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next heir to the throne in the event of Edward's dying without issue. The members of the council, being averse to the thought of a Romanist being placed on the throne, persuaded the dying boy to dispose of his crown to the Lady Jane Grey. Cranmer tried to persuade him to adhere to his father's will, to which he, the Archbishop himself, and all concerned, were bound by a sacred oath. Failing in this, with that unfortunate want of firmness characteristic of him, Cranmer yielded, and signed a document contrary to the oath that he had taken to his old master, who, with all his faults, had been unswervingly faithful to him.

One gets wearied over the tortuous actions of those connected with the prominent events of this terrible age. The headsman's axe, the fire and fagot, the avenging sword, were hovering near the dying boy, and the fell consumption had no sooner claimed him than the hideous instruments of death began their cruel work. Cranmer was clearly wrong in violating his oath, yet some extenuation for the act may be found in the trying circumstances which surrounded him. Mary was not only a papist, but she was personally inimical to Cranmer. She was the daughter of Katharine of Aragon, whose divorce from her royal husband Cranmer had been the means of procuring. This, in an age when vengeance was considered almost a virtue, must have seemed portentous of great danger to the perplexed Archbishop. If, then, his actions cannot always be defended, at least he moves our pity, for he trod a path beset with dangers on every hand. The spectres of these dangers hovered over him as he watched the breath fade forever from the thin, wan boy, under whose rule his personal safety had been ensured, and his religious reforms supported.

Now all was terribly changed. The council forsook the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, who, with her husband, was beheaded. Cranmer remained true to her and her cause, and for

this was in danger of his head. Yet an opportunity was given him to escape. To his lasting honor, he refused to go. In the general stampede of the friends of the Reformation, who lost no time in reaching the Continent as soon as they knew that Mary was fixed upon the throne, Cranmer, as Primate of the English Church, stood firm to his post. We seek for bright spots in the character of this unfortunate man. Here is one. Tennyson finely describes his soliloquy upon the occasion:

"To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle, our bishops from their

sees be fled, they say—or flying—Poinet, Barlow, Bale, Scory, Coverdale, besides the Deans of Christ church, Durham, Exeter, and Wells, Ailmer, and Bullingham, and hundreds more, so they report. I shall be left alone. No, Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, will not fly."

Nor did he; yet he soon found himself under arrest. On the 14th of September, 1553, the Archbishop of Canterbury was sent to the Tower, where Ridley, the Bishop of London, and Latimer, the sturdy old Bishop of Worcester, were also confined. Here these three, imbued with the spirit of the Reformation, feeling themselves in the face of impending death, were allowed to converse together, till, in the following March, they were removed to Oxford and lodged in the common jail, known as the Bocardo. Time wore wearily on till October, 1555, when an order was issued that Ridley and Latimer were to be burned as heretics. On the 16th of the month this dread decree was carried out. Cranmer was saved for the time being, and from the roof of his prison he saw his two friends and suffragans bound to the stake. Stripped of all garments but their shirts, they stood before a gazing crowd. He saw them calm, and even triumphant, as the fagots were lit and the flames began to do their deadly work. He saw this, but he probably heard not from his distance the words of comfort and cheer that the dying martyrs addressed to one another—or did he? Did he hear Latimer—sixty-five years of age, undaunted and even cheerful through it all—did he hear him say, "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as (I trust) shall never be put out." If he heard not this, he doubtless saw the old man stroke his face in the fire, bathe his hands in the flame, and die. The bloody work had begun. What were the feelings of Cranmer as he crept back to his gloomy cell, knowing that the sleuth-hounds of persecution were already let loose upon him?