

his power over the British Church from age to age, till, about the commencement of the sixteenth century, it had arrived at a great and oppressive height,—not indeed without occasional remonstrances and successful opposition; which, if they availed not at the time to remove the evil, sufficiently proved that the Romish dominion was imperfect and insecure, and gave indications of a return at some future period to complete independence.

Early in the sixteenth century, the Bishops and Clergy of the Church, acting in concert with the civil power, threw off the usurped authority of the Pope, and the other innovations that had been thrust upon her, whilst subject to his authority, and stood forth to the world, once more, an independent branch of the Church, freed from the thralldom of Rome, and relieved from the accumulated corruptions of centuries.

In doing this she only did what she had a perfect and unquestionable right to do. She was a complete branch of the Church before she became subject to Rome, as her admission to various Councils in the fourth and fifth centuries, long before Augustine came to England, fully proves. She refused subjection to Rome when Augustine wished to make her subject. She then knew nothing of the errors, which, together with the usurpations of Rome, she threw off at the Reformation. At that memorable period she reformed herself and returned to the independence and the purity which she possessed before she had any connexion with Rome. She was to all intents and purposes the same Church that had from the first existed in Britain. She had the same rights and the same principles she formerly enjoyed. She had, from the first, possessed all the parts of a true scriptural Church. She had the orders of the ministry established by Christ and his Apostles, and the Apostolical Succession. She became again holy, and did not, in resuming her rank as an independent branch of the Church Catholic, and cleansing herself from the accumulated corrup-