

ality could be levelled against their inmates.

Q. What other reasons prompted Wolsey in his aims?

A. The injurious influences of monasteries on the Church's welfare. Religious houses were free from Episcopal control, and generally looked to Rome. Besides, the number of them was by far too great. There were about six hundred monasteries in England at this time, and they actually enjoyed a tenth part of the country's capital, much of their wealth being demanded by the exactions of the Pope.

Q. Had the Crown power to dissolve religious corporations?

A. Yes, the Knights Templars had been dissolved in 1307, and their property given by Act of Parliament to Hospitals. Later on, too, colleges had been benefitted by transferring to them the property of monasteries.

Q. But what was the difficulty with the king?

A. To find a precedent for the alienation of religious property to *secular* uses.

Q. How did he set about carrying out his purpose?

A. A commission of unscrupulous persons was appointed under Cromwell to visit and report concerning the condition of monasteries throughout the length and breadth of England, whose incomes were under £200 per year.

Q. What was the result?

A. At the end of three months a bill was passed for the dissolution of 376 monasteries whose revenues thus lapsed to the king, to be disposed of, however, as the Act said, "to the honour of God."

Q. How did the king employ the money thus obtained?

A. To purchase connivance at a more extensive spoliation, and to gather in a greater revenue. For this purpose, a second visitation was undertaken by the agents of the court, and every effort was made to coerce the monasteries into resignation, that Henry might secure the booty.

Q. Mention some consequences springing from this plunder?

A. The edifices were mutilated, their valuable contents often left to the mercy of the rabble, their literary treasures, which were indeed incalculable, forever lost, while the Ecclesiastical style of art almost completely perished.

Q. What amount is it said Henry received from the dissolution of the monasteries?

A. Over thirty-eight millions of pounds sterling.

Q. How was the vast treasure chiefly spent?

A. Lords and Dukes were bribed into acquiescence of the scheme by grants of monastic demesnes.

Some of the monasteries were converted into collegiate Churches, for example, Ripon and Manchester. Two great colleges were endowed at Oxford and Cambridge, viz., Christ's and Trinity.

And six new Episcopal Sees were founded and partly endowed.

Q. What extraordinary act of Henry's finally caused his excommunication by the Pope?

A. The robbery of the priceless shrine of Thomas A. Beckett at Canterbury, and depriving the Saint of his festival, special office and commemoration, after a silly charge of treason and rebellion brought against the dead primate, and heard before the king.