

UNDER THE ENGLISH CROWN

which the townspeople could get some sort of education. But the mass of the Welsh people, untouched by changes and by any mental progress, lived its obscure life in the middle of a desolate country, tending its cattle, marrying and dying, without feeling anything—or very little—of the great intellectual movements going on during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Religious life was equally quiescent. The Reformation had hardly affected the ignorant mass of the people, while on the other hand no deep sympathy bound them to the Catholic religion, whose intervention had never been exercised in favour of the Welsh nation. Consequently they accepted without a struggle, but also without enthusiasm, a new service which had little interest for them. It made no difference, in their view, whether a clergyman sent by the king or a priest sent by the pope governed their spiritual existence.

The new Church, besides, proved more indifferent and neglectful than the Church of Rome, even at its worst, had ever been. There was no translation of the Bible before 1588, and religious services were held with the greatest irregularity. The bishops, all of whom were English, never