

some of them very glaring, yet great as they were, they must not hinder us from rightly estimating the immense service she rendered to Protestantism and the Reformation. She had an unflinching conviction that Protestantism would be the strength and elevation of her kingdom. She heartily abhorred the Pope's assumption, and never wavered in her belief that Popery fettered the understanding, and if she did not carry reform to the full extent of her convictions, it was from a desire to avoid every just occasion of offence to any part of her subjects, a policy of expedience as unwise then as now. This was soon apparent by the appearance of Popish intrigue, plotting and treason.

The stringent laws made for the punishment of these practices, combined with the events which followed, constituted the Queen champion of Protestantism. She allied herself to the King of Scotland for its maintenance in the North; also to the Protestants of France during the third civil war of that unhappy country, and she espoused the cause of the Netherlands when they could no longer endure the tyranny of Spain and Italy, furnished them with men and money and gave their exiles sanctuary.

Such conduct, of course, was very displeasing to the Pope and all his party both at home and abroad. We are not, however, to suppose that this was the first cause of alienation. From her youth up, as heir apparent to the throne, the Pope had regarded her with jealousy and suspicion. When at her accession to the Throne she wrote Karns to inform the Pope of the fact, the reply of His Holiness was an insult: "England is a fief of the Holy See, and it is great temerity on the part of Elizabeth to have assumed without my participation the title and authority of Queen, nevertheless I am willing to be indulgent. [Well, that was kind of him, was it not?] I have a right to punish this criminal invasion of my authority, but still I will open to her the door of grace if she will renounce all right and title to the crown." We cannot but think his indulgence was soon followed with exactation.

He sent an embassy with that famous letter of tenderness and affection, beginning "To our most dear daughter in Christ, Elizabeth," and it went on to urge her to cast herself and people into his paternal arms. But his smile of affection and tears of sympathy were lost on Elizabeth. She had seen such crocodile tears and mock sympathy before, and did not appreciate either one or the other. So the Pope changed his plan, if not his purpose. He would put her under the ban, he would excommunicate her, he would depose her from the throne, and relieve all her subjects of their allegiance. He did not content himself long with mere threatening, for by and by the red-hot thunderbolt came, that fearful artillery that had so often made nations to quake and tremble, and bowed the hearts of the stoutest kings. It had, however, little effect at this time, and this courageous woman with the whole nation stood unmoved. One John Felton took the bull and affixed it to the gates of the palace of the Bishop of London, by which he made himself amenable to the penalties for conspiring against the Queen's supremacy, and such was the temper of the London populace he was immediately seized, soon tried and suffered for his temerity.

This bull was coupled with the celebrated minute of the Pope's Council, which granted a full and plenary pardon to any one who would assault the Queen, or to any cook, brewer, baker, vintner, grocer, surgeon, physician, or person of any other calling who would make way with her life. She was thus fairly under the ban, and was lawful prey to the worst passions and greatest villains of the world. This bull and celebrated minute of council caused no end of plotting and intrigue, and the Queen was no sooner free from one attempt upon her life, than another one was preparing. Her numerous escapes can be accounted for only by the merciful interposition of God.