

which we have now to consider, Apostolicity, you fearlessly claim for the Church of England; because, as you say, her present bishops derive their orders, through an unbroken succession, from St. Augustin and his brethren, who were themselves of undoubted apostolical descent; and you say, further, that this claim is tacitly acknowledged even by Rome herself, inasmuch as she has never formally declared the English orders invalid.

Now, this whole-question is much too intricate for either you or me to enter upon in any thing like detail; for to examine it rightly would require more ecclesiastical learning than we possess. But with respect to this last assertion, that Rome has not pronounced upon the English orders, even if it be true in the letter, I am sure the impression which it conveys is false; for has she not pronounced upon them to all intents and purposes, when every clergyman of the Church of England, who embraces the Catholic faith, and desires to become a Catholic priest, is required to be ordained de novo and unconditionally, just in the same way as any lay candidate? This is at least a practical decision on the question; and that Rome has so decided is a fact which I think, ought to have some weight even with you, when you remember that she has no interest in denying or representing as doubtful the orders of those communions which have separated from her, because, according to her theory, such separation is in itself enough to constitute schism; and, moreover, that she does acknowledge the validity of orders in the Greek Church, the Armenian, and other heretical bodies in the East, so as not to require re-ordination from any of their priests who return to her obedience: This ought in fairness to suggest to you the enquiry, whether there be not some special flaw in the English succession, discernible to her experienced eye, which renders it nugatory.

What this flaw is, we need not here enquire; but so few, even of the party to which you belong, trouble themselves to look into the history of the English Reformation, while they are taught to assume the validity of English orders as a matter altogether beyond dispute, that I think it may be well to mention a few facts, which may perhaps be new to you, and which will show that there is, at least, some room for question.

Perhaps you are not aware that, though during the reign of Henry VIII. no further change was made in the Roman Pontifical than the omission of the oath of obedience to the Pope, yet, in King Edward's time, an entirely new service was prescribed, both for the ordering of priests and deacons and for the consecration of bishops. This service was quite different, in many important particulars from the one then in use in the Church. For instance, in the consecration of a bishop, the form of words which accompanied the laying on of hands

was such as might have served with equal propriety for the ordination of a priest or deacon, or even for the confirmation of a layman,* and no mention was made, in any part of the service, of conveying to the candidate the power of conferring orders. These defects are the more important, because Cranmer, Barlow, and several others, who were principally concerned in framing the new ordinal, had on a previous occasion distinctly affirmed that consecration was not necessary; that princes might by their own authority, appoint priests and bishops, and that such appointment alone was sufficient; nay, some went so far as to say that the only reason why the Apostles made bishops on their own authority was, that there were at that time no Christian princes to whose orders they might submit themselves.† However, be the cause what it may, the fact is indisputable, that the form of words then used for the consecration of a bishop was very indeterminate; and that it so continued until the reign of Charles II., when an important alteration was made, and the form now in use first introduced. Six bishops had been consecrated according to this first Protestant ritual during the reign of Edward; but upon the accession of his sister, Mary, it was ordered by the Catholic bishops and other able divines, that they should, if found worthy, "receive that which was wanting to them, seeing that they were not yet ordered in very deed."‡ Then came Queen Elizabeth, who restored her brother's ordinal, and having deprived all the Catholic bishops, except one, proceeded to order the consecration of others according to the Protestant form. But here a new difficulty presented itself, no Catholic bishop could be found to execute her will; and the ceremony was at last performed by three of those bishops who had been deprived in the preceding reign, acting under a commission from the queen, in which she undertook to "supply by her own supreme authority all that should be done upon this occasion contrary to the usages of the realm or the ecclesiastical laws."

Such is a brief history of the origin of the pre-

* It may be worth while to specify the changes made in the form of consecration at the Savoy conference. In king Edward's book it stood thus: "Take the Holy Ghost, and remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by imposition of hands; for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and of soberness." In the new Ritual of the time of Charles II., "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a bishop in the Church of God, now committed into thee by the imposition of our hands; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee by this imposition of our hands, for God," &c. The following question was at the same time added to those, which were to be put to the Bishop elect: "Will you be faithful in ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others?"

† Collier, ix. 201, 205, &c.

‡ Collier, vi. 64.