



DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND AGRICULTURE.

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**NOTICE.**

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**KING JOHN'S QUARREL WITH POPE INNOCENT III.**

In the year 1205, when King John, the only English king of the name, was on the throne, Hubert, the Primate of England, died. The junior canons of Canterbury met secretly the night of his death, and elected their sub-prior, Reynold, to the vacant position. The Archbishop of Canterbury installed him in the Archiepiscopal throne before midnight, and before dawn he was on his way to Rome to solicit the Pope's confirmation of his election. When King John heard of this transaction he was greatly enraged, secured the election of the Bishop of Norwich to the primacy, and also sent agents to Rome to plead his cause before the Pope.

Innocent III., one of the most ambitious and powerful occupants of Peter's chair, saw in this disagreement a chance to increase his own power by placing a man of his own nomination in the coveted position, and through his influence and that of the bishops and priests under him, virtually govern England from Rome. He therefore annulled both elections and made his own nominee, Cardinal Langton be chosen to the See of Canterbury, at that time, next to the Papal throne, the most important dignity in the Roman Church.

King John saw the danger, knowing well that if the Pope were permitted to appoint to the See of Canterbury, the next step would be to appoint kings to the English throne; he protested with many oaths that the Pope's nominee should never sit in the Archiepiscopal chair, turned the canons of Canterbury out of doors, ordered all the prelates and abbots to leave the kingdom, and bade defiance to the Pope. The latter was not to be defied in this manner, and smote England with an interdict—the king had offended, and the whole nation must be punished along with him.

In these days there are many whom a papal interdict would not trouble much, but in England in these days of superstitious beliefs, it was aimed with tremendous power. The

Rev. Dr. Wylie, in the "History of Protestantism," describes the effect of the curse as follows:—

"The men of those times, on whom this doom fell, saw the gates of heaven locked by the strong hand of the Pontiff, so that none might enter who came from the unhappy realm lying under the papal ban. All who departed this life must wander forlorn as disembodied ghosts in some doleful region, amid unknown sufferings, till it should please him who carried the keys to open the closed gates. As the earthly picture of this spiritual doom, all the symbols of grace and all the ordinances of religion were suspended. The church doors were closed; the lights at the altar were extinguished; the bells ceased to be rung; the

education upon him, deposing him from his throne and absolving his subjects from allegiance. This could not be accomplished without the aid of an armed force, and Philip Augustus, King of France, was selected to carry out the Pope's behest, the Kingdom of England being offered to him under the condition that he conquered it for his holiness. Philip did not relish the conditions under which he was to gain the kingdom, but the prize was too rich to be idly spurned, and he collected a mighty armament to cross the channel and invade England.

This last blow subdued the stubborn king, he craved an interview with the Pope's legate, Pandolf, and promised to submit himself unreservedly to the Papal See, engaging to make

This took place in May 1213. But England was not as craven as its king, and in April, 1215, the barons began their efforts to wipe off the disgrace their monarch had inflicted on the country. They appeared before King John at Oxford, and presented the charter, which they said, "consecrates the liberties confirmed by Henry II., and which you also have sworn to observe." The king stormed. "I will not," said he, "grant you liberties which would make me a slave." He forgot that he had already made himself a slave to Rome. But the barons were not to be beaten, and on June 15th, 1215, John signed the Magna Charta at Runnymede. This was in effect to tell Innocent that he revoked the vow of vassalage, and took back the kingdom he had laid at his feet.

When tidings of this unprecedented transaction were carried to Rome, Innocent instantly launched an anathema against these impious and rebellious men, and at the same time inhibited the King from carrying out or in any way fulfilling the provisions of the charter. This did not satisfy him, for in this great charter he recognized the inauguration of a new order of political ideas and a class of political rights entirely antagonistic to the fundamental principles of the Papacy, and fulminated a bull on the authority of his commission as set by God over the kingdoms, "to pluck up and destroy, to build and to plant," by which he annulled and abrogated the charter, declaring all its obligations and guarantees void. But the barons remained firm, and their bold stand saved the independence of the nation. Innocent went to the grave; feeble men followed him in the papal chair; the Kings of England mounted the throne without taking the



KING JOHN AND THE POPE'S LEGATE.

crosses and images were taken down and laid on the ground; infants were baptized in the church porch; marriages were celebrated in the churchyard; the dead were buried in ditches or in the open fields. No one durst rejoice, or eat flesh, or shave his beard, or pay any decent attention to his person or apparel. It was meet that only signs of distress and mourning and woe should be visible throughout a land over which there rested the wrath of the Almighty, for so did men account the ban of the Pontiff."

For two years King John remained unmoved while his country lay under this terrible curse, but at the end of that time was met by a personal punishment which troubled him more. The Pope pronounced sentence of excommuni-

full restitution to the clergy for the losses they had suffered, and "resigned England and Ireland to God, to St. Peter, and St. Paul, and to Pope Innocent, and to his successors in the apostolic chair." He also agreed to hold his dominions as feudatory of the Church of Rome by the annual payment of a thousand marks, and worse yet, stipulated that if he or his successors should infringe this agreement, unless they repented on being admonished, they should forfeit all right to their dominions. When this had been settled, John, it is said, took off his crown and laid it at the legate's feet, and the latter to show the mightiness of his master spurned it, kicking it about as a worthless bauble; and then picking it up placed it on the Monarch's head.

oath of fealty, and at last the annual payment of a thousand marks as Peter's Pence was quietly dropped, no remonstrance against its discontinuance coming from Rome. Thus it was that what was considered the greatest evil to England was turned into good; for the charter forced from John at Runnymede is yet the foundation of English liberties, and it marks the time when England began to pay little attention to Rome, and less and less, until the Roman Church was neither consulted nor thought of in connection with matters affecting the country alone.

"He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; He also will hear their cry and save them."—The Worders of Prayer.

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