material prosperity. Though this spiritual freedom was by no means complete, yet the first step had been taken; a break had been made from the old order of things. Conditions and environment, the character of the ruler and of the ruled, have all, in a greater and less degree, delayed the total emancipation of the mind. But the mind was at least awakened to a just sense of its needs both in religious and in temporal matters. There was now no going backward; the old order of things would never return. That was, certainly, some consolation.

Now, as this Reformation was accomplished under a religious garb, religion was given a new importance and a new direction in all the relations of life. On the one hand, secular governments began to take Christianity under their special protection, while their respective rulers endeavored to become veritable popes in their methods of securing uniformity of belief. On the other side, the variety of religious doctrines, to which the emancipation of the human mind had naturally given rise, found expression in a multiplicity of sects that

denied to each other the same privilege of dissent, which they had demanded for themselves, and backed their arguments, when they had the power, by appealing to the temporal sword, slashing right and left in imitation of their former task-masters. The only religious liberty thus far enunciated was the liberty of using their newly acquired power in coercing all those who disagreed with them,—the right of the strongest. However, those who could thus force their doctrines upon others without their consent could make it a merit to die as well as to fight for their cause. Thus the various sectaries can point to numerous martyrs who suffered in maintaining and repressing religious freedom alike. But it is a sad reflection on those distressful times, to note those infatuated religionists, at the very moment of their recovery of spiritual liberty, flying to arms and cutting one another's throats for no other reason than for some slight difference of opinion in non-essentials, some point of rubric or ceremony!

In France and the Netherlands religious toleration was secured only through the mutual concessions of opposing factions. Political reasons, as much as the sheer exhaustion of the contending parties, hastened that event. A mild Christian spirit had nothing to do whatever with the change of attitude.

In Holland the struggle between Romanism and Protestantism lasted until the power of Spain, the mere tool of Rome, had been totally shattered. The deadly blow which Spain had intended to inflict upon Protestant Christendom rebounded on herself and paralyzed all her energies, from which blow she has never recovered. Yet Holland presents an unique example in the history of the Toleration movement. From the year 1575 on, the persecuted religionists of every shade and of every nationality here found safe har-

borage where each might exercise his peculiar belief with impunity. Thousands of fugitives from England alone, counting many Roman Catholics among them, obtained here a toleration they could not find at home. But it must be admitted that these very exiles would have abetted any persecution of the other religious sectaries in their own country whenever their own party should be in the ascendant; and they did so when the coast was clear enough to return home and coöperate with their co-religionists.

Turning back to France for a moment, we find that toleration was a purely political measure on the part of Henry IV., to secure the peace of the realm, not from any conscientious motives on his part. The Huguenots at this time formed in France a party more powerful than the Romish, and were able to obtain toleration at the point of the sword so long as they had the power. But, on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Romish party was once more in the ascendant, at which time thousands of persecuted Huguenots were driven from France, and settled in America, chiefly in the English colonies.

Passing on to England, we shall note there, for a period of nearly two centuries, the same unremitting attempts to secure uniformity in matters of religion by coercion, which was met by a no less corresponding nonconformity on the part of the persecuted, and rendered the struggle between the different factions one of most intense bitterness. A consideration of the causes which led to the full establishment of religious toleration in England and in her American colonies will explain on a small arena the rise of the toleration movement. The chief factors in accomplishing this event are to be found in the conflict of the various politico-ecclesiastical parties into which the advocates of the several religious

sectaries were divided during what is known as the reformatory period. Therefore, if we consider the rise and development of these parties of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we shall be the better enabled to trace the toleration movement both in England and our own country.

Of the many political parties which arose during this period, five attained more or less prominence at different times, and were active in shaping public opinion in regard to the toleration of religion. The minor parties exerted but little or no influence, or else constituted smaller subdivisions of the more powerful factions, and, hence, do not require any special mention. The five parties under consideration were as follow:—

I. The Popish, or the old conservative party,—the intolerant spirit against which England was first to protest, and which for a hundred and fifty years was a constant menace to English liberties and English reform. It constituted the party of intrigue, was ever ready to accept of any change in the political horizon, provided such change afforded advantage to the principles it advocated, and was, so to speak, the denational party, prepared at any time to overturn the existing condition of things to secure its ends; and, for this purpose, it would endeavor to conciliate its enemies when out of power, and to betray them again when once more taken into favor. Thus this party was ever on the side of power, especially when that power should subserve its interests.

II. Anglicanism constituted the second powerful party. It was a protest, the first, against all foreign interference with English institutions,—a declaration that the sovereign possessed the indisputable right to rule his subjects according to the law of the land, whether in temporal or in religious

concerns; an affirmation of the supremacy of the state in all things against individual rights or foreign intervention. This, in turn, became the conservative party, and was as intolerant in the course of time as had ever been the old Romish party. Hence, the same animadversions which were once directed against the Papal became equally applicable at length to the Anglican party.

III. The Puritans proper, who formed the great bulk of the Puritan party, apart from their desire of religious reform, adopted no less arbitrary methods than the other two parties to weaken the royal supremacy, following the example of the Anglicans in their struggle with the papal hierarchy. In its political capacity this party represented pure republicanism, the first of the kind to find expression on English soil. It exhibited its political side more definitely, in this regard, in Presbyterianism, where it would have both church and state legislated by an assembly,—the first ruled by synods and the second by a parliament. But it departed somewhat from a pure democracy in the fact that it advocated that both synod and parliament should be placed under the control of a spiritual, or ecclesiastical, oligarchy instead of giving obedience to a single head. But it had no intention, however, of tolerating any religious belief which did not accord with its own form. The Puritan party could not, therefore, use language strong enough to express its hatred of "lawless toleration." Nevertheless, it denominated itself the party of reform.

IV. The Erastians made a vigorous protest against the dawning tendency to republicanism as exhibited by the Presbyterians, who constituted the right wing of the Puritan party, and this irrespective of its religious aspect. The Erastian party declared itself in favor of an absolute monarch

in civil affairs, as being preferable to a tyrannical oligarchy. In matters of religion, however, it favored a perfect toleration and often sided with the Independents.

V. The Independent party, the last under consideration, was distinctively a liberal party. In this party we may first note the glimmerings of true democratic principles both in church and state,—the right, then and there first enunciated, in any political body, for any number of persons to form themselves into whatever religious assembly they might desire; and that every such congregation should constitute a true church organization, to be governed by its own members or by-laws without any let or hindrance from the civil magistrate. This party was the first to proclaim the great principle that religious liberty is the inherent right of man, and that, so long as the civil peace is not disturbed, such liberty should not be curtailed. This enunciation of self-government in ecclesiastical affairs was afterwards reflected in the civil polity, and had its best fruitage in the New World.

The struggle for ascendancy between these several parties was productive not only of English constitutional government, but of the gradual separation of church and state and the recognition of religious freedom, the last two finding their earliest and fullest expression in the English colonies of North America, and now forming a part of the Constitution of the United States.

With this brief introduction, the reader will be the better prepared to enter more at large upon the discussion of this interesting subject, and to note the rôle played by each party in bringing about the very result which the great bulk of these sectaries did all in their power to prevent.

I.

When Thomas Aquinas, the ecclesiastical casuist of the thirteenth century, formulated the doctrine of papal supremacy, which was stereotyped in the sixteenth at the Council of Trent, and gave the Pope of Rome supreme control in both spiritual and temporal concerns alike, a position was assumed by the Church of Rome that clearly evinced its relations with Protestantism from the start,—a policy from which that church has never once swerved a hair's breadth. To the subsequent conflict between Protestantism and Romanism, a struggle which ended in the total freedom of the human mind from ecclesiastical arrogance, may be traced the germs of that antagonism to the Roman Church wherever it has established itself.¹ But, in viewing the Romish party, we must regard it not so much from an ethical standpoint, as in the light of a stupendous political system, such as the world never before knew. When Henry VIII. of England, by his arbitrary act, threw off his allegiance to the Papal See and established a church more subservient to his or to English interests and placed under his direct supervision, it was the first blow struck for religious freedom, in whatever other light it may be considered. This act was the first step made towards religious toleration, and gave rise, in after time, to the colonization of America.

Of the three parties which now held the balance of power, the Roman Catholics were by no means the weakest, if not

¹ See Bull of Gregory XVI. (1832), where he emphasizes the evils of religious toleration and refers to the "pestilent error" of liberty of conscience; also the Encycl. of Pius IX. (1864), which condemns all the principles upon which the United States are founded; also the Encycl. of Leo XIII. (1885 and 1888), wherein this "enlightened prelate" makes similar assertions; also the recent arraignment by the Papal Court of "Modernism."

so strong as the Anglicans, and if we again except the brief lease of power of the Romish party under Mary. But at that time its excesses not only made her name one of the most infamous in history, but, in their carrying out to the full the principles enunciated at the Council of Trent, proved their utter incapacity to govern and their total unworthiness of public confidence.

The Puritans at this time were in a small minority; but they were the staunch upholders of the English Constitution, whatever might have been their disagreement in religious concerns. The general reluctance of the Papal party to swear allegiance to the temporal sovereign, and, as time went on, their refusal to subscribe to any measure which might conflict with the Pope's claim to temporal as well as to spiritual supremacy, kept this party, especially the Jesuitical wing, and the country at large, constantly in hot water, and drew thereby upon the party most of the persecution and proscription to which all the Roman Catholics were subjected. The Puritans did not offend in the same vein.

The evils under which the Papal party in England labored during the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles II., if not entirely undeserved, are evident enough. But it was during the stormy reign of Elizabeth that the Roman Catholics were compelled to endure more than ordinary hardships. The position of the Queen was peculiar. At that time all the popish powers, headed by Spain, were leagued together to make a grand and final effort to blot Protestantism out of existence. The Netherlands were invaded; Elizabeth excommunicated and deposed by the Pope; her subjects absolved from their allegiance to her, and threatened, in their turn, with excommunication in case of their disobedience to the Papal Bull. In short, the Queen's life was placed in con-

start jeopardy from popish plots, which culminated in the "Invincible Armada," despatched by Spain for the conquest of England and the redemption of lost souls. Under such trying circumstances the penal code enacted against all Roman Catholics who refused to take the oath of allegiance (hence termed *recusants*) was more rigidly enforced. By this law it was made equivalent to treason for a Romish priest to say mass: even those who should take part in its celebration were liable to like penalties. Imprisonments and fines for recusancy were now of constant occurrence on the slightest pretext. And, though the escape of recusants was frequently connived at, the Roman Catholics did not dare to complain of any of these rigorous measures.

Another severe law, passed against recusants at this time, was to the effect that all persons who should absent themselves from the service of the Anglican, or established, Church, unless they should hear the Protestant service at their own homes, were to be fined twenty pounds a month, if their property admitted of such a sum; otherwise they forfeited two-thirds of their lands until such time as they should conform. Those who had no lands to levy on had their personal property attached (1581). Hard as such treatment was, it was made still more severe by the abuses of constables and pursuivants whose business it was to make search for Romish priests who had taken refuge in the families of the Roman Catholic gentry. Under the pretense of looking for concealed priests, these officials were wont to destroy in the most wanton manner the furniture of the houses which they searched, or else to carry away with them much valuable property. The sufferers from such treatment had no redress whatever, as there were but few Romanists who had not given the law some hold on them for more or less assistance extended

to their priests. This was made the occasion when many Roman Catholics, whose tender consciences would not permit them to take the oath of fealty to the Queen, went beyond sea where they could exercise their religion with freedom. Holland furnished that asylum for sects of all complexions, Protestant and Romish alike.

During the same year (1581), another act against recusancy was passed. The year previous, many Jesuits had made their appearance in England; and much, if not all, of the disturbance during the reign of Elizabeth may be attributed to them. The Jesuits and Seminary priests, instructed at Dany, were at the bottom of all these troubles; and but for them the reign of the Queen might have been comparatively tranquil; for they accentuated in every way imaginable the terms of the bull of Pius V., and gave encouragement to all conscientious professors of their faith in their disloyalty to the Queen. Yet it would not be just to deny that the best element among the English Romanists repudiated with indignation all such attempts to shake their loyalty to the English government. After events proved this fact conclusively.

It was this wholesale and indiscriminate persecution of Roman Catholics which cannot be too strongly deprecated, and which must be laid not so much to the necessities of the times as to the intolerant spirit of the age, as the sequel will show. Another point to note is the fact that all statutes enacted against Nonconformists were chiefly directed against recusant priests; the non-juring laity were never so severely dealt with. No one, according to Hallam, could not have preserved his life "by explicitly denying the Pope's power to depose the queen." But the faithful Roman Catholic, rather than to do this, preferred to suffer at the stake and obtain the glorious crown of martyrdom.

On the accession of James, the Romish party was led to expect some mitigation of the severity which had hitherto been exercised towards it. On the eve of succeeding Elizabeth to the throne, James had promised some half-way concessions to all parties, in the hope of attaching them more closely to his interest. To the Roman Catholics in particular he had promised toleration; and, to encourage them the more in this belief, during the first two years of his reign he remitted all fines formerly levied against recusants. The Roman Catholics were in consequence very zealous in his favor. But, whatever he had done to win the favor of that party, James was no admirer of Papists, much less of Jesuits; and on several occasions he declared he should proceed against them in the same manner as had been done in the preceding reign. But if the Romanists found their condition but little lightened, the Puritans had still greater cause of complaint of the severity of the laws against nonconformity. These latter sectaries were not only bitterly opposed to the Romish party, but desired changes to be made in the ritual of the established church. They were, therefore, not persecuted so much for state reasons, as were the Roman Catholics, but for their nonconformity. They had never refused to take the oath of allegiance to the government, but had refused to subscribe to certain forms and ceremonies of the Establishment. The Romanists, on the other hand, would neither submit to the sovereign nor conform. This contumacy on their part made them more difficult of management.

At the beginning of the rule of James, England became the asylum of those Papists who had fled in the previous reign. As many as one hundred and forty priests landed on those shores within nine months after the death of Elizabeth, encouraged to return by the hope of toleration. But in this

hope they were disappointed; for, soon after, the law was put in force against recusancy which was particularly severe in its treatment of priests. The Roman Catholic laity were for a time, at least, tolerated. But this toleration did not last long, for James put into operation all the old laws in this regard, but, apparently, for no other purpose than to use the fines, thus collected on the lands and other property of the Roman Catholics, for pensioning his Scotch favorites. Then it was that many recusants again sought asylum in Holland; while at home, owing to the baneful effect and rank injustice of the laws against recusancy, arose the famous Gunpowder Plot, which was ascribed to the notorious Guy Fawkes. Albeit in this conspiracy only Jesuits were implicated, yet the secular priests, though entirely innocent of any complicity in it, were involved alike in the punishment; and a still more rigorous code of recusant laws was enacted, in which all classes of Roman Catholics were included.

In 1622 the hopes of the Romish party were once more revived when James seemed bent on an alliance with Spain by the proposed marriage of his son Charles with the Infanta. Sir George Calvert, one of his secretaries of state, was most strenuous in his efforts to bring about this match; and he was, besides, a recent convert to the Catholic Church. Among the stipulations asked in concluding this alliance, it was required that the future Queen of England should enjoy the full and free exercise of her faith, and that all her children should be brought up in it. But the article in the agreement that chiefly concerned the Roman Catholics was the promise made whereby James and his son pledged themselves to discontinue all persecution of recusants so long as the latter confined their worship to their own residences. However, the Spanish marriage was finally broken off through the

opposition of the Puritan party. At this time that party was gaining strength; it was mainly through the Puritan interest in Parliament that the alliance was opposed and the King enjoined to seek a Protestant marriage for his son.

Two new parties arose during this reign. They were naturally of a religious complexion, though political in their bearing. Both were old parties with new faces. One was the Country party, wholly composed of Puritans, who were strongly opposed to the absolutism of the king, to the church establishment, and to the Roman Catholics as a matter of course. The second, or Court party, was a conglomerate body, made up of Anglicans, clergy, laity, and those holding offices under the crown, together with the vast majority of Romanists who now found it to their advantage to curry favor with the ruling powers. But, under whatsoever name going, these two parties were to be easily differentiated.

At first the Papal party gained ascendancy over king and court. This made matters all the more uncomfortable to the Puritans, which gave occasion for many of this party in their turn to emigrate to the Low Countries, and thence to New England. However, as the Puritan interest was stronger in the Commons than either of the other two parties (Romanish and Anglican), the Puritans demanded the enforcement of the laws against recusancy. It was then that the Roman Catholics were forced to flee, as the Puritans had done, and seek refuge in Holland among their co-religionists.

During the reign of James a colonizing spirit first made its appearance; though it did not fully develop till in the following reign, having for the most part its birth in religious intolerance. The first of the kind was one proposed by George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore. In this reign he secured a charter from the King for his Palatinate of

Avalon, which at one time appears to have been proposed as the asylum of persecuted Roman Catholics. It will be remembered that Calvert was one of James's secretaries of state, and a recent important convert to Catholicism. But, as Protestants as well as Roman Catholics appear to have gone there, it could not have been an exclusive Roman Catholic retreat. The colony was probably nothing more than an adventure or speculation, like his subsequent colony of Maryland. Again, for state reasons, it could not have been a strictly Popish asylum. No complaints were sent home concerning the celebration there of the rites of the Roman Catholic Church. Lord Baltimore seems to have adopted a more liberal policy, for personal or political reasons; at least a modified toleration was found there. The colony was not, however, a successful experiment.

On the succession of James's son Charles, the hopes of the Romish party were given a new lease of life. On his marriage with Henrietta Maria, the sister of Louis XIII. of France, one of the most bigoted Papists of the age, Charles, as his father had done when contemplating the Spanish match, made promises to tolerate the Romish Church in his kingdom. But the House of Commons, now composed of many prominent members of the Puritan party, petitioned the King to execute the laws enacted against recusants as his father had done before him.

Charles was at this time placed in a most delicate position, requiring the greatest tact to maintain. He had promised the King of France to cease persecuting his Roman Catholic subjects, and at the same time given his solemn word not to tolerate the Papal faith. He was thus placed between two fires. But, whatever his promises may have been to either party, it is certain that the condition of the Romanists during

his whole reign was greatly ameliorated. Notwithstanding the demands of the Puritans in the Commons, Charles was not able to enforce the statutes levied against English Papists; in Ireland it would have been a physical impossibility to have done so.

The fines levied for non-attendance on the established church were now reduced one-half, or else wholly rebated by some sort of composition. The spy system, so obnoxious in the previous reign, was abolished. "The English Catholics affirmed that they never enjoyed so much repose and security as under king Charles." To be sure, they were not entirely exempt from apprehension so long as the penal laws directed against recusancy remained unrepealed and might at any time be put into force; for the Puritans raised a continual cry for their enforcement, and kept the Romish party constantly upon the rack, notwithstanding the assurances of Charles that the enforcement of these statutes formed a part of the royal prerogative. But, as the Puritans were a growing party in Parliament, it was uncertain what legislation might be directed against recusants were these offensive statutes not rescinded.¹ But Charles determined to be master of the situation in every case; and he loved power too well to make any undue concessions.

The Presbyterians, on their side, had now good cause for alarm at the increasing ascendancy of the Court, virtually a Popish, party. From the Netherlands, France, Rome, and Spain, the seats of Roman Catholicism, between seven hundred and eight hundred emissaries had been sent into England,—Jesuits, Seminary priests, and various classes of ecclesiastics. Most of them had been received into the principal families of the country, and had openly professed the Rom-

¹ Ranke, *History of England*, vol. II. pp. 34 ff.

ish faith. The Mass was now boldly celebrated in numberless places and, on special occasions, with all the pomp and magnificence known to their ritual. The Queen, who was herself a Roman Catholic, attended her religious exercises at her own public chapel, and was waited on by Capuchin monks in the dress of their order. Even an agent of the Holy See was stationed at the English court. Roman Catholics found powerful friends among the English nobility and gentry, numbered with whom was the Earl of Arundel, whose daughter had married Cecilius Calvert, son of the first Lord Baltimore, above cited. Add to this the eccentricities and innovations which Bishop Laud had introduced into the Anglican liturgy, and had been countenanced by Charles, together with the King's leaning towards Rome and his attempts at a reconciliation with that Church, and then may be readily explained the strong opposition of the Puritans to the King, as well as the support which the Romish party gave him in emphasizing the royal prerogative. But the opposition of the Commons, and the obstinacy of Charles in maintaining his position as Pope of the Anglican Church, in all probability nipped in the bud the Popish scheme of reuniting the Anglican and Roman churches.

It was during this lull in the persecution of recusants that the first Lord Baltimore obtained his charter of Maryland, the planting of which was left for his son Cecilius. It has usually been supposed that the motive of planting this colony was purely for the purpose of securing a place of refuge for English Roman Catholics, where they might practise unmolested their own form of religious worship. This view was chiefly based on vague notions then prevalent, but without any corroborative evidence. A letter, proceeding from one of Lord Baltimore's Council in Maryland, alludes but slightly

to any such motive for founding the colony; for certain Roman Catholics there had been refused privileges and immunities demanded by them, over and above the other colonists. The fact that Lord Baltimore was himself a Romanist may have given currency to this belief.

Another fact will substantiate the opposite view. There was, during the reign of Charles, never any occasion for the establishment of such an asylum. The persecutions of the Roman Catholics were now less severe than ever before. Furthermore, according to the testimony of Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore, his father Cecilius had found it a matter of considerable difficulty in persuading colonists to emigrate; and the great preponderance of those who eventually did emigrate belonged to the laboring classes and were mostly of the Protestant faith. From this fact we must conclude that the persecution of recusants during this reign was not severe enough to induce many to emigrate when such advantages were held out to them at home.

Thence, down to the close of the Puritan revolution, when Protestantism became firmly established in the realm, the fortunes of the Romish party met with varying success. The encouragement given them by James II. in the Romish reaction was but the calm preceding the storm. Under Parliamentary rule, of which the Puritan party was the moving spirit, a number of severe penal statutes were passed against recusants. Before the break with Charles, Parliament even required the King's assent to measures by which the children of Roman Catholics should be brought up in the Protestant faith. In the falling fortunes of Charles I., the higher classes, and the Roman Catholics in general, took sides with the King, while the balance of power remained with the Commons, where the Puritan element was in the ascendancy.

During the Protectorate (1649–60), the doctrine of toleration, or liberty of conscience, was in the air, and it pleased Cromwell to be the upholder of that doctrine,—in moderation. At the same time the Romish party began to breathe more freely, but only for a brief space; for the times were not yet ripe for the acceptance of any broad interpretation of religious toleration.

After the Restoration, Roman Catholics were generally tolerated in some degree; and, although their hopes rose higher correspondingly in the following reign, so as to have a controlling influence in politics, the deposition of James and the accession of William and Mary to the throne of England dashed all such hopes to the ground. But they were tacitly tolerated along with the other sectaries now denominated together as Nonconformists. But the bitter prejudice entertained towards all Roman Catholics continued for many a long year, though, so far as can be ascertained, that party never gave the government any cause of uneasiness. This prejudice was, undoubtedly, well grounded, and has never as yet been wholly eradicated.

During the rule of Parliament (1642), the Romanists mainly espoused the Puritan cause; some of them even entered the Parliamentary army, fully expecting, should the Puritan cause prevail, that liberty of conscience would be conceded to all parties, irrespective of their religious tenets. The French ambassador used every endeavor to win them over to Charles, but without avail. Lord Baltimore and the Arundel family were the only Roman Catholics of any prominence who yielded to the ambassador's solicitations.¹

Any one, conversant with the crude notions then obtaining relative to religious toleration and the policy of the Puritan

¹ Bozman, *Maryland*, vol. II. p. 183.

party, must readily perceive the hopelessness of any such alliance between the Puritans and the Romish party. Nor could the latter make it possible to enter into any permanent agreement with the State, or Anglican, party and secure toleration; for when the Roman Catholics were at the height of their own power, they had utterly failed to put into practice the principles they had demanded when constituting the weaker and persecuted party. They courted favor when they saw it was to their advantage to do so, but never once slackened the rein when it was once in their hands. They could beg and fawn when necessary, but never granted a tithe of that which they asked of others. No wonder they earned the hatred of the reforming parties till their teeth had been all drawn and their bites rendered harmless.

II.

The Anglican party, though possessing all the prestige and authority, all the machinery and power necessary for enacting and enforcing statutes for the repression of recusancy and nonconformity, was, nevertheless, the weakest of all the parties, with a continually waning influence under the persistent attacks of the Puritan party,—the Presbyterians and the Liberty men. The Church of England represented the principle of absolutism in ecclesiastical concerns as did the Stuarts advocate absolutism in the state. Puritanism and despotism, whether in state or in church, were diametrically opposed. The old spirit of intolerance still survived in the modified ritual of the Anglican Church. The sovereign and the primate were their respective main supports. There was little sympathy with the mass of the people.

Supported both by the law and the power, the Anglicans became, in the course of time, a formidable party, and perse-

cuted and martyred with all the venom of the mother church. But, in spite of all such severity and inhumanity towards recusant and nonconformist alike, Puritanism crept through every loophole till it finally was the means of completely honeycombing and overthrowing its power.

The Anglican party attained its culmination under the leadership of Archbishop Laud, when church absolutism and ritual innovations were carried with so high a hand that the whole fabric of both church and state broke down under them and paved the way for the Puritan régime. This extreme policy was carried out to the full in the colony of Virginia, founded during the reign of James I. Here were transplanted all the civil and religious paraphernalia of the mother country; here neither recusant nor nonconformist found a congenial home. The Anglican policy, though exhibited here in miniature, was none the less intolerant. Virginia was one of the few colonies planted in America which can claim an origin unprompted by religious persecution at home, its establishment being due entirely to worldly and selfish motives. If the neighboring province of Maryland was a constant eyesore to Virginia and a thorn in the flesh, the latter showed that she could sting back in more ways than one, thus proving herself the unmistakable offshoot of the ruling policy of the mother land.

When James II. succeeded to the throne and made forcible attempts to carry over the Anglican Church bodily to Rome, the weakness and humiliation of the Anglicans were pitiable in the extreme. Then it happened that Episcopacy was compelled to take shelter under the wing of Puritanism, which tided the Anglican Church over her troubles until by their united forces the two parties had deposed James and set a Protestant monarch on the English throne. This fact

alone proves that loyalty to country was stronger than party issues, when, for the nonce, religious differences could be laid aside in the defense of constitutional liberty. A similar event may be noted in the reign of Elizabeth, at the time when England was threatened with invasion by the great Catholic powers of Christendom, and fears were entertained of the defection of her Roman Catholic subjects,—a possibility on which her enemies had joyfully built their hopes. But when the crisis was to be met, Romanist and Protestant alike flew to arms in the defense of their common liberties. And thus will it ever be, be what the party may or what it proclaims. Religious differences have stood little, if any, in the way of constitutional liberty.

III.

Soon after the separation of England from the Court of Rome, the wave of religious reform reached British shores and brought about changes in ecclesiastical matters, first set in motion by the personal interests of Henry VIII. Although the Papal authority was now overturned in England, a similar authority over the Anglican Church was claimed by Henry and his successors. For this reason the court reformers did not intend to make any more changes in the ecclesiastical polity than were necessary to substitute the temporal ruler of England for the Pope, putting into the hands of the sovereign certain powers which it was claimed had been usurped by Rome. These reformers did not deny the Pope's authority in his capacity of Bishop of Rome, his own diocese; nor did they wish it to be understood that the Roman Church was not Catholic. But they merely pared away certain alleged encroachments and excrescences of the Papacy and retained all the other priestly offices, ceremonies,

ritual, habits, etc., which were neither enjoined nor forbidden in Scripture. Thus, in point of worship, there was but little difference between the Anglican and Romish communions, the only exception being that the English sovereign was now the ecclesiastical head of the Anglican Church.

Reform seemed now accomplished. But these half-way measures did not suit a body of more radical reformers who, from the very outset, did not think that the distance between the reformed religion and the Papacy could be made too wide. The transference to the temporal sovereign of the supreme power in religious concerns altered, in their opinion, the former despotism but in name only; the substance remained the same. Instead of a foreign, they had now placed over themselves a domestic pope as obnoxious as the old. Hence, these reformers demanded more drastic measures of reform. They were for removing all forms and ceremonies, rubrics, rites, habits, ritual,—in fact everything that savored of the old religion, the ancient superstition. They thus far exceeded the Court party in their reform measures.

These radical reformers were the Puritans, a name ever memorable in the history of English constitutional liberty. They first made their appearance in the reign of Edward VI. But during the Marian persecutions they went into hiding in the cities of Germany and Switzerland, where they listened to the preaching of the famous John Knox, one of their number, who, having imbibed the doctrines of John Calvin, had headed the reformation of the Scottish Kirk. The reform had now advanced with rapid strides on the Continent, where some of the princes of the German states were stout upholders of the new doctrines.

When Elizabeth succeeded to the throne, the Puritans flocked to England in vast numbers, hoping to enjoy a greater

toleration under the new queen. Though still in communion with the Anglican Church they, like the Roman Catholics, refused to promise strict conformity or to accept the pompous ritual so dear to the heart of Elizabeth. And they immediately set to work to make the desired changes in the Anglican Church to which they were not willing to subscribe, for which reason they received the name of Puritans.

Having adopted the doctrines of John Calvin, they early began to formulate a mode of belief with great distinctness. They taught that authority in ecclesiastical concerns did not reside in a single head, whether spiritual or temporal, but in an assemblage of persons, such as an assembly or synod,—a spiritual aristocracy or hierarchy. The civil authorities were not to interfere with ecclesiastical matters at all; yet it was the province of the temporal sovereign, says Cartright, one of the spokesmen for the Puritans, “to protect and defend the councils of the clergy, to keep the peace, to see their decrees executed and to punish contemners of them, but to exercise no spiritual jurisdiction.”

Thus it is evident that the only difference between the polity of Prelacy, Papacy, and Puritanism was one in name and degree only. The authority once assumed by pope or prelate for shaping the discipline of the church was now to be placed in the hands of an assembly, made up of a number of individuals and possessing the powers formerly exercised by a single individual. All three forms of discipline, however, were agreed in this, that they claimed equally the right to call upon the secular arm to enforce their respective decrees. The temporal was as yet regarded as the servant of the spiritual power; for, like the Romish and Anglican parties, the Puritans insisted upon a uniformity of belief. Religious tolerance had found as yet no place in their body ecclesiastical,

even though that religious freedom should not be incompatible with the maintenance of the civil peace.

But, in one respect, the Puritans may be considered as taking a step in advance of the two previous parties. For the same reason that this party opposed absolutism in pope or prelate, it opposed absolutism in the king. Stern and unflinching in its adhesion to its religious tenets, Puritanism as jealously safeguarded the principles of civil liberty; so that, whatsoever may have been the shortcomings of the Puritan party in its ideas of religious toleration, the Puritans were the bulwark of English liberties, checking from time to time every extension of the royal prerogative until they had utterly crushed the despotism of the Stuarts and formulated a constitutional government under William and Mary. The political platform of the Puritan party was a pure republicanism, based on parliamentary rule, just as its ecclesiastical system was grounded on an assembly in which both clericals and laymen found equal representation. Representative government had its full expression in Puritanism, which, when transplanted to American shores, gave birth to the first government based on the principles of equal representation.

The political results of Elizabeth's harsh policy in endeavoring to enforce uniformity in religion at all hazards, even in such trivial matters as those relating to vestments, postures, and so on, have generally been lost sight of in her overweening purpose to establish absolutism in the state. Although the Puritans were republicans at heart, they never once denied the supremacy of the sovereign in civil affairs; it was only in religious concerns wherein they demanded freedom of action and freedom of conscience. But, in the short-sighted policy of coercion, then and for long years to come the prevailing one, the Anglican Church gradually

drifted away from its best interests until most of those of its own confession were confined to the royal family, nobility, and the ruling classes. The mass of the people were non-conformist.

The first effect of the Queen's severity was the defection of the Puritans. In spite of their wish to reform the ritual further, the Puritan party still retained its relations with the English Church; and, not until every attempt made in that direction had proved abortive, did it once think of separation. Their clergymen were deprived of their livings and in some instances suffered death. The prisons were full to overflowing with their fellow religionists. Between the years 1562 and 1566, when the Puritans began to break from the Anglican Church and set up one more in harmony with their own way of thinking, hundreds of Nonconformists fled to Scotland, where the kirk had been reformed by John Knox some years before, or went beyond seas. But, despite this thinning of their ranks, a gallant little band of sturdy souls remained to carry on the good fight at home for constitutional liberty.

A second result of Elizabeth's harsh policy was to confirm the Puritans in their nonconformity, and knit their ranks more strongly together, until they became a formidable party, shouldered and carried through successfully a great civil war, and overturned both church and state, which they afterwards reconstructed on more republican principles.

A still further result of her policy was to split the Puritans into various factions, whereby the gap between them and the first reformers grew wider and wider, and cut off all hope of any accommodation between the several parties, some of which wielded as much influence in the state councils as did the old Puritans themselves. The only common ground now

between the Anglicans and Nonconformists was their thorough Protestantism, their equal opposition to papal supremacy. And this fact, however, emphasized by the various conflicting factions, bound the nation together in its hour of trial, and carried the Reformation in England to a successful termination.

It was in the reign of Elizabeth that the Puritans first became known as a political party in contradistinction to their religious bias. Religion and politics were now closely interwoven. To proclaim one's politics was to declare one's religion, and the converse. Other parties now began to attract attention. The Puritans were pitted against the Anglicans, or Church party, with whom, as the Court party, the Roman Catholics in the two following reigns carried favor. For, so long as the Anglicans and Romanists seemed to join hands, the opposition of the Puritans to the government policy was intense; party spirit never ran higher. The Puritans were a thorn in the side to Elizabeth. They criticised the church most severely, compared prelacy to popery, and considered themselves to be the sole repository of the true faith. Among other animadversions, they taught that the Anglican Church had copied too closely the popish ritual. And here there was a grain of truth in what they said. Elizabeth was as fond of pompous rites and ceremonies as was her father Henry, and was as jealous, too, of her position as head of the English Church. So she answered their strictures by enacting more repressive laws against nonconformity.

The increasing power of the Puritans in Parliament was first noticed in 1562. In the second Parliament called that year, the Act of Supremacy was affirmed. At the convocation, which was opened the day after the meeting of this Parliament, the articles subscribed by the Anglican Church,

originally forty-two in number and drawn up in the reign of Edward VI., were amended and reduced to thirty-nine, the present number. At this time the Puritans had influential friends among the Protestant gentry and a majority in the House of Commons. They were not a faction by any means, but made up of the principal landed proprietors, who represented the universal desire to bring about a change in religious as well as in civil affairs. The Church party, on the other hand, which was always weak, constituted the conservative party, while the Roman Catholics, who were excluded from the Commons, would naturally be silent under the circumstances. "This," says Hallam, "contributed with the prevalent tone of popular opinion to throw such a weight into the Puritanical scale in the Commons as it required all the queen's energy to counterbalance." The Country party, however, was defeated.

In 1571, when the same question came up before Parliament for affirmation, and the objectionable clause relative to the imposition of rites and ceremonies by the sovereign was debated, the Puritan opposition was strong enough to prevent an affirmative vote from being taken on this part of the rubric. Perhaps it was for this reason that the penalties were increased for nonconformity in the following year, as the Puritans at that time suffered severely, and many Puritan clergymen were deprived. In consequence, in 1573, another separation took place, when a large body of Nonconformists formed a church of their own. A general separation was debated but not decided on.

But, in the ten years succeeding, such coercive measures were enforced by the crown for securing uniformity, that multitudes of Nonconformists separated from the Anglican communion, occasioning an almost total desertion and giving

rise to a new religious sect, known as the Brownists. This sect refused all communion with the Establishment, denied the truth of its doctrine altogether,—and this after the defection of its founder, Robert Brown himself. The persecutions that year were nearly effectual in stamping out nonconformity. Emigration to Holland of Puritans became general. But, as a whole, the Puritans were disinclined to a separation. They accepted the main principles of Anglicanism, only differing in methods of church government and in the forms and ceremonies which they hoped, by retaining their place in the Establishment, they might in time be able to reform.

For a while Elizabeth had her hands full in disciplining contumacious recusants, in unearthing popish plots and conspiracies against her life and the peace of the realm, and in bringing the offenders to condign punishment. By 1593, having to her mind sufficiently intimidated the Romish party, she began to think it was high time to tighten the reins over the Puritans, which had become of late too lax. That year an Act was passed which bore heavily upon recusant and Puritan alike, and more than one person paid the penalty of his nonconformity with his life. Under this statute every person above the age of sixteen was required, under the penalty of imprisonment, to attend the established church. Multitudes of Puritans and Romanists again fled to the Low Countries, preferring exile to conformity. From this time, for a period of over forty years, dates the emigration of Puritans to the Netherlands, and in subsequent years to New England, one of the direct results of which was the planting of colonies, nursed in the spirit of opposition to state absolutism, and the laying of the corner-stone of the American Revolution.

But, notwithstanding all these violent measures of Eliza-

beth, in spite of fines and imprisonments, exile, deprivations, and, in some instances, the infliction of the death-penalty, the spirit of Puritanism would not die: it only languished to reappear with renewed energy. Hounded from place to place, shut off from communion with the Anglican Church, with their very Christianity called in question, the Puritan party never was stronger nor counted more powerful friends among its adherents than in those troubled days. Although in such desperate straits, this little, sturdy band of reformers were never louder in their cries for reform than when there seemed the least likelihood of such reformation. The Puritans were ever bitter in their denunciations of anything which bore the least resemblance to the hateful popery; for the staunchness of the Puritans, at this time, to an apparently hopeless cause, was truly remarkable. As their ranks became more and more depleted, the remnant still stood shoulder to shoulder without flinching. It was this spirit, which would not down under the most trying and adverse circumstances but rose with every accession of persecution, that saved England to Protestantism, and built up in the New World the American Republic.

The Puritans had flattered themselves, as did the Romish party, that they should receive more favor from James than heretofore. In this hope a petition was presented to the King on his accession, signed by nearly a thousand Puritan clergymen, asking for toleration and, at the same time, suggesting certain reforms which they deemed highly expedient for the welfare of the church. They could not help letting fall a good word for reform for which they had suffered so many years ingloriously to effect. Beyond a few trifling reforms, which he granted, James required them all forthwith to conform unconditionally or suffer the penalty of the law. The inflexible Puritans, as a matter of course, resisted; and three

hundred ministers, who would not obey his orders, were punished by imprisonment and in other ways. But, bad as this treatment of them was, it was nothing compared with the sufferings endured by the recusants, who had also anticipated toleration. The Separatists suffered still worse than the regular Puritans, especially the Brownists already mentioned. After 1606, multitudes of this sect fled to Holland and settled principally in Amsterdam and Leyden, and gave rise to the Independents, a party hereafter to be considered.

The persecutions under Bancroft were exceedingly violent. At this time the Puritans were divided by King James into two parties, namely, the State and the Church Puritans. The former opposed the royal prerogative in Parliament, just as the other disavored ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies. The latter party, though of small weight in the Commons, was, when united with the State, or Patriot party, more numerous than all the other parties put together.

In 1620 the repressive measures passed against nonconformity became still more severe. Heretofore the penal statutes relative to this subject had more to do with the imposition of forms and ceremonies so obnoxious to the Puritan clergymen. Now the very doctrines of the Puritans were made the object of the animadversions of the crown. These sectaries now obtained the name of Doctrinal Puritans, for the reason that they scrupled to acknowledge the sovereign's headship of the church, would not disclaim Calvinism, nor favor popish innovations. Singularly enough, Archbishop Abbot, then the Primate of England, was at the head of this party; but he soon afterwards fell into disgrace, when many Puritans removed to the new plantations in America. The reign of James had now nearly closed. Popery came in with the negotiations concerning the Spanish match.

In reviewing the fortunes of the Puritan party during the rule of James I., we shall everywhere note the increasing strength and influence of that party, together with the bold stand that it ever took to limit the royal prerogative, to defend the liberties of the people, to oppose prelacy as much as popery, and to guard Protestantism in every quarter. It was the Puritan party which, in 1620, demanded in Parliament that England should espouse the cause of the continental Protestants in their life-and-death struggle with Spain for liberty of conscience, weaken Romish influence at home, as much as possible, by executing more vigorously the statutes for disciplining recusants, and that James should marry his son Charles to a Protestant woman.

The aversion of James to the Puritans seems to have been due to their open avowal of civil liberty and their pronounced hostility to absolute monarchy, rather than to their reforming tendencies in religious concerns. James was exceedingly jealous in maintaining his prerogative, perhaps more so than Elizabeth had ever been. But in striking at the church, the Puritans struck at the crown; and that was an unpardonable offense.

When his son Charles came to the throne, both Roman Catholics and Puritans were promised toleration and the removal of their disabilities; but the King had already assured Parliament that the laws in regard to recusancy should be enforced. The majority of the Lower House was then composed of zealous Calvinists, who loudly demanded the execution of these recusant statutes. Charles, as has elsewhere been shown, was a Romanist at heart, and connived at every infringement of these laws, although he ostensibly followed their letter. During his whole reign the Church and Romish parties were to all appearances united. Under

the administration of Laud almost popish innovations were introduced into the Anglican service, which served but to rouse greater hostility from the Puritans. Protestantism seemed well nigh to be a lost cause in England, with the Papacy again in the ascendant.

For their continual and growing unwillingness to conform to the new ecclesiastical system, and, at the same time, their persistence in attempting to reform the church from within, the Puritans, as usual, paid the penalty of their temerity. The drastic measures, now adopted to bring about uniformity, "gave birth," says Neal, "to a second colony in North America, commonly known by the name of Massachusetts Bay." In 1629, John Winthrop, at the head of a thousand Puritans, set sail for New England. Others followed up to 1635. "It has been computed," observes the author above quoted, "that the four settlements of New England, viz., Plymouth, the Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and New Haven, all of which was accomplished before the beginning of the Civil Wars, drained England of four or five hundred thousand pounds in money (a very large sum for those days); and if the persecution of the Puritans had continued twelve years longer, it is thought that a fourth part of the riches of the kingdom would have passed out of it through this channel."

All the emigrants, except those who settled in Plymouth, were distinctively Puritans; while those who planted that colony came from England by the way of Holland, and have been denominated Pilgrims in contradistinction to the other Puritans whose doctrines had not become so adulterated by a sojourn in the Low Countries. According to Neal, down to 1640 as many as seventy-seven Puritan clergymen, who subsequently were pastors of the various churches and congrega-

tions in New England, held orders in the Anglican Church. This fact will explain much in reference to the Puritanical hierarchy in New England, especially in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay.

But, if paralyzed, the Puritan cause in England was not crushed. With every fresh persecution and consequent losses by emigration of its members, the party received new life. In their exasperation of everything which bore the least resemblance to popery, the Puritans kept up the good fight for the Protestant cause and civil liberty, and gained rather than lost in popular favor. Their influence continued to extend in spite of any attempt to weaken them. Parliament was now wholly Puritan; and from the outbreak of the civil wars up to the Restoration, Puritanism under the Presbyterians became the established religion.

It was in 1644, when England was under Parliamentary rule, that Roger Williams, the founder of the Colony of Providence Plantations, obtained his first charter. It was during the Commonwealth and the Protectorate that Anglican and Romanist alike paid court to the Puritan party, and with the same once persecuted party Lord Baltimore curried favor, and so preserved through that troubled period his Palatinate of Maryland.

But, when the Puritans became in turn the ruling party, they, too, had failed to learn the lesson of toleration. As in their former struggles for principles, so, in their hour of triumph, they did not lay aside their hostility to Romanists and to all others who dissented from themselves; and so, too, on coming into power, the Presbyterians were not averse to doing a little persecution on their own account. There was no place in the doctrine of Calvin for religious tolerance. The old Puritans never denied the Anglican Church its right to

persecute and enforce uniformity; they only wanted their own form of belief to be given amnesty. They were now as eager to make others conform and as much opposed to "lawless toleration" as ever was the most bigoted Roman Catholic or rigidest Churchman. Laud himself could not have surpassed them in this respect. But, fortunately, Cromwell would have none of it; and it was left for their co-religionists in the New World to give free rein to their lawless intolerance. Though opposed to some of the religious sectaries, Cromwell never advocated coercion.

Charles II. had made many promises of toleration on his restoration, and thus gave great hopes to the various classes of Dissenters, as Nonconformists now begin to be termed, of security. Religious toleration seemed to be the fashion. But the Stuarts were never distinguished for their sincerity; and the old laws concerning nonconformity were dragged forth and more or less rigorously executed. Charles played a double game. Though pledged to grant tolerance to the Roman Catholics, he still desired to satisfy the more rabid Puritans. But, despite his many vacillations, he really did seem desirous to reconcile the Anglicans and Presbyterians, to whom he had been indebted for the restoration of the crown.

The Puritan influence now began to ebb until the following reign, when it gained new life by setting William and Mary on the English throne, establishing a constitutional monarchy, puritanizing the Anglican Church, and, above all, proving its right to existence. England was at last thoroughly protestantized, with no fears of its backsliding.

It was in the reign of the second Charles (1663) when he was courting the favor of all parties, that Roger Williams secured his second charter for his plantations through the influence of the Earl of Warwick. This patent gave "full

liberty of conscience in matters of religion"; though the colonists had no intention of conforming "to the public exercise of religion according to the liturgy of the Church of England."

In the charter, granted the proprietors of Carolina the same year as that of Roger Williams, it is there explicitly stated (Sect. 18) that all persons shall enjoy liberty of conscience, provided they show "all fidelity, loyalty, and obedience to the king," and "do not actually disturb the civil peace." Furthermore, no person was to suffer molestation on account of his private religious belief. In 1665, the terms of this charter were somewhere extended. Hence, religious freedom had at last found an abiding place in the New World among chartered rights.

Just previous to the outbreak of the Civil Wars, all authority being now in the hands of the Commons, Parliament set about making a reform in religion, and called together for that purpose, as was the custom, an assembly of divines. The complexion of Parliament at this time was Presbyterian, or Calvinistic; so was the proposed Assembly. There were still individuals among the old Puritans in orders; but these were soon identified with the Presbyterians, as has already been adduced. The old name now disappears to reappear under that of Dissenter.

No radical measures were contemplated at first by Parliament in making this reform,—nothing more, in fact, but a sort of modified Episcopacy. But, after their union with the Scotch Presbyterians, the "Puritans," says Neal, "did not fight for a reformation of the hierarchy, nor for the generous principle of religious liberty to all peaceable subjects, but for the same spiritual power the bishops had exercised; for when they had got rid of the oppression of the spiritual courts,

under which they had groaned for almost fourscore years, they were for setting up a number of Presbyterian consistories and parishes of England, equally burdensome and oppressive."

The old Puritans were now divided into three factions, strong both in the Assembly and the Commons. These were the Presbyterians, already cited; the Erastians; the Independents. The Anglican party had lost about all the influence it had ever enjoyed in Parliament, and may be counted out, as it did not now have there a single representative. All the energies of the Presbyterian party were now concentrated on the establishment of the "divine right of Presbytery" and of a Presbyterian form of ecclesiasticism. This "power of the keys," as it was called, found no friends among either of the other two factions, both of whom were the sworn foes of every sort of ecclesiastical usurpation. And if the united forces of these two parties did not succeed in defeating the obnoxious measure entirely, they had much to do in hindering the Presbyterian hierarchy from resorting to extreme methods in carrying out its discipline. And yet the old Puritanic spirit was strong enough to prevent the doctrine of religious toleration from being accomplished. This work was left for the other two parties, now to be considered, whose history is so intimately connected with that of the Puritans as to form the sequel of that party.

IV.

The more powerful of the two parties now to be considered, and the one which resisted longest the pretensions of the Presbyterians, were the Erastians. In religion they were what is known as Separatists; but they had little in common with the old Puritan party from which they had separated. In politics they advocated everywhere the supremacy of the king.

The Erastian doctrine began to prevail in England in 1588, and spread with wonderful rapidity. The party took its name from Erastus, a German divine, born in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. He preached principles diametrically opposed to spiritual, or ecclesiastical, supremacy, as had once been exhibited in Popery, Prelacy, and now in Presbyterianism, or Presbytery. The Erastians held that the civil magistrate alone had authority to punish all offenses whether of a religious or a civil nature. This scheme of ecclesiastical polity had the advantage, it was thought, of preventing the establishment of a government within a government (*imperium in imperio*), and thereby averting the abuses from which none of the other religious sectaries had been exempt. The pastoral office was entirely persuasive; no coercive measures were admissible in maintaining ecclesiastical discipline.

When not pressed too far, Erastianism was an effectual corrective of the assumptions of the three other forms of hierarchy already adduced. The religious teaching of these sectaries, according to Neal, "effectually destroyed all that spiritual jurisdiction and coercive power over the consciences of men, which had been challenged by popes, prelates, and presbyteries; and they made the government of the Church a creature of the State." It was still further maintained by them that Scripture prescribed "no one form of church government as an invariable rule for future ages." In this respect they were somewhat in consonance with the Independents.

The Erastian doctrine was not new, it having previously appeared under another name. All the early reformers entertained the same sentiments and were for resigning to the crown everything relating to the liberty of the conscience. Hence Erastianism was nothing more than a revival of the old Anglican doctrine of royal supremacy, but now softened by

time and reappearing in a modified form.

The Anglican Church first assumed the functions of judge in ecclesiastical matters under Archbishop Whitgift, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It claimed the right of punishing heresy and contumacy as much as popery had ever done. Under Whitgift's administration, the measures adopted for disciplining offenders were even at that time considered somewhat of a stretch of power. But under Bancroft the hierarchy went to yet greater lengths, when was boldly asserted the doctrine of the "divine right of Episcopacy," together with the authority of coercing Nonconformists, as the persecutions of the Puritans at that period fully attest. It was the constant desire and aim of the bishops to render the jurisdiction of the Anglican Church as unlimited as possible, and wholly independent of the law courts, in which, from the time of Henry II., was lodged the power to restrain the spiritual courts in case they should venture to overstep their proper limits. Bancroft made the first attempt in this direction in 1605, which not only completely failed, but drew upon the Episcopacy the hostility of the secular lawyers, who had always been jealous of these ecclesiastical judicatures; nor did the latter win the favor of the judges.

To purge the Church of the odium of the Puritan persecutions, the bishops transferred all cases of nonconformity from the Court of High Commission to the Assizes, to be tried at common law. The temporal power was thus made to execute the commissions of the ecclesiastical officers. Under Laud the hierarchy laid claim to an authority and to privileges on a par with the royal prerogative itself for which it had not the least legality, and which in the end proved its own destruction. The contest that had been waged so long between Anglicanism

and Puritanism closed with the utter discomfiture of the former.

Now just as Episcopacy had hoped to secure, by the use of coercion, uniformity of belief, and found in the Puritan party an opponent equally as zealous in attaining its aim, so, to the growing power of Calvinism in a similar direction, was the Erastian doctrine destined to be an effectual counteractive by its emphasis of the old-time dictum of the royal prerogative. If any one should govern, said this party, it should be the civil magistrate; the "keys" should not by any means be placed in the hands of the English Church. In their hostility to every kind of ecclesiastical supremacy, the Erastians found willing and powerful coadjutors in the Independent party.

The Erastians were largely recruited from the ranks of the civil lawyers, no friends to ecclesiastical usurpations. This party numbered among its adherents Dr. Lightfoot, one of the most celebrated theologians of the day, and was headed by Seldon, a lawyer of no mean acquirements. Half the House was Erastian, all of whom denied emphatically the divine right of the church. And, furthermore, the liberality of belief, which this party advocated, drew to it all broad-minded persons. It never was for employing coercive measures in securing uniformity of religion. According to their teachings, the gospel was a free gift to all who would accept it; every one was welcome to drink of the fount; none to be coerced. Herein certainly lay, in theory at least, the germs of religious liberty.

In politics their platform was in harmony with popular feeling. This remained true down to comparatively recent times. For, according to Hallam, who wrote in the middle of the last century, "the ecclesiastical constitution of England is nearly Erastian in theory and almost wholly so in practice.

Every sentence of the spiritual judge is liable to be reversed by a civil tribunal."

In 1645 the Presbyterians accused Parliament of being Erastian because it would not surrender to them the spiritual authority to which it held fast. For, it must be remembered, that Parliament passed ordinances at this time, regulating the discipline of the Establishment and prescribing the form of belief and the modes of suspension from its communion. Hence, though never professing to intermeddle with spiritual concerns proper, Parliament retained its claim to punish errors and misdemeanors within the Church. But the authority for determining such cases was now transferred from a single head to an assembly, or synod, where each question was determined by the vote of the majority of the members present. This method of trying such cases was of course due to the change in the form of government, at this time republican. And, if Parliament had given the several presbyteries absolute control over all their communicants, it had, nevertheless, reserved to itself the right of the last appeal, the demand made by the Presbyterians for themselves.

V.

The Independents as a political party first came into notice about the year 1640. From their very organization they made a bold stand against the High Presbyterian, now the High Church, party. Perhaps at this date they did not exceed a dozen in the Westminster Assembly of Divines; but they rapidly rose into prominence and, down to the Restoration, successfully checked the pretensions of the Presbyterian hierarchy.

During the persecution of the Puritans, under Whitgift, and later under Bancroft, multitudes of this persecuted sect were

driven from the Anglican Church, forced into exile and separation. From this time dates the great subdivision of this party into a variety of sectaries. Among them were the Brownists, who, in their hostility to the Church of England, professed doctrines the farthest yet removed from that communion.

The Brownists took their name from one Robert Brown, a Puritan of extensive learning, and arose in the year 1580. During the persecutions of 1583, under Whitgift, the Brownists, in company with a large number of other Puritans, sought shelter in Holland, where, in the town of Middleburg, they founded a church of their peculiar belief. This was dissolved in 1589, through the defection of Brown himself, who returned to England and made his peace with the Establishment. But the seeds sown by this sect in England had not fallen on stony ground; nor did the desertion of their founder have any disheartening effect upon his followers, for a Brownist congregation was soon afterward established in London.

In the persecution of the Puritans, in 1604, under Bancroft, and subsequently, Holland was again made the asylum of the persecuted. Two years later, a number of Brownists, with John Robinson at their head, emigrated to Amsterdam, and thence to Leyden, and formed a church, where Mr. Robinson softened the harsh doctrines of Brown and became the founder of what was known as Independency. Soon after, one Henry Jacob, a Puritan, influenced by the preaching of Robinson, became an Independent, and, in 1616, introduced Independency into England by founding a congregation of that form of belief in London. This was the origin of Independency, or Congregationalism, in England.

The Leyden church emigrated to America in 1620, and,

under Brewster, planted the colony of New Plymouth, thus establishing the very first congregation of Independents in America. From this church sprang modern Congregationalism.

In England the Brownists at length became identified with the Independents, the extremists of which party in all probability belonged to the parent denomination. One of the early clergymen (or ministers as this sect now began to name their pastors) of the Independents was Samuel Howe, who died in prison, on account of his doctrines, in 1636. This minister is interesting to us Americans from the fact that Roger Williams has spoken of him in high terms, as being a very pious and godly man. He was born in humble life and possessed little or no education. The Brownists did not consider a liberal education of any importance to a preacher; nor did the Independents discourage lay preaching, were the candidates for orders possessed of the proper spiritual disposition. The Plymouth colony was slow in laying any stress upon education; the commonwealth of Rhode Island never did so until long after it had ceased to be an English colony.¹ On the other hand, the Puritans were strong advocates of education, especially of an educated ministry.

The influence of this Howe is clearly seen in the teachings and writings of Williams; and perhaps it is not too much to say, that Williams drew his ideas of "soul liberty" from the Brownist doctrines as taught by Samuel Howe.

In the times of which we are writing, religion and politics were so closely interwoven that it becomes extremely difficult to dissociate the two. As every circumstance in life was tinged with religion, politics would naturally not escape its coloring. And this religious coloring was never more ap-

¹ Staples, *Annals of Providence*, p. 492.

parent than when found in the ecclesiastico-political party known as the Independents; for this party was distinctively recognized as the party of toleration.

The two broad, vital principles put forth by Robert Brown in his scheme of church polity, and handed down to his successors, were: 1. *The absolute independence of the church of all civil or spiritual headship in matters of discipline*, whereby either one was empowered to use coercive measures; but that all authority to regulate its own concerns should be lodged in each of the several congregations of which that denomination was composed; 2. *The principle of toleration in its broadest sense*. The first principle emphasized a democratic form of government in ecclesiastical matters, a modification of the Presbyterian synod, or assembly; the second *proclaimed, for the first time in the history of the world, the doctrine of the absolute separation of church and state*—the grand principle which forms one of the cornerstones of the Republic of the United States.

In their plea for separation the Brownists declared they would have no communion with any religious organization which did not fulfill the requirements of their doctrines. In this category were of course placed all papists, prelates, and presbyteries.¹ In politics they carried matters with a high hand,

¹This fact explains the language of Cotton Mather (*Magnalia Christi Americana*, fol. Ed., bk. vii. chap. ii., p. 7) when he says that Williams would have no dealings with "the Church of Boston because they would not make a public and solemn declaration of repentance for their communicating with the Church of England." He elsewhere calls Williams a Separatist and a Seeker, and speaks of him as advocating the principle that "every one should have liberty to worship God according to the light of his own conscience; and owing to no true churches or ordinances now in the world." Barring sectarian bitterness, this passage proves, beyond question, that Williams was an extreme or ultra Brownist. He finally repudiated church government altogether, and would worship wherever and however he pleased.

even bordering on revolution, and, during the Civil Wars, constituted the fanatical wing of the Independent faction. Thus, from 1581 to 1583, Robert Brown and the early leaders of the Separatists taught that the magistrates "may do nothing concerning the Church but only civilly,"¹ and as civil magistrates; that is, they have not that authority over the church as to be prophets, or priests, or spiritual kings, as they are magistrates over the same, but only "to rule the Commonwealth in all outward justice, to maintain the right, welfare, and honor thereof, with outward power, bodily punishment, and civil forcing of men." Brown further maintained that the state had nothing whatever to do with matters of religion; a church was to be ruled by its own members.

In 1609, Henry Jacob, the founder of the first Independent congregation in England, addressed King James in "An Humble Supplication for Toleration," wherein he prayed that every church might be free to practise its own religion, "elect, ordain, and depose her own ministers, and to exercise all the other points of lawful ecclesiastical jurisdiction under Christ."

Another forward step in the toleration movement was made in 1614 by one Leonard Bücher, an English Baptist, once a Brownist, who at that time published a work entitled "Religious Peace, or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience." He taught a religious freedom that is unequaled at the present day. He would have toleration extended to every heresy and to every religion, be what it might, Christian or otherwise;

¹ These Brownistic principles may be still further exemplified in the compact purported to be signed by Roger Williams and by all others who had intended to become inhabitants of Providence Plantations, wherein they agreed to submit "only in civil things" (Early Records of Providence, vol. i. p. 9).

neither would he have irreligious persons punished for their unbelief.

Such were the main points of Brownism as enunciated by its founder and his more immediate successors, which gave rise to Independency, in England through Jacob, in America through Brewster. The doctrine of independency formed a middle ground between Brownism and Presbyterianism, steering clear of the fanaticism and extravagances of the one and the bigotry and strait-lacedness of the other. But, in common with all the other reformed religions, it maintained its hostility to the Church of Rome. However, it was the moderate Independents who preserved this middle course throughout its brief reign under Parliament and Cromwell. Even Hume, a writer who appears to have associated with this party all the excesses and revolutionary tendencies displayed by the various sectaries who had sheltered themselves under the wing of the Independents, speaks in warm praise of this party as a whole. "Of all the Christian sects," says he, "this was the first which during its prosperity as well as its adversity always adopted the principle of toleration; and it is remarkable that so remarkable a doctrine owed its origin not to reasoning, but to the height of extravagance and fanaticism."¹

Perhaps a better comprehension of the religious and political principles of the Independents may be gained, so far as it fits the scope of this article, by considering them in their relation with the Westminster Assembly of Divines, with Parliament, and with the Army under Cromwell. In the last two in-

¹ According to Neal, in 1645, there were as many as sixteen different religious sectaries in England. The Independents head the list because they were for tolerating all others who agreed with them in the fundamentals of Christianity, and originated all the other sects. Among these may be cited the Brownists, Separatists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, Arminians, Seekers, Sceptics, Socinians, Arians, etc. According to Baxter, the Parliamentary Army was half Presbyterian.

stances we shall not fail to notice a blending of religion with politics which constitute these sectaries a true, ecclesiastico-political party.

In the year 1643, Parliament summoned the Assembly of Divines to consider the regulation of the spiritual concerns of the Commonwealth. At this session the Anglican party, though summoned with the rest, either ignored the summons or constituted so small a factor in the consultation as to count for nothing. As a fact the Anglican Church had ceased to be the Establishment. The Independents were a small force, but backed by Goodwin, the chaplain of Cromwell himself, by Nye, and other influential persons. The Erastians joined forces with the Independents, and were instrumental in checking the arrogance of the Presbyterians in more than one instance. There was also present a sprinkling of Anabaptists, or Baptists, and a few other sectaries.

The debate opened with the presentation of the subject of the ordination of clergymen and the authority of such ordination. The Presbyterians, as had been expected, proposed that their presbytery should be the source whence all such ordination should proceed. This proposition was opposed by both Erastians and Independents, the latter on the grounds that each separate congregation should elect its own officers. For, they argued, that, in the ordination of ministers, nothing should be done which should be the means of conveying "office-power" to clergymen irrespectively of their congregations, or to ministers who had no congregations of their own, *for fear a minister might be given undue spiritual power which resided only in and through each separate congregation.*

The debate upon this question alone lasted for ten days. The force of circumstances, however, obliged the Independents at this juncture to withdraw their motion and acquiesce

in the Presbyterian practice, "provided it was attended with an open declaration that was not intended as a conveyance of office-power,"—a saving clause indeed.

The next subject brought up to be considered by the Assembly was as to whether the church should be regarded as a divine institution. This, of course, was denied by none, the only difference of opinion being in the fact as to which form of belief belonged the "divine right." The Erastians proposed that the sole "power of the keys" should rest with the civil magistrate, or, at least, that it be so agreed until the affairs of the nation became more settled. For they denied this divine right not only to the Assembly, but to the pulpit, as they feared that Presbytery might become as arbitrary and tyrannical as Prelacy had formerly been, were its claim to divine authority allowed. The Erastians did not, however, oppose the Presbyterians on political grounds. The Independents also had a scheme of their own to propose. So each party claimed for itself the power of the keys.

The question was at length carried in favor of the Presbyterians. But, as it was to be brought up again before Parliament for confirmation, the Erastian party reserved all their strength for that occasion when, with the coöperation of the Independent vote, they hoped to overthrow the Presbyterians. At this juncture, the two parties just mentioned, finding that they could not carry their own measures, agreed upon a compromise and combined their forces against the common enemy. In this they were entirely successful, defeating the Presbyterian party at every point, and carrying in concurrence the proposition "that it is lawful and agreeable to God that the Church be governed by congregational, classical, and synodical assemblies." Thus were the Presbyterians completely out-generated.

Not to be thus baffled, the Presbyterians carried their grievance to the House of Lords in the hope that the sentence of the Commons might there be reversed, and praying "for a speedy settlement of Church government according to the Covenant, and that no toleration might be given to popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, profaneness, or anything contrary to sound doctrine, and that *all private assemblies might be restrained.*" In their reply, the Lords promised that so much zeal thus displayed in the cause of religion should not go unrewarded, and therefore recommended the city magistrates (London) to repress all unlawful assemblies. But the Commons remained unshaken; while this interference proved ruinous to the Presbyterian cause.

The next subject of debate was the "power of the keys." This question was undecided in the Assembly, but carried to the House of Commons, where it was easy to see how it would be treated. The Independents fought it partly on toleration and partly on doctrinal lines; the Erastians wholly on political grounds. The former desired all religious affairs to be referred to their proper religious authorities, without any interference of the civil arm. The latter were for a free and open communion, and against all suspensions and excommunications, and referred all crimes and misdemeanors to the civil magistrate. Both, however, seemed to agree to toleration in religion and to no compulsory uniformity.

The aim of the Presbyterians, on the other hand, was to establish a hierarchy like both of those which had been overthrown; and it was patent to every one that they demanded a church which should be entirely independent of the state. In this attempt Parliament was determined to disappoint them. Although the two Houses had made Presbyterianism the state religion, they had reserved to themselves the right of

appeal as a last resort in all cases of ecclesiastical discipline, not only retaining in their own hands the spiritual sword, but effectually checking every effort of the Presbyterian hierarchy to enforce the penal laws against nonconformity from their standpoint, which would make all religious denominations not agreeing with them nonconformist.

But "nobody," says Neal, "was pleased; the Episcopalians and Independents were excluded; and because the Parliament would not give the several Presbyteries an absolute power over their communicants, but reserved the last appeal to themselves, neither the Scotch nor the English Presbyterians would accept it." The Independents, accordingly, petitioned both Houses to reconsider their case and grant them toleration, using arguments to show that they did not disagree with the general doctrines accepted by the Presbyterian party. But the leading Presbyterians, who had the preponderance of power in both bodies, would consent to nothing unless to an unconditional surrender; to which the Rev. Mr. Burroughs, whom Baxter even regarded with admiration, spoke the sentiments of Independency when he said: "If their congregations might not be exempted from that coercive power of the classes; if they might not have liberty to govern themselves in their own way, so long as they behave peaceably towards the civil magistrate, they were resolved to suffer, or go to some other place of the world, where they might enjoy their liberty. But while men think there is no way of peace but by forcing all to be of the same mind; while they think the civil sword is an ordinance of God to determine all controversies of divinity, and that it must needs be attended with fines and imprisonment to the disobedient; while they apprehend there is no medium between a strict conformity and a general confusion of things; while these sentiments prevail,

there must be a base subjection of men's consciences to slavery, a suppression of much truth, and great disturbances in the Christian world."

If the Independents fared thus badly at the hands of the Presbyterians, they received still worse treatment from the Scotch Kirk. The Scotch were loud in their denunciations of that sect. The Kirk Presbyterians opposed any and every doctrine not in harmony with the Covenant; declared against the toleration of the other religious sectaries and liberty of conscience which, they considered, would open the door to licentiousness and utterly destroy the true religion. Sermons were preached against the Independents from Scottish pulpits; pamphlets flung broadcast both in favor of and against toleration. But, if the Independents and Anabaptists had lost the day in the Assembly, where they no longer had representation, the Presbytery was powerless to molest them.

If not in the Assembly, their party had representatives in Parliament. In 1644, these were Lords Say and Wharton and the younger Vane, Sir Harry, who was the friend of Roger Williams and of Oliver Cromwell, then the acknowledged leader of the House of Commons. There were two events that year which more than anything else indicated the growing power of the party. First, a bill had been introduced into Parliament to deprive those who had seats in the Commons of any office of trust they held at the same time. This was carried as a political measure and known as the "Self-denying Ordinance." The passage of this bill would exclude the Lord Protector himself from the House. But, by a course of intrigue, or "lobbying," the case of Cromwell was excepted. This ordinance, says Hallam, "which took from all members of both Houses their commands in the army, or civil employments, was, as is well known, the first great victory of the

Independent party which had lately grown up under Vane and Cromwell."

The second event was of a religious complexion and related to toleration. The question had been brought up in Parliament in reference to the toleration of Independents and other sectaries. Cromwell, then a member of the House, proposed that, in all the schemes suggested for establishing any form of church government, "tender consciences should be taken into consideration." This "Accommodation Order," as it was designated, was accepted by the Commons without a division and Cromwell himself, in addition, given a vote of thanks for his proposition.

In 1647 the Independent party was split into two factions. One was for using temporizing means in setting up the old monarchical system of government; the other for more radical measures. The first constituted the old, moderate, conservative party, composed of men like Vane, St. John Fiennes, and others. The second was known under the name of Republicans, and it comprehended the Levelers, Ranters, Fifth Monarchy Men, rabid Anabaptists and Antinomians; in religion, noisy, iconoclastic, who would overturn church and religion itself, and bring nobles and everybody else to the same level with themselves, and only establishing their claim to Independent parentage by their avowal of the most extreme license;—in politics as subversive as in religion, desirous of any change; would now destroy monarchy and king together; now opposed to all order and government;—all which but indicated their anarchistic tendencies. They not only lost the regard of the reputable element in the community, but they threw discredit upon the very party to which they owed their origin.

After the administration of "Pride's Purge" to Parliament

and when the younger Sir Henry Vane and all the moderate Independents had been excluded from the Commons or imprisoned, and the army ruled in both church and state, then it was that these two factions sought the ranks of the army, one for protection, and the other to further its more radical views; and these last served but to awaken the disgust of the Episcopacy, the Presbyterians, and all peace-loving citizens alike, who now entered into a compact from which the better class of Independents, unfortunately, was excluded. On account of the leveling bent of the Republicans, the Lords sided with the Presbyterians; for, as the two factions were agreed in their ideas of religious toleration, they were placed in the same category, even though the conservative Independents had never shown any animosity either towards the monarchy or towards a mild form of Episcopacy, provided toleration should find a place in the church government. But the intemperance of the other sectaries left them no other alternative but to turn to the military, which, at that time, was governed by a violent faction, never satisfied until they had accomplished the ruin of the existing government. And, if Cromwell employed these incendiaries for the accomplishment of his purposes, he was never in sympathy with their extravagances, but ever held them in check, though in his political course he seems to have been guided by the revolutionary party.

It is to be regretted, that, in their advocacy of religious and political freedom, the Independent party did not have broader and more definite ideas of the principles which they so energetically advocated. They were willing to include in their toleration the more sober-minded Anabaptists, or Baptists; but Papists, and all sectaries who did not agree with them in the fundamentals of Christianity, they had no inclination to

admit into their freehold. And, though rather misty in defining their scheme of religious toleration, yet it must be admitted on all sides that the Independents were the first party, or religious organization, which, both in its teaching and practice, enunciated the doctrine of soul liberty. As recent a writer as Gardiner, in his "History of the Civil Wars," has remarked, that, for this teaching of the Independents (the principles of democratic government and of religious toleration), posterity owes them a deep debt of gratitude.

Cromwell was himself an Independent in religion and always sided with the professors of that creed. But, if he was in favor of toleration, he did not think it should be carried to such a length as would be injurious to the public peace, that is license. Nor did he consider any particular doctrine should be proscribed because it seemed ridiculous to the educated classes. We have already seen where his sympathies lay when he proposed his "Accommodation Order."

That religious toleration first began to be formulated in the first half of the seventeenth century must now be evident to all. The movement owed its greatest impulse to the influence of Oliver Cromwell. In 1645, Governor Sayle, formerly of the Bermudas, and another delegate, petitioned the House of Commons to grant religious toleration to all persons who had left the Anglican communion and to permit them to organize congregations of their own. The House gave the desired protection to both public and private church organizations, and furthermore moved, "That the inhabitants of the Summer Islands [Bermudas] and such others as shall join themselves to them, without any molestation or trouble, shall have and enjoy the liberty of conscience in matters of God's worship, as well as in those parts of America where they are now planted, as in other parts of America where hereafter they may plant."

In the passage of this ordinance one may readily perceive the hand of the younger Vane, if not also that of Cromwell, who was then all-powerful in the Commons. It was in this year that Roger Williams published, in England, his celebrated treatise on religious liberty, wherein he arraigns those who have persecuted others on account of their religious tenets. And, in 1650, Cromwell, much to the disgust of the Presbyterian party, repealed the penal statutes which had been enacted in previous years against nonconformity, and only made it obligatory for all persons to keep Sundays and Fast days, both publicly and privately, in a religious and seemly manner. From 1647 to 1659, then, while England was under the Protectorate, almost universal toleration prevailed.

At the Restoration, Independency found no place among the political questions of the day. Cavaliers and Roundheads had entered into a combination to restore Charles to the throne of his fathers; and they were the sole parties to be considered under the new régime. But, in 1660, the Independents and Anabaptists presented a bill to the King, praying him to grant toleration to religions of all shades, so as to secure peace and quiet to the nation. The Roman Catholics were evidently included in this memorial; and some concessions were likewise made to the Presbyterians. But nothing came of it.

But, in 1672, some sort of toleration was patched up. Dissenters and Nonconformists were included in this religious amnesty and permitted to assemble in certain places for public worship; while the Papists, or recusants, were not to be molested so long as they confined their religious exercises to private houses, removed from general observation. But even this settlement of so perplexing a question did not suit the more rabid Roundheads, as the Puritans were now denominated, who complained that the Roman Catholics had

been granted a greater indulgence than themselves. They most likely made these complaints for the reason that they had been disappointed in the larger hopes held out to them by Charles on his restoration.

By a statute, known as the "Act of Toleration," passed on the accession of William and Mary, a somewhat limited form of toleration was extended to all classes of dissenters and non-conformists except papists. But, if the latter were not mentioned by name in this general amnesty, recusants were at no time disturbed in the full enjoyment of their form of worship.

The good seed, however, had not fallen upon stony ground. All the sufferings in the cause of religious liberty had not been for nothing. From that time forth not a single person has suffered bodily harm in England because of his religious belief. As the wave of humanity and soul liberty began to spread over the civilized world, the ridiculousness, not to speak of the savagery, of forcing persons to accept doctrines in which they could not believe, was clearly seen. As time went on, political disabilities on account of religion were also gradually removed. Coercion had constantly added enemies to the English constitution; for religious persecution indicates nothing else than a dread of a rival sect by the persecuting party or a fear that its true weakness will be seen, or its tenets too closely examined. As a fact, persecution but lent strength to the persecuted.

The study of these ecclesiastico-political parties leads one to the unavoidable conclusion, that to their mutual conflicts was due the first glimmering of religious liberty. In all these contests, however, two broad principles were clearly and indisputably established, namely, the right of each and every

religious sect to exist, and, in case of its attainment of the requisite power, the privilege of coercing the weaker party. But the outcome of this struggle for supremacy produced only a drawn game, a political rather than a religious toleration,—the last and the least expected result of all this interclashing. A supposed conflict of interests ended in a cessation of arms, not from conviction but from sheer exhaustion. The cornerstone, therefore, of religious toleration was not laid amid universal festivity, the ringing of bells, bonfires, and salvos of artillery, but amid the most violent contentions of opposing parties.