

calendar; the office for his festival to be expunged from all breviaries; his bones to be burned, and the ashes to be thrown in the air.

On the whole, the king at different times suppressed six hundred and forty-five monasteries: of which twenty-eight had abbots that enjoyed a seat in parliament. Ninety colleges were demolished in several counties; two thousand three hundred and seventy-four chantries and free chapels; a hundred and ten hospitals. The whole revenue of these establishments amounted to one hundred and sixty-one thousand one hundred pounds.^m It is worthy of observation, that all the lands and possessions and revenue of England had, a little before this period, been rated at four millions a year; so that the revenues of the monks, even comprehending the lesser monasteries, did not exceed the twentieth part of the national income: a sum vastly inferior to what is commonly apprehended. The lands belonging to the convents were usually let at a low rent; and the farmers, who regarded themselves as a species of proprietors, took always care to renew their leases before they expired.ⁿ

Great murmurs were every where excited on account of these violences; and men much questioned whether priors or monks, who were only trustees or tenants for life, could, by any deed, however voluntary, transfer to the king the entire property of their estates. In order to reconcile the people to such mighty innovations, they were told that the king would never thenceforth have occasion to levy taxes, but would be able, from the abbey lands alone, to bear, during war as well as peace, the whole charges of government.^o While such topics were employed to appease the populace, Henry took an effectual method of interesting the nobility and gentry in the success of his measures: ^p he either made a gift of the revenues of convents to his favourites and courtiers, or sold them at low prices, or exchanged them for other lands on very disadvantageous terms. He was so profuse in these liberalities, that he is said to have given a woman the whole revenue of a convent, as a reward for making a pudding which happened to gratify his palate.^q He also settled pensions on the abbots and priors, proportioned to their former revenues or to their merits; and gave each monk a yearly pension of eight marks: he erected six new bishoprics, Westminster, Oxford, Peterborow, Bristol, Chester, and Gloucester, of which five subsist at this day: and by all these means of expense and dissipation the profit which the king reaped by the seizure of church lands fell much short of vulgar opinion. As the ruin of convents had been foreseen some years before it happened, the monks had taken care to secrete most of their stock, furniture, and plate; so that the spoils of the great monasteries bore not, in these respects, any proportion to those of the lesser.

Beside the lands possessed by the monasteries, the regular clergy enjoyed a considerable part of the benefices of England, and of the tithes annexed to them; and these were also at this time transferred to the crown, and by that means passed into the hands of laymen: an abuse which many zealous churchmen regarded as the most criminal sacrilege. The monks were formerly much at their ease in England, and enjoyed revenues which exceeded the regular and stated expense of the house. We read of the abbey of Chertsey, in Surrey, which possessed 744 pounds a year, though it contained only fourteen monks: that of Furnese, in the county of Lincoln, was

^m Lord Herbert. Camden. Speed.

ⁿ There is a curious passage, with regard to the suppression of monasteries, to be found in Coke's Institutes, 4th Inst. chap. i. p. 44. It is worth transcribing, as it shows the ideas the English government entertained during the reign of Henry VIII. and even in the time of Sir Edward Coke, when he wrote his Institutes. It clearly appears, that the people had then little notion of being jealous of their liberties, were desirous of making the crown quite independent, and wished only to remove from themselves, as much as possible, the burthens of government. A large standing army, and a fixed revenue, would, on these conditions, have been regarded as great blessings: and it was owing entirely to the prodigality of Henry, and to his little suspicion that the power of the crown could ever fail, that the English owe all their present liberty. The title of the chapter in Coke is, *Advice concerning new and plausible Projects and Offers in Parliament.* "When any plausible project," says he, "is made in parliament, to draw the Lords and Commons to assent to any act, (especially in matters of weight and importance,) if both Houses do give upon the matter projected and promised their consent, it shall be most necessary, they being trusted for the commonwealth, to have the matter projected and promised (which moved the Houses to consent) to be established in the same act, lest the benefit of the act be taken, and the matter projected and promised never be performed, and so the Houses of parliament perform not the trust reposed in them, as it fell out (taking one example for many) in

valued at 960 pounds a year, and contained but thirty. In order to dissipate their revenues, and support popularity, the monks lived in a hospitable manner; and besides the poor maintained from their offals, there were many decayed gentlemen, who passed their lives in travelling from convent to convent, and were entirely subsisted at the table of the friars. By this hospitality, as much as by their own inactivity, did the convents prove nurseries of idleness; but the king, not to give offence by too sudden an innovation, bound the new proprietors of abbey lands to support the ancient hospitality. But this engagement was fulfilled in very few places, and for a very short time.

It is easy to imagine the indignation with which the intelligence of all these acts of violence was received at Rome, and how much the ecclesiastics of that court, who had so long kept the world in subjection by high-sounding epithets, and by holy execrations, would now vent their rhetoric against the character and conduct of Henry. The Pope was at last incited to publish the bull which had been passed against that monarch; and in a public manner he delivered over his soul to the devil, and his dominions to the first invader. Libels were dispersed, in which he was anew compared to the most furious persecutors in antiquity; and the preference was now given to their side: he had declared war with the dead, whom the pagans themselves respected; was at open hostility with heaven; and had engaged in professed enmity with the whole host of saints and angels. Above all, he was often reproached with his resemblance to the Emperor Julian, whom it was said he imitated in his apostasy and learning, though he fell short of him in morals. Henry could distinguish in some of these libels the style and animosity of his kinsman, Pole; and he was thence incited to vent his rage by every possible expedient on that famous cardinal.

Reginald de la Pole, or Reginald Pole, ^{Cardinal Pole.} was descended from the royal family, being fourth son of the Countess of Salisbury, daughter of the Duke of Clarence. He gave, in early youth, indications of that fine genius and generous disposition by which, during his whole life, he was so much distinguished; and Henry, having conceived great friendship for him, intended to raise him to the highest ecclesiastical dignities; and, as a pledge of future favours, he conferred on him the deanery of Exeter, the better to support him in his education. Pole was carrying on his studies in the University of Paris at the time when the king solicited the suffrages of that learned body in favour of his divorce; but though applied to by the English agent, he declined taking any part in the affair. Henry bore this neglect with more temper than was natural to him; and he appeared unwilling, on that account, to renounce all friendship with a person whose virtues and talents he hoped would prove useful, as well as ornamental, to his court and kingdom. He allowed him still to possess his deanery, and gave him permission to finish his studies at Padua: he even paid him some court, in order to bring him into his measures; and wrote to him while in that university, desiring him to give his opinion freely with regard to the late measures taken in England for abolishing the papal authority. Pole had now contracted an intimate friendship with all persons eminent for dignity or merit in Italy, Sadolet, Bembo, and other revivers of true taste and learning; and he was moved by these connexions, as

the reign of Henry the Eighth: on the king's behalf, the members of both Houses were informed in parliament, that no king or kingdom was safe, but where the king had three abilities: 1. To live of his own, and able to defend his kingdom upon any sudden invasion or insurrection. 2. To aid his confederates, otherwise they would never assist him. 3. To reward his well deserving servants. Now the project was, that if the parliament would give unto him all the abbies, priories, friaries, nunneries, and other monasteries, that for ever in time then to come, he would take order that the same should not be converted into private uses; but first, that his exchequer, for the purposes aforesaid, should be enriched; secondly, the kingdom strengthened by a continual maintenance of forty thousand well-trained soldiers, with skilful captains and commanders; thirdly, for the benefit and ease of the subject, who never afterwards, (as was projected,) in any time to come, should be charged with subsidies, fifteenths, loans, or other common aids; fourthly, lest the honour of the realm should receive any diminution of honour by the dissolution of the said monasteries, there being twenty-nine lords of parliament of the abbots and priors, (that held being twenty-nine lords of parliament in the next leaf,) that the king of the king *per baroniam*, whereof more in the next leaf,) that the said monasteries would create a number of nobles, which we omit. The said monasteries were given to the king by authority of divers acts of parliament, but no provision was therein made for the said project, or any part thereof." ^o Coke's 4th Inst. fol. 44. ^p Dugdale's Warwickshire, p. 800. ^q Fuller. ^r Burnet, vol. i. p. 237. ^s Goodwin's Annals.

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