

his college, nine years before the dissolution of the lesser, and thirteen years before that of the greater monasteries.

The following are some of the startling delinquencies which Henry VII.'s Visitation disclosed: At Tewkesbury, where there was an Abbot and 82 Monks, there were 144 servants in livery, wholly engaged in their service. The Monks lived in idleness, waited upon by a vast retinue of menials. In one diocese 18 clergymen and laymen had, or professed to have, dispensations to keep concubines. The Abbot of Fountains had six concubines. According to the Visitor's famous "Black Book," which they laid before the House of Commons, two-thirds of the Monks in England were leading immoral lives. Parliament in A.D. 1536, in consequence passed the act for the Dissolution of the Monasteries. All Monasteries having incomes less than £200, were "given to the King." A few of the smaller Abbeys, some 32 in number, were free from stain, and were permitted to survive. This was the result of the *first* Visitation. Two years later, in 1538, fresh investigations demonstrated that the larger houses also were irregular and corrupt. Then all the shrines of Saints in Cathedrals, Abbeys, and Chapels were demolished, so that by the year following nothing was left to denote the presence of the Saints, but the names of the churches. In 1539 the Dissolution of the Monasteries was rendered complete by a second act of Parliament. Monastic life, which had flourished for a thousand years in England, then came to an end, and the Abbeys became the property of the King, and many of them were granted by him to his courtiers and leading statesmen. According to a curious old rhyme, the following noble families came in for a share of the spoils:—

"Hopton, Horner, Smyth, Knocknaile and Thyme—
When Abbots went out, they all came in."

Some of the Abbots met with a tragic fate. For example, in 1530, the Abbots of Colchester, Reading and Gladstonebury were tried and executed, for concealing or making away with the abbey plate, and for treason to the government. In Queen Mary's reign certain of the monasteries were revived, but in 1559, Elizabeth's reign, they were again dissolved. In the same year the Scotch Abbeys were dissolved, and those of Ireland.

The number of Monastic establishments confiscated under Henry VIII. was enormous—in England (according to Hume) 647 monasteries, 90 colleges, 2374 chapels or chantries, and 110 hospitals, whose revenue amounted to £161,100—one twentieth of that of the entire Kingdom. In Ireland. Archdale's "Monasticon" enumerates 1788 monasteries which suffered a like fate. And, besides, some 250 Abbots who sat in Parliament, representing Abbeys, lost their places. The ecclesiastical wreck was complete.

The fall of the monasteries entailed with it the fall of the Craft of Operative Masons. There were no more splendid Abbeys to be constructed. Gothic Architecture itself came to be considered a symbol of popery, and fell into disgrace with the monks who had been its patrons. The Craft became disbanded; the secrets of the Gothic art, of which they had been the discoverers, and conservators for several centuries, were to a large degree lost also, and to this day remain a mystery. The architects of to-day cannot match the works of their predecessors of four centuries ago. Operative Masonry, as taught and practiced by tyled lodges, thus became gradually extinct, and in connection with it, and directly from it, there were developed the Speculative Masonry that is now practiced and taught in Lodges of Freemasons. Enlightened by these facts, the reader can readily observe that modern Freemasons have reason to be proud of their ancestry.

We have finished our sketches of the Abbeys and Cathedrals of Great