

beat the Puritans. These men had a great contempt for ceremony. They are said to have attended the conference in their dressing gowns instead of their academicals, a fact which naturally caused some ridicule on the part of the well dressed and properly robed dignitaries who confronted them.

Archbishop Whitgift was at this conference, but was too old and feeble to take much part in it. The real leader throughout was Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London. The Puritans moved for certain changes to be made in the Prayer Book, and although what they wished for was not granted, yet some improvements were made in the liturgy on motion of the Church party, such as special thanksgivings, and the addition in the catechism of the last part, relating to the sacraments. The king dismissed the conference with much dignity and ability, showing in his concluding speech an earnest desire for peace and good will.

On the whole, the Church party had much to be thankful for in this conference; yet the aged Archbishop was ill at ease. He saw that a desperate struggle would some day be sure to take place between the two great elements in the Church, which every attempt at conciliation seemed only to drive further and further asunder. Preparations were being made for a parliament, the probable results of which made the poor old man tremble. But he was destined never to see it. He caught cold on the river a few days after the conference, and died on the last day of February, 1604. In every sense of the word a good man, his departure from the world was regretted by all sorts and conditions of men within the Anglican Church.

His successor in the Archbishopric was not hard to find. He had virtually been chosen long before the vacancy really occurred, and Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, was soon notified of his appointment to the important post. His father was a gentleman of Farnmouth, in Lancashire, where he was born in 1544. At Oxford, where he graduated, he became famous as a tutor and also as a preacher, his eloquence being of a high order. He received several livings and preferments in the Church and was actively engaged in controversies with the Puritans, whom he regarded as disturbers in Israel. For some reason or other, promotion towards the last came rather slowly. At the age of 53 he was made Bishop of London, in which capacity he was an able assistant to Archbishop Whitgift.

He was sixty years old when, by the death of his much valued friend, he succeeded to the primacy. Though every one looked to him as the man best suited for the position, it was several months before the appointment was made. He was not nominated till the month of October, 1604. He was officially confirmed in the Archbishopric on December 10th.

The new Archbishop began to rule with a firm hand. He had the Church party, which was then in the majority over the Puritans, at his back, and, therefore, felt secure in putting forth very stringent measures regarding the clergy. Every one holding a living was required to sign a paper declaring his unreserved belief in the king's supremacy and the Thirty-nine Articles, and his cheerful readiness to use the Book of Common Prayer in the public services of the Church. These were enforced without the authority of parliament and caused a great deal of ill-feeling, both on the part of the Roman Catholics and the Puritans. Some of the Puritan clergy threw up their livings and left England for the continent, but there many of them found that they had as many doctrinal difficulties of another kind to face as those which had caused them to abandon their native land.

King James showed a strong disposition to rule without a parliament, with the advice only of a select council known as the Star Chamber. This desire on the part of the king was fostered by the Archbishop in order to carry out the measures which, according to his judgment, were for the benefit of the Church. All this produced great rancour and resentment, not only on the part of the Puritans, but also among the Papists. It was at this time that all England stood aghast at the discovery of the "Gunpowder Plot," one of the most fiendish attempts to destroy the leading powers of a country probably ever designed; and when Guy Fawkes was dragged from among the barrels of gunpowder, which had been placed under the parliament buildings by Robert Catesby and others who entered into the atrocious scheme, for the purpose of blowing up the king, lords, and commons of England, the feelings of the nation were those of mingled indignation and dismay. It has been the fashion to attribute the discovery of this diabolical plot to the sagacity of King James himself, but modern investigation has failed to discover sufficient proof of this. A letter addressed to Lord Monteagle, desiring him not to be present in parliament at the fatal moment determined upon, led to its discovery. This letter is still in existence, and may be seen in the State Paper Office.

The head of the Roman Church in England at that time was a priest named George Blackwell, who condemned this plot as "a detestable and damnable practice, odious in the sight of God, horrible to the understanding of men"; but this disclaimer did not prevent most stringent measures being passed by an indignant parliament against all "Papists" throughout the realm. These, however, were much mitigated through the influence of Archbishop Bancroft, who took a merciful view of the case. Had he been equally lenient towards the Puri-