

the policy of these rulers to assimilate the Jews as far as possible with their other subjects. With this object, they strove to eliminate these elements of national life and feeling which were fitted to maintain their solidarity as a distinct people. They endeavoured to spread Greek customs, and to introduce the Greek language, very much as the Germans are seeking to Germanize the French speaking provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to day. These efforts were partially successful. An increasing number of the Jews gradually began to conform to the manners of their masters, and to use their language to such an extent that the books of the New Testament had to be written in Greek as the tongue familiar to the greater part of the people. We find reference to this process of Grecising the Jews in the books of the Maccabees which, though apocryphal, are yet historical records. There, this period is described in one place as "the mingling," in another as "the time of the mingling." Time-serving wordlings, men of mere expediency, "trimming" politicians, and people of no religious or patriotic feeling, readily adopted Greek ways. Of these were the Saducees, and afterwards the Herodians. But there was a more earnest section of the nation who held firmly to their own religion, and time-honoured national usages. This was the religious and patriotic party, corresponding very closely to the Covenanters of Scotland. With them the national interests were bound up with religion, as adherence to the national religion in Scotland was intimately associated with the popular struggle for civil rights against the despotic efforts of the Stuarts. All that was best, manliest, most earnest, most patriotic, most religious, among the people, refused to conform. From this, apparently, that party got the name Pharisees, which means, according to the best authorities "separated," or "non-conformist." Indeed the word Pharisee is almost identical with "non-conformist" not only in literal, but also in historical meaning. The Pharisees were the non-conformists, the nationalists, the patriots, the religious and orthodox party among the Jews; and like the English non-conformists and Scottish Covenanters, originally constituted the best element of the nation. Politically, their position corresponded to the party of Italian unity a few years ago, when, filled with hatred of Austrian domination, they hugged to their hearts the memories of Italy's former greatness, struggled against imported customs, and sighed for deliverance from the foreign yoke. While the Sadducees were ready to adapt themselves to the necessities of the times, and discarded, without a pang of regret, their old national usages, the Pharisees clung tenaciously to every thing Hebrew. Theirs was at first a splendid conservatism which attached itself to the best traditions of the religious and national life of their fathers.