

Charles II. Alarmed by his brother's bias to the Roman-catholic religion, the king strove to counteract the injury that was likely to accrue to his family, by choosing for them a preceptor who had made himself remarkable by his attacks on popery. This was Henry Compton, bishop of London, who had forsaken the profession of a soldier and assumed the clergyman's gown at the age of thirty. The great loyalty of his family procured him rapid advancement in the church. The tendency of the duke of York to the Roman-catholic tenets had been suspected by the world, and Henry Compton, by outdoing every other bishop in his violence against him, not only atoned for his own want of education in the minds of his countrymen, but gave him dominion over the children of the man he hated.¹ A feud, in fact, subsisted between the house of Compton and the duke of York, on account of the happiness of one of the bishop's brothers having been seriously compromised by the preference Anne Hyde gave to the duke.²

As to the office of preceptor, bishop Henry Compton possessing far less learning than soldiers of rank in general, it was not very likely that the princesses educated under his care would rival the daughters or nieces of Henry VIII. in their attainments. The lady Mary and the lady Anne either studied or let it alone, just as suited their inclinations. It suited those of the lady Anne to let it alone, for she grew up in a state of utter ignorance. There are few housemaids at the present day whose progress in the common business of reading and writing is not more respectable. Her spelling is not in the antiquated style of the seventeenth century, but in that style lashed by her contemporary Swift as peculiar to the ladies of his day. The construction of her letters and notes is vague and vulgar, as will be seen hereafter. The mind of the elder princess was of a much higher cast, for the lady Mary had been long under the paternal care. Her father, the duke of York, and her mother, Anne Hyde, both possessed literary abilities,³ and her grandfather, lord Claren-

¹ Dr. Lake's MS.

² Memoirs of the Earl of Peterborough.

³ Life of Queen Mary II. : 1695.