

From the opening years of the 13th century, I must ask you to pass on to the middle of the 14th century, and to the famous Statutes by which the Church of England was then legally freed from the power of the usurper at Rome. The third Edward, the hero of the battles of Crecy and Poitiers, sat on the English throne. In A. D. 1315, the "Statute of Provisors" was passed: this was followed in A. D. 1353, 1365, and 1393, by the successive "Statutes of Præmunire." By these Statutes the Bishop of Rome was forbidden to appoint to any bishopric, or other ecclesiastical preferment in England. These Statutes also prohibited the carrying of any suits to the Roman court, and forbade, under penalty of confiscation of property and perpetual imprisonment, any one to procure from Rome, or elsewhere outside of England, any appointments, bulls, excommunications, or the like.

Thus, as has been observed, in *theory* the Roman yoke was cast off in England in the middle of the 14th century; but *practically* two things were needed to carry out the theory.

First, the removal of the popular superstition that, after all, the Bishop of Rome had a sort of divine right over all the Churches of Christendom.

Secondly, a King bold enough and strong enough to break with the triple tyrant, to say and to act on his words:

"That no Italian priest shall tithe or toll in our dominions."

As to the first, the illusion was dispelled in the 15th century: the prestige of Rome was broken by the vices and quarrels of the Bishops of Rome, by the removal of the Papal Court to Avignon, where for more than 70 years the Bishops of Rome were mere puppets of the French king; and by 50 years of rival Popes cursing and excommunicating one another. The illusion was further dispelled in the latter half of the 15th century by the revival of learning, and by the increased study of Holy Scripture.

As to the second, it needed only a bold King to take the first step. In the overruling providence of God, who maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him, Henry VIII. was the man for the hour.

As to Henry the Eighth's character, we need not trouble ourselves: it was about as bad as it could be, notwithstanding Froude's white-