

HOW THE REFORMATION BEGAN IN ENGLAND.

BY JOHN KNIPE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Reformation, generally considered, is a topic to-day of burning interest and exceedingly strong prejudices. I wish to deal with the subject rather as one who desires to suggest different ways of regarding well-worn facts in the light of modern research. I hope we are met with a common desire to study afresh how the Reformation appeared in the eyes of the ordinary people of the sixteenth century in England. In each country the Reformation took a different course. We are not concerned now with princes, nobles, or great folk, but with the *people* of England, their everyday lives, hopes and fears.

Another difficulty in considering this great subject is that the general facts are well known, so that if one speaks of them, it may be said there is nothing new; while if one mentions what is unfamiliar, you might say that can't be true, or you must have known it already.

Let us consider for a moment how sudden the change must have appeared in the eyes of those who watched it from the beginning. Take England in the reign of Henry VII. The Church was the greatest power in the land, the great estates of the barons had been broken up, for the Wars of the Roses dealt the Feudal System its death-blow. Those of the great nobles who had not fallen in battle had their power checked by the new STATUTE OF RETAINERS. The House of Lords was much weaker, and the Church there was the predominating power. Besides the Bishops, thirty-six mitred Abbots and Priors sat in the Upper House and voted on all-important questions. Every city and town of any size was full of churches; roughly, there was a church to every five or ten streets in London; and Exeter was called "Monk Town" for the same reason; yet in a few years the essential service in every one of these churches was considerably modified in doctrine, and in practical authority the King was Supreme Head of clerks and laymen alike.

But although the Reformation seemed to come suddenly, as a thief in the night, the main causes were deep-rooted—far back in the centuries—so that actually it was very long overdue. Little had changed in Church order and discipline since the Norman Conquest. There were certain popular grievances which had become crushing burdens and gross abuses, while the Church had failed to make provision for the growing intelligence of the minds of the English people. The time which is known as "The Dark Ages" deserves the name, at least intellectually, because so few could read or write.

Those in whose hands knowledge rested, like the Key of Wisdom, locked it against any who sought to enter therein. Even the secretaries or clerks of great nobles must be taken from the Clergy, because they alone could fulfil such posts. There were a host of minor officials in Church employment, called clerks, who were not priests at all. Yet the Church stubbornly refused to allow such men to be judged for crime in the King's Courts. This was a survival of the ancient quarrel between Henry II and Thomas à Becket. By his murder the Church had won her case in the general opinion of the whole country, and Becket had some reason, because of the nature of the proceedings in the civil courts. At that time, and for centuries after, Trial by Jury was very differently regarded, the Jury themselves being considered more as witnesses for the accused person, who stood, "at his deliverance," upon their testimony of his guilt or innocence, they being chosen from the locality in which he lived. The Church desired to keep her ministers apart for her own judgment, for the sake of her good name and influence. But on the other hand she summoned the laity before her Spiritual Courts on matters of life and death; and as one king succeeded another, the exemption of the CRIMINOUS CLERKS was stretched to include no less than Seven Orders: priests, deacons, sub-deacons, readers, exorcists, sacristans, and even door-keepers (*ostiarii*). Indeed, any man might claim *Benefit of Clergy* who had enough knowledge of Latin to read his *neck-verse* or text from the Psalms,¹ frequently read for the edification of a lay Sheriff who himself knew no Latin whatever. Now after the Wars of the Roses bands of lawless soldiery, or "masterless men" whose lords had fallen in battle, roamed the country like wild beasts, and some of these claimed "Benefit of Clergy," whose right it was impossible to disprove. This abuse became intolerable, and at last Parliament, under Henry VII, passed an important statute, commanding that such "criminous clerks" who read the *neck-verse* should be branded in the hand by the Sheriff or Law Officer appointed, as first offenders, so that, if they repeated their crimes, they could not plead "Benefit of Clergy" a second time, but should be judged by the King's Court. In spite of strenuous opposition, this Bill was forced through both Houses, and received the Royal assent.

Another great cause of the Reformation was that terrible scourge called the Black Death, which swept away half the population of England between 1349 and 1351. The Clergy, both Secular and Religious, suffered heavily. The death-roll was so great that in many parishes no services could be held in the churches, while the loss of their lords profoundly changed the social position of the labourers and villeins, and caused the abolition of serfdom, fostering a desire for knowledge, especially of "God's Law," or The Gospel of Christ. John Wycliffe perceived this need, and he set about his famous translation of the New Testament from the Vulgate that the words of Our Lord might "comfort those who mourned and

¹ Usually Ps. 51. 1: "Miserere mei, Deus," etc.—chosen as appropriate to the occasion.

bind up the broken-hearted." After his death the priest John Turvey continued his master's work, and the whole Bible was translated by the reign of Richard II. In spite of the persecution directed against Wycliffe, headed by Bishop Courtenay of London, he had powerful protectors at Court in John of Gaunt and the Dowager Princess of Wales, Joan, called the "Fair Maid of Kent." No doubt her influence on the young King was greatly in favour of letting his people read, or hear quietly, the Gospel translated by John Wycliffe, and Richard's Queen, Anne of Bohemia, was herself a Lollard, as was one of her ladies-in-waiting, Blanche, Lady Poynings, a noble lady of Sussex. Bohemian students at Oxford carried the Gospel into their own country, where it was eagerly read up to the time of John Huss, and possibly may thus have influenced Luther.

Archbishop Arundel was a bitter persecutor of the Lollards, who were also suspected of sedition after Wat Tyler's revolt, which left many discontents. Under Henry IV Thomas Arundel obtained the infamous Statute "DE COMBURENDO HERETICO" ("Concerning the burning of heretics"), which remained upon the Statute Book of England until the reign of Elizabeth. The first martyr, William Sawtre, Priest-Vicar of St. Osyth's, London, was actually burnt at Smithfield before the Statute was passed; but after him many suffered under a law unjust as it was cruel. It gave the Bishop before whom the accused was brought absolute power to acquit or condemn him, and *no man knew his accusers* or was permitted to answer their charges face to face. He might be condemned as a heretic on such flimsy grounds as neglecting an attendance on some Holy-day, not a Sunday, styled Day of Obligation, or for listening to one of the "Poor Priests" preaching in a market-place of some town, these preachers having been founded by Wycliffe, to preach and teach the Gospel to the unlettered poor folk. If the accused failed to satisfy the Bishop or his Archdeacon, he was commanded to recant his heresy, which meant that he lived the rest of his life under a perpetual cloud of suspicion and doubt, and often was called a "Fagot-man," since the common penance was to bear a faggot on the shoulder in some public place, which was cast by the abjured heretic into an open fire, as symbol of the doom deserved by the one who had borne it.

If, however, the judged heretic refused to recant, he was handed over to the Secular Arm to be burned as the Statute directed. He had just one chance of mercy, not from the Church, but from the Common Law. For if he recanted when faced with the terrible alternative, the State was more merciful and frequently the Crown extended grace to the penitent, who was now beyond the jurisdiction of the Church. And it was unlawful by her own Canon Law for the Church to put any man to death. It was forbidden the Church, by the Civil Law, to do more than apply to the Sheriff as decreed under the Statute, which delay gave some respite to the victim.

In practice many bishops disliked proceeding to the last extremity against heretics, and preferred to use milder measures of fine and

imprisonment, and even persuasion, when they were actually desirous to be Fathers-in-God to their flock.

Broadly speaking, persecution in England for religion almost ceased from the death of Henry V to half-way through the reign of Henry VII. It was never popular in this country, and the disputes of the Succession with the Barons' Wars in the struggles of York and Lancaster gave a different occupation to men's minds, alike in Church and State. During the whole time Wycliffe's Bible was secretly read, separate Gospels being copied, or leaves of favourite passages, and passed from one to another wherever there was one found able to read them. And in certain dioceses the bishops were more willing to license portions at least of Wycliffe's New Testament. It is absolutely false to assert that his translation was suppressed. There are still to-day 170 ancient copies of Wycliffe's translation of the Holy Scriptures, in the English tongue.

But a great cause of the Reformation has a most romantic origin. In the first half of the fifteenth century a German swineherd was in the forest near his mother's house, and being of an active mind, the boy amused himself with whittling chips of wood into rough letters of his own name, and arranging them to spell "*Johann.*" Outside the house-door his mother had spread fair parchment skins to dry in wind and sun, and it chanced that a tub of purple dye was steaming near them. The boy dropped one of his letters in this tub, snatched at it, and burnt his fingers, so that the letter fell on a particularly choice piece of vellum. Horrified, he caught it up, and beheld the letter "H" marked clear on the skin.

Thus began a new page in the history of men, for the boy was afterwards known as Johann Gutenberg,¹ and from his Press the first book issued was the Bible in Latin. It can easily be seen how readily the invention of printing encouraged the Reformation in England, how this new knowledge was to widen men's minds and open their eyes to the gross abuses, the ignorance, superstitions, falsehoods and frauds practised in the name of Holy Church, to her great advantage. Especially this was true of PILGRIMAGES, which were falling into disrepute because of the childish character of the devotions practised at their shrines, and the gaudy display of rich jewels, and the covetous demands made upon the pilgrims' purses. Men were beginning to question everything taught in her name, and those to whom they had looked up before, the Religious, or

¹ Johann Gutenberg took his mother's name. He was the illegitimate son of a Canon of Mayence Cathedral, in which neighbourhood he was born. This explains some details of the story; such as his mother, whose occupation was that of one who prepared skins for parchments used for illuminating and books. Her work thus caused her to be acquainted with the Cathedral clergy, one of whom being a certain Canon Gensfleisch, from whom the boy Johann probably took his love of books, keen intelligence and aptness for mechanical learning, which was to result in the famous first printing-press known being set up afterwards at Mayence, when Gutenberg came back to reside in his native place. This further explains how the young swineherd of the forest was already acquainted with letters sufficiently at least to carve his own name.

Monks and Friars, were rather despised than respected by most people, especially in the towns.

And a very great cause of the spread of what they called in the colleges the "New Learning" was developed by that new-born passion of *Nationalism* under the Tudors. Henry VII was himself the People's King, in the sense that he must depend upon the goodwill of his Parliament, and not on the caprice of a few powerful nobles. England was sick of war, desirous of peace at home and abroad, and men had more time for thoughts of philosophy and religion. The people were growing richer, and the great merchant guilds in the cities were liberal in thought and patriotic in opinion. London was to lead the way in this new feeling after the Light.

THE FIRST GREAT LONDON REFORMER—JOHN COLET.

"The world is waking out of a long, deep sleep. The old ignorance is still defended with tooth and claw." These words of Erasmus describe the beginning of the conflict between the New Learning and its leaders against the Medievalists of the Church. Erasmus had come to England early in the sixteenth century, about the time of Luther's fiery outburst and the brilliant Dutchman became the close friend of men like John Colet, the great lecturer of Oxford, Linacre, Grocyn, Warham, and the young Thomas More. Erasmus made his name by his book, *The Praises of Folly*, a satire against superstition and ignorance. He and his friends upheld the teaching of Greek, of which the Church in England knew very little. The men of the New Learning learnt their Greek in Italy, where, after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, Greek scholars fled for refuge, bringing with them the treasures of Greek manuscripts saved from the Turk.

It would not be true to say that Greek was entirely unknown in the England of the Middle Ages. The great Bishop Grossetête eagerly collected Greek manuscripts which he himself translated, but he was one bishop out of the few against the many who were totally ignorant of the Greek language. The knowledge of Greek was to become the mighty weapon of the Reformation, whence sprang the desire after the New Testament.

In London there were still traces of the older Lollard beliefs. We know this from certain words of Bishop Tunstall, himself a friend of Erasmus, who said a few years later how "new arms were being added to the great band of Wycliffite heretics." Luther's protest and burning of the Papal Bull took place in 1510, and the Pope, Leo X, cursed both Lutherans and Wycliffites together. Wycliffe had attacked the dogmas of Transubstantiation and Purgatory and superstitious practices connected with pilgrimages and relics. John Colet and Erasmus together took the famous pilgrimages to Canterbury and Walsingham. Colet was disgusted with the rapacity and credulity he saw, at which Erasmus seems to have been more amused than indignant. He tells us how the Prior of Canterbury showed them the famous Shrine of St. Thomas

Becket and touched a kind of mechanical device to raise the cover of the shrine, displaying the rich jewels and gold which adorned it, gifts of pious donors through the centuries. The Prior touched the principal of these with a white rod, naming the gifts and the givers. Some of these can be seen to-day in the Regalia of the Tower of London. The wonderful ruby given by the Black Prince to Becket's Shrine was among them. It had been presented to him by Pedro the Cruel, King of Castile. Treasures like this had no attraction for John Colet, for he saw in them an emblem of the things which he most hated as great temptations, stumbling-blocks to holiness in the Church of Christ.

Now in 1512 the English Bishops became greatly perturbed by the spread of Lutherism in England, and the Convocation of Canterbury assembled in London to consider the best means which could be taken to suppress and extirpate heresy. Not only were Luther's writings coming over from the Continent, but Wycliffe's works were being secretly printed and read, for it was even becoming not a rare thing in the towns that the younger people should learn how to read and write. Besides the Bible there was a little tract of Wycliffe's written in a popular way, which was eagerly treasured and passed from hand to hand. It was called *The Wicket, or Plain Way of Salvation*, and this was the first Gospel tract known to be printed in English until John Colet himself wrote and circulated his *Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer in English*, to the intense indignation of his diocesan, the persecuting Bishop Fitz-James of London. John Colet was now Dean of St. Paul's, which made him the preacher of the opening sermon before Convocation in St. Paul's Cathedral. And to the amazement of the assembled Bishops, Abbots, Priors, Proctors and dignitaries who heard him preach, "John Colet fairly lashed the covetousness, the corruption and the worldliness of the Church." The scene can be hardly imagined, for it was unique. They had come together to condemn heretics. Puffed up with their own conceit, their minds were bitter, arrogant, and with their thoughts full of savage cruelty against those whom they hated. John Colet, whose life was pure in a corrupt age, whose speech was usually gentle and mild, and his opinions tolerant in matters of belief, made their ears to tingle with his outspoken condemnation of their vices and greed. They knew how the pride and avarice of Thomas Wolsey was bringing discredit upon the Church. But Wolsey was a courtier and the King's favourite. Probably it was on account of his sermon that John Colet was violently attacked and persecuted by Bishop Fitz-James, who accused him of heresy for putting the Lord's Prayer in English in the hands of the vulgar people, but Colet was protected by Archbishop Warham of Canterbury, himself a great patron of Erasmus, and by the King, Henry VIII. He founded his "School for Poor Scholars" in the neighbourhood of St. Paul's and "*Colet's Foundation*," as it was called, has endured long after Bishop Fitz-James is forgotten. The men of the New Learning were too strong to be lightly overthrown. Colet had cast aside the teaching of the Schools as taught by the Medievalists.

At Oxford he had discouraged by word and example Disputations upon trivial subjects such as "How Long did it Take the Angel Gabriel to Fly from Highest Heaven to Bethlehem?" Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, those ancient teachers of Divinity, were ridiculed by the New Learning of these scholars, *the Grecians*, as they were called. In bygone centuries—

"The school men having subtle and strong capacities, abundance of leisure, and but small variety of reading, their minds being shut up in a few authors as their bodies were in the cells of their monasteries; they spun out of a small quantity of matter, those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books. For the human mind, if it works upon itself as the spider does, then it has no end, but produces cobwebs of learning, admirable indeed for the fineness of the thread, but of no substance or profit."

This criticism of Lord Bacon in his famous book, *The Advancement of Learning*, is a very good illustration of the great change in Thought brought about by the invention of printing, and it provides the best answer to the rather blind admiration of Thomas Aquinas and his School, whose works show an absolute ignorance of the first Principles of Science, Natural and Physical. The Church had made a wrong use of the Bible during the Dark Ages. It was supposed to contain the sum of all human knowledge and science, which explains the later absurdity of upholding such beliefs as articles of faith, contrary to Natural Law. Maintaining that the earth was flat, and that the sun went round it, was stoutly held amongst them. The Popes forbade Dissection; for Anatomy was held to be an impious and profane study.

It could not be practised by Christian men—but his Holiness commonly preferred himself to have an Arab or Jewish Chirurgeon and leech.

DECLINE OF THE MONASTERIES IN LONDON.

The loss of favour in which Monasteries were held is proved by the *Calendar of Wills*, showing how the bequests to the Religious Orders diminished during the last century before the Reformation. In the three periods, (1) 1250 to 1350, (2) 1350 to 1450, (3) 1450 to 1540, we note these examples among the chief Orders in London:

Charter-House: 2nd period, bequests number 31; 3rd period, 14.

Grey-Friars (Franciscans): No separate bequests in 1st period; in the 2nd, 20; in the 3rd, none.

Black-friars (Dominicans): 2nd period, bequests, 10; 3rd period, 1.

Cistercians of East Minster, the great Abbey called Our Lady of Grace, without the Wall near the Tower, 2nd period, bequests 7; 3rd, 2.

St. Helen's, Bishopsgate (Nunnery): 1st, 18; 2nd, 12; 3rd, none.

Minorettes (Poor Clares): 1st, 9; 2nd, 18; 3rd, 3.

Carmelites: 1st, 15; 2nd, 11; 3rd, 1.

Crutched Friars: 1st, 13; 2nd, 10; 3rd, 1.

Austin Friars: 1st, 13; 2nd, 13; 3rd, 2 (this last for Masses only).

S. Bartholomew's Priory and Hospital: 1st, 14; 2nd, 13; 3rd, 2.

These are remarkable figures. You can judge from them how untrue it is to assert that the Reformation was the cause of the decay and loss of the Monasteries. The whole system was moribund.

CHURCH AND COMMON LAW IN CONFLICT.

Meanwhile in 1514 an event occurred in the heart of the City of London which gave an extraordinary instance of the rising tide of public anger against the cruelty and injustice of the Bishop's Court. The funeral pall of a baby became the cause of a tremendous issue joined between Church and State, a quarrel which involved the City of London and some of the greatest people of the day—Wolsey, the King, Archbishop Warham, Thomas More, and others. It is known as "THE CASE OF RICHARD HUNNE" (or ¹*Hunney* as pronounced)—a rich merchant of the City of London, a man who was highly respected by all who knew him, and much beloved for his goodness and charity. He was the last man whom the Londoners would have dreamed of as getting into trouble with the Church or the Law. But the Bishop was that same Fitz-James who hated John Colet and he was resolved to persecute to the death any man who showed himself as a believer in the new Liberal opinions of religious matters. Also this notorious case touched Mother Church to the quick—for it threatened her privileges, where it was evident that any bold man could assail them for the same cause if this were once allowed to pass unchallenged.

Richard Hunne was a rich Merchant-Taylor living near St. Paul's, reputed very devout, attending Daily Mass in the Cathedral, and giving large sums of money to the Church. But it was whispered that Hunne had been heard to say strange things against Pilgrimages and Relics, and in particular he had exclaimed against the sharp punishment of a woman in the Bishop's Court for some offence connected with her use of words rather slighting the famous Canterbury Pilgrimage. Now Hunne's youngest child happened to die when they were staying out of their own parish, and the Priest (Thomas Dryfield, of S. Mary Malfellow (Spittal), Whitechapel) demanded the *Mortuary* or Offering of the Deceased at the funeral, and when this was refused, he tried to seize the pall off the coffin, which the bereaved father resisted, exclaiming that his son, but a few weeks old, as being a minor, had held no goods with which to pay church dues. Doubtless Hunne thought he had given so much to the Church that this exaction should not be required of him. But the aggrieved Priest cited Hunne before the Bishop's Court. Hunne retaliated by bringing a suit against the Priest in the King's Court, as being guilty of a breach of the Statute of *Premunire*, which forbade cases against the King's lieges to be sued in foreign courts, meaning the Bishop's Court when under the Papal Authority. Bishop Fitz-James of London accused Hunne of heresy, shut him up in his

¹ *Hunne*—the doubled consonant followed by the final "e" clearly indicates two syllables—and *Richard Pace*, the diplomatist, is also written "Pacey."—J. K.

prison of Lollards' Tower, adjoining St. Paul's, and searched Hunne's house for heretic books. His officers discovered, amongst others, the Great Bible of John Wycliffe in English. Hunne was threatened with death unless he recanted, which he did, but he refused to abandon his suit against the Priest in the King's Court. What happened is rather mysterious.

Rumour suddenly spread that Hunne had been secretly murdered in the Bishop's prison (December 4—7 a.m. Monday). His friends at once appealed to the Merchant Taylors Guild for redress. So quickly was this done that within twelve hours a Coroner's Warrant discovered Hunne's body hanging from a beam in his cell. A jury of twenty-four men was empanelled to seek out the cause of death—"Suicide or Murder," which? They met and began to take evidence from sworn witnesses.

Meanwhile Bishop Fitz-James grew alarmed and he brought forward fresh Articles against Hunne which were read on Sunday, December 10, before the people at Paul's Cross. The two prison officials—Charles Joseph the Summoner and Jailer, and John Spalding the Bell-ringer—were both suspected as having been in charge of Hunne at Lollards' Tower, and so the last persons known to have seen him alive. Also Charles Joseph had absconded after taking sanctuary at Westminster, and no man knew where he had fled. On the 16th Bishop Fitz-James went through the solemn farce of "Trying the Corpse" in his Spiritual Court before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen at Paul's Consistory. Mr. Thomas More, one of the Under-Sheriffs of London, was present. Finding the dead man guilty of "Heresy and *Felo de se*" on December 17, the Bishop formally condemned the defunct, and he ordered the body to be delivered over to the secular arm to be burned at Smithfield. Which was done on the 20th (Sunday, the regular day of sentencing heretics). This Fitz-James did to stifle the *Premunire* Case against his Curate, and resolve the question of Hunne's body being allowed Christian burial or not. Also the Bishop preached a most bitter sermon against the dead man at Paul's Cross, telling the citizens how Hunne was a manifest heretic who hanged himself like Judas to escape being burned alive, and he threatened them with a like fate. Fitz-James wanted to get the case over before the Parliament met.

The Coroner, Thomas Barnwell, ignored the Bishop's actions and he held his Quest according to the Common Law. He heard witnesses and ordered search to be made for Charles Joseph and for his woman-servant Julian Little. John Spalding was watched. The *Premunire* Case was not dropped, for suspicion was keen against the authorities of Paul's. Chancellor Horsey was suspected because of the Bishop's proceedings. Fitz-James wrote to Archbishop Warham, who could do nothing. Mr. Thomas More gave it as his opinion that Hunne had committed suicide. Few believed this to be true.

Suddenly Charles Joseph, who had fled the day after the jury were sworn, in the night of December 21—22, was discovered in

Good Easter, a remote Essex village. He had taken sanctuary in the Priory Church! As a "sanctuary man" the case looked black against him. He was surrendered by the Prior, taken to the Tower and examined by the King's Counsel in the presence of four of the Coroner's Quest. He put forward a weak alibi. It was proved that men saw him about 7 a.m. leaving Lollards' Tower by stealth. He confessed to the murder and accused Spalding, his accomplice, as accessory before fact, and the *Bishop's Chancellor, William Horsey*, of instigating them. Joseph's cook, Julian Little, whose evidence confirmed the Summoner's, was in refuge at Bethlehem Hostel, and there examined.

The Coroner's Jury returned all three men to stand their trial for murder at the next Assizes or the King's Bench. This was about the end of February. Horsey was then arrested and put in Archbishop Warham's custody. In despair the Bishop wrote to Cardinal Wolsey to plead with the King for his Chancellor Horsey, declaring that the Summoner confessed "under durance." Parliament met (February 8, 1515) and the Commons took up the quarrel. The Lords went with the Bishop. The case grew big—not so much of Hunne as of the "Criminous Clerks." All men exclaimed against the horrid cruelty of the Bishops' prisons. Fitz-James made no plea for the Summoner or the Bell-ringer. The jurymen swore that Charles Joseph spoke "of his own free will, unconstrained." The Commons pressed a Bill depriving some Criminous Clerks of their immunity. The King was undecided, Wolsey perplexed. Henry chose a learned Franciscan, Dr. Standish, to argue the cause for the Crown. For the Commons pressed hard a new Bill to repeal "Benefit of Clergy" to all those guilty of murdering people in their own homes, in hallowed places or on the King's highway, provided the criminous clerk was not in the higher degrees of holy orders.

The physical distinction of all clerks was then the tonsure, given to all schoolboys. The Bishop of London spoke furiously against this Bill and another Bill—"an Appeal of Homicide" by Hunne's widow and children. Fitz-James called the Coroner's Jury "false perjured caitiffs."

At Blackfriars Dr. Henry Standish defended the Bill which had been dropped and Convocation called him before them in November (1515). Standish was sharply threatened by Warham as a heretic for asserting that the Papal Decree which forbade "*the conventing of criminous clerks*" before a temporal judge had never been received in England. But Standish relied on Henry and appealed to him to protect his Ecclesiastical Counsel. At Blackfriars the King met Convocation in an extraordinary Assembly of Counsels, Judges, and some of the Commons. Afterwards the Judges finally declared all clergy present at Standish's Citation were *In Praemunire*. This was at Baynard's Castle, in the yet greater assembly of clergy and both Houses of Parliament. On his knees Wolsey made formal submission to the King on behalf of Convocation, reserving the matter of "conventing of criminous clerks" for the Pope.

Then Henry answered: "We will maintain the Rights of Our Crown as amply as any of Our Predecessors. We will own none Supreme over Us, as has ever been the Law in Our Realm."

The King accepted the Submission of Convocation. He agreed to Horsey's release, and the Attorney-General entered a "*Nolle Prosequi*"¹ after William Horsey submitted to the King's justice and pleaded his "Benefit of Clergy." He was fined £600 and deprived of all his London preferments.

The King found that there was not sufficient evidence to convict William Horsey of wilful murder. The offence was reduced to allowing his servants the Summoner and Bell-ringer unlawful access to Lollards' Tower. The charge was left in the air, so to speak.

Horsey fled to Exeter and never dared show his face in London more. This case of Richard Hunne marks the end of the long tyranny of the Church in the sweeping away of the old abuses of "Benefit of Clergy" which followed in a few more years. Soon no clerk could commit murder with impunity, and the next Parliament deprived the "Courts Christian" of their right to inflict Judgment of Death on the King's lieges. Even heresy could only be punished by the Royal Assent of a Crown Writ.

¹ Annulment of Proceedings—not to stay the trial for lack of evidence, but an exercise of the Royal clemency.—J. K.

PARABLES FROM SOUTH AMERICA. By Kenneth G. Grubb. Pp. 215. Lutterworth Press, 7s. 6d. net.

The name "Grubb," in connection with South America, is in itself a guarantee of reliability and interest. Readers who, on this account, are attracted by the name, will not be disappointed. Yet the book is not easy to describe. It is not a record of missionary work, nor a mere description of that great land, though there are descriptions that will delight and illustrations that will attract. The author takes the reader to various parts of South America and as they journey he bases upon the things they see and hear spiritual implications and eternal truths. For example, having described the beauty of the stars in the southern hemisphere he quotes: "And the Lord brought Abraham forth and said, Look now toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." "Thus was the night season transformed into a time of supreme revelation. . . . Often the night is a time of vision and revelation. . . . Who can say how often it is the case that a transaction between the soul and God, when all others are asleep, moulds the destiny of nations?"

The book has this special virtue that each chapter is complete in itself, a great boon to those who can give only occasional time for such reading.

F. B.