

shown by the fate of Hubert de Burgh, Gaveston, Despensers, Michael de la Pole, and many others.

But the Reformation, (as poor, simple, illiterate men call it,) brought as great a revolution in civil government as it did in the religious order. Laymen, then, for the first time, began to perform all the offices of government, and then, indeed, did men see such a crowd of favorites jostling and pulling and elbowing each other in the race for offices as the world never before had even dreamt of in the courts of kings. Look at the favorites of Queen Elizabeth's time, an infinite swarm, and an unprincipled withal. Look at the quarrels, contentions and slanders that filled that unfortunate court. This man chief favorite to-day, to be supplanted to-morrow, through the plots of his less fortunate rivals. Plots and counter-plots. Impeachments and arraignments for treason and sendings to the block, till men became more accustomed to human blood spilled by the axe of the executioner, than to bullocks' blood shed through the axe of the butcher.

And yet men will say of this change, of this reformation, "that 'twas a glorious victory."

Were we in our sober senses to ask the question, whether the 1st of January is New Year's Day? it is quite possible that we should be accused of "having a screw loose," or "a slate off," or of "being light in our upper story," or some other of those thousand and one euphisms by which society designates the state of insanity. And yet New Year's Day is a fact concerning which the learned have grave doubts; but, then, what subject is there under the sun about which the learned have not the gravest doubts? It was a Philosopher who first declared that the highest wisdom was to know how very little one knows. Doubtless, this is the reason of the highly refined doubting powers of the learned. Be that, however, as it may, the Jewish, the Egyptian and the Greek calendars did not place the commencement of their year at our starting point; nay, even our Catholic ecclesiastical year commences on the First Sunday in Advent, some four weeks previous to our popular New

Year's Day. In fact, as far as the 5,000 years of our world's existence is concerned, our January is a comparatively modern institution, having been devised by the clerical Numa Pompilius for his own good and sufficient reasons: no doubt. And if neither the Jewish, nor Egyptian, nor Greek, nor Christian ecclesiastical New Year's Day is on the first of January, neither is the legal. It is a curious fact, worthy of remembrance, that it was not until the year 1752 that the legal New Year's Day was coeval with our popular one. Previous to that year, the legal year commenced most unaccountably on the 21st March, and this day is actually yet the commencement of the Financial Year. Connected with this, there is a curious fact. Our old history books tell us that King Charles I. of England had his head cut off on the 30th January, 1648 or '49. Now what does that mean? Can it be possible that History is uncertain a whole year as to the date of so important and melancholy an event? By no means. It merely means to say that popularly Charles I. was beheaded in 1649,—legally in 1648.

Mr. Spurgeon has been lecturing in England on *candles*. If a curious, it is also a light subject. I think I have somewhere read of a certain Saxon King, whose Mamma, in his childhood, used to whip him, when he was naughty, with a candle. This may, by an easy transition, have led to the modern Anglo-Saxon punishment for naughty boys of being sent to bed *without a candle*. We were speaking just now of Charles I., and naturally enough, Mr. Spurgeon's "Candle Lecture" brings to recollection (what a mysterious thing memory is!) the fact that on the night preceeding his execution, which the King passed at St. James', the royal bed-chamber was dimly illuminated, *not by lamp or candle*, much less by *gas*, but by a great *cake of wax* set in a silver basin. Of course there must have been a wick to the "great cake of wax," and thence it was after all nothing but a candle, though a quaint one and a curious withal. But curious as King Charles' candle undoubtedly was, and suggestive of the monarch's fast expiring days, it was not half so curious nor half so quaint as