

CARDINAL POLE.

The London Athenaeum, in a review of the third volume of "The Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," by the Dean of Chichester, which has just been published in London, gives the following interesting sketch of Cardinal Pole:—

We have said that Pole was of royal blood when his grandfather Clarence, brother of Edward the Fourth and Richard the Third, was drowned in a butt of Malmsey—or in the Thames in a Malmsey butt—he left two children, the little Earl of Warwick and the Lady Margaret—the latter so well known to us as the ill-fated Countess of Salisbury. Henry the Seventh murdered the little Earl to get rid of a pretender, and Lady Margaret was married to a Welshman, Richard Pole, who persuaded his princess that he was descended from Cardinal Beaufort. Of this couple, Reginald was one of the children, born in 1500. The family was looked upon at Court with that sort of dislike which poor relations are said to be looked on by their richer kinsfolk, of whom they are the inevitable heirs. Queen Katharine, indeed, would willingly have seen in Reginald the future husband of her daughter Mary. "Such a marriage," says Dr. Hook, "was regarded as possible by Pole himself, and to this circumstance we may trace some of the inconsistencies of his career. It is to be remarked that even when he was created a Cardinal, Pole declined to be made a priest." Meanwhile, Pole went through school and university with credit, travelled, wrote a book, and signalled his authorship by never writing so good a book as his first, the life of Longo. When he returned, a man from the travel and sojourn on the Continent which he had begun as little more than a boy, he was of spare body, fresh complexion, of rather a broad face, but with eyes which showed the gentleness of his disposition, but which, we may add, often belied it, and as often belied in their apparent truthfulness the want of veracity which distinguished Pole on more than one occasion. This last defect did not spring—not always at least—from mere impulse or blindness of discernment, but was adopted deliberately when needed. State papers now for the first time betray the fact that Pole's acts and Pole's words were often at variance. Dr. Hook proves, moreover, that after Pole attained to power, he was one of the cruellest men of his time. In mercilessness to Protestants he surpassed Gardiner, who has suffered much misrepresentation in this matter.

Reginald was not even in orders when Henry the Eighth made him an offer of the Archbishopric of York. It was a princely place for one of quasi royal birth, but not being hereditary, it did not lift the Pole family nearer to the throne. Moreover, it was a bribe, by which Henry, or his agent, hoped to bind Pole to the King's party in the question of the divorce from Katharine. Reginald, however, declined to commit himself; and he lost the Archbishopric, but not altogether, as yet, the regard or seeming regard of the King. At all events, he remained unmolested, perhaps because he gave at least a tacit assent to the King's supremacy. However, furnished with princely means, Pole repaired to Italy, where he gathered around him the noblest, the subtlest, the most free, the most orthodox, the most inquiring, the most doubting, and the most intellectual spirits of the time.

Dr. Hook says, and says truly we think, that at first the tendency of Pole's moral and intellectual character was towards Protestantism, but that "through hostility to Henry he became a Papist." This latter name is almost invariably used by the author as the best one to distinguish a partisan who is not merely a Catholic. But Pole was, in spirit at all events, with those who would have reformed the Church without removing its spiritual head at Rome. Only a short time had elapsed since a preaching Dean in the Papal chapel had placed Christ on a level with Phocion, Epaminondas, Aristides, and Socrates. Zeus Pater and God the Father were to him the same beings under different names. In Apollo and Esculapius he saw types of the Son. If Jesus died on the cross for the good of mankind, Decius and Curtius sacrificed themselves for the good of their country, and there were Queens of Heaven—Diana, Venus, Minerva, Juno—before Mary was raised to that dignity and the Father was practically dethroned! Altogether, it may be said that a man with his eyes resolutely shut could not help seeing the necessity for a reform. Pole had discerned that necessity; but he had learnt to hate the turn which events had taken in England more than he could deplore the corruption of the Church of the Papacy. At Venice (as we learn from the Simancas papers) Pole confided to the Imperial Envoy, Zorzoza (A. D. 1534) his political plans and aspirations; and Zorzoza recommended the Emperor not to refuse the services of a man who was near the blood royal of England, who was in correspondence with persons in that country who were planning an insurrection there, and who, with aid from the Emperor, might place England itself under the feet of Charles!

It is certain that at this time Pole was professing neutrality to Henry; but he speedily threw off that affectation. He flung a thunderbolt into his native kingdom, in the shape of that famous piece, "De Unitate," in which, like M. Ledru Rollin, he asserted the sacred right of insurrection, as part of a dissatisfied people, against the sovereign and his Government. In this publication, Pole spared no one who stood before him as an adversary—nothing that might be an obstacle in his path. "He broke down the floodgates by which his violent and vindictive feelings had been hitherto dammed up. The torrent of his indignation and wrath knew no bounds." If Pope and Emperor would but join hands, England would be theirs; and Pole evidently cared little what devastation might be spread, as long as he and his party stood upright in the general wreck.

Rome noted as offensively as she could just then—that is to say, when Pole went thither he was received with royal honors, as if he had been the rightful heir of England. A Cardinal's hat was put upon the head that had not yet even received the ordinary clerical tonsure, which intimates a man designed for the clergy. The cardinal on this occasion was less pleased than the emperor, who now considered a union between a cardinal and the Princess Mary of England impossible; but Cardinal Pole was not in holy orders, and though the marriage by which his ambition would have been gratified was, perhaps, a less probable event than before, yet dispensations had not been refused under similar circumstances. Circumstances, however, began to look grave. Pole undertook to go, as Papal Legate, to Flanders, to confer there with insurgent agents on the best means for carrying a revolution in England to a successful issue. Among his baggage—and he travelled like a king—was a Papal proclamation to be published in London on the insurrection being

triumphant. The Pope approved it, and the people were exhorted to obey his Legate, on the grounds of his office, his merits, and his high birth. A letter was also addressed to James the Fifth of Scotland, almost commanding him to give that countenance and support to the English insurgents which none could give so effectually as the King of Scotland. Other letters were addressed to other potentates. They all betrayed the primary object in Pole's mind—the utter subjection of England to the Papacy. Here follows an excellent specimen of the author's manner of narrating events which he portrays character.

"Notwithstanding the remonstrance from the lords and others of the king's council, Pole was still in high spirits. He knew that fifteen lords had conspired to put down the Reformation, that among others the Nevilles had been in the field, and that the western counties were as much excited as the northern. He expected to be summoned to England almost as soon as he had entered France. He little understood the power of intellect and of will which belonged to the great prince on whom he had heaped unmerited abuse, and whom he had ventured to lecture as a school-boy. At no time in a long reign was the vigor of Henry's policy and character so conspicuous as it was at the present. With a considerable portion of his subjects in open insurrection, with discontent murmuring in every corner of the land, with Scotland and all Europe in arms against him, with scarcely a minister whom he could trust or from whom he could seek advice, except Cromwell; so quietly, but so decisively, did Henry overpower all resistance, that until lately, when the State papers were opened to the public, no historian, certainly no reader, was aware of the dangers to which his government was at this time exposed, or how near the insurgents were to conceiving the resolution of Henry, the precaution united with violence which he displayed, the amount of labor he endured, and the anxiety he could not always conceal, are worthy of all admiration. The noiseless success is an indication of a genius which, in its proud consciousness of strength, wished for no display; and the political wisdom is worthy of notice, by which he avoided all appearance of triumph, and so left the impression on the public mind that the insurrection, instead of being a subject of alarm, was simply a succession of riots, to be treated with contempt and easily quelled."

For a long and weary period after this, Pole was a mere conspirator destined to meet only disappointment. Henry was excommunicated, Pole was outlawed, and each might have been assassinated with the eulogy of the assassin's respective employer. Frigate agitation, knocking at half the royal gates in Europe, to aid in the overthrow of England, all came to naught. Pole became depressed, but his spirits rose when he heard of that cruel slaying of his mother, the Countess of Salisbury, on the scaffold. She perished in her innocent old age, as her little brother Warwick had perished in his innocent youth. But Pole left it to be understood that his mother had been murdered because of her religious opinions, whereas she was sentenced for treasonably, it was said, corresponding with her son. The execution, however, was at best a judicial murder. When Pole thanked God for the martyrdom of his mother, he was himself a Papist only in discipline; he believed in justification by faith, and was something of a Protestant as Dr. Garth was a Christian, without knowing it. On the subject of Papal supremacy, Pole was a fanatic, papist, ultramontane, Italian, un-English, but his fingers' ends. It is well known that when justification by faith came before the Council of Trent, Pole withdrew; as he had hitherto believed in it, but he accepted the opposite conclusions pronounced by the Council.

He has been roundly abused for withdrawing, but Dr. Hook generously, and, as we hold, successfully, defends the Cardinal at this difficult juncture.

Reginald had long to wait before that opportunity came by which he profited and briefly triumphed. When he addressed Edward the Sixth, as a royal cousin, he only met with contempt; and when he missed being elected as Pope, he lost an opportunity which for a moment was very valuable to England. When Mary ascended the throne, he recognized the hour, and felt—that was a mistake—that he was the irresistible and indispensable man. The Pope and Cardinals, it should not be forgotten, celebrated the death of the young king as the gaining of a victory. With all this, Pole had difficulty in obtaining access to England. Many parties wished him absent; some feared danger to himself by his presence. At length, intrigues were overcome, and the Cardinal and Papal Legate, after a progress which was oriental in splendor, although the splendor was kept under lest susceptibilities should be alarmed, reached Gravesend.

"The royal barge was lying before Gravesend, waiting the legate's command. It was splendidly decorated; and the legate, a nobleman seated on which his most reverend lordship might exhibit himself to the people without incurring unbecoming notice, was surrounded by a large silver cross of the legate appeared on the pier. The passing scene was splendid. A multitude of vessels were waiting for a signal to escort the legate up the river, from the quay to the nobleman to the hackney boat of the artisan. By the rapidity of the stream and the strength of the rowers, the barge had reached the front of Whitehall before any one was aware of its approach. It had been arranged that Pole, on his passage to Lambeth, should pay his respects, in passing, to the king and queen, and that the king had calculated that he would not arrive before dinner was over; and he had now come when the officials were in the midst of their repast. The rowers ceased to pull; they looked to the legate, and he, before he could decide what was to be done, the Lord High Chancellor was seen at the head of the pier. His own carriage was ordered; and the king, of foreign court, received the legate with reverence, making a low obeisance, as if at once to admit his superior rank. The arrangements had been, under his direction, so admirably made, that the servants, though taken by surprise, immediately fell into their places; and between a lane of liveried servants standing on either side the Lord High Chancellor of England, the legate of Rome now passed in friendly conversation. At a little distance, at the entrance of the palace, they saw the king approaching, surrounded by his courtiers. The king and the legate embraced. Philip descended to explain, that he and the queen were seated at the dinner-table, when the shoutings of the people attracted their attention, and the king had not a moment in hurrying to the river's side to welcome so honored a guest. Philip offered his arm to support the legate, and he, as they approached the grand staircase, at the top of which, surrounded by her ladies, the queen was seen standing, impatient to welcome her kinsman. She received him with a salute on his neck, and in the manner at that time peculiar to England; she conducted him to the arrival of the legate, and he, immediately ordered to be held, and a procession was formed to the Great Hall. The king having taken the legate at the queen's right hand, and motioning the legate to take the left, said pleasantly in Latin: 'We will place the queen between us; when Pole, protected by the queen, replied, 'You are thus doubly protected, the king and I representing the majesty of the emperor on the one side, and I representing his holiness the pope on the other.' He then directed the king's attention, of the wonderful mercy shown to the legate, and the prayers which he offered; and the queen, we are told, answered in many wise and prudent words, she explained to him, in their own language, the many reasons which had compelled her to postpone his arrival; to which the legate politely but very delicately replied that the delay was to be ascribed

to the overruling of Providence, that he might be able to say, as he said now, *Benedictus fructus carnis caris*. Having received the presence chamber, the three great porphyry canopies, which were being used by one another for a quarter of an hour. One by one the members of the legation were presented to their majesties by Lord Paget. They kissed hands and were graciously received. When the cardinal took his departure, notwithstanding his polite remonstrance, the queen insisted upon his sending him to the top of the stairs, where she had first met him. The king went with him to the door. The Bishop of Winchester, the Duke of Alva, and the nobility, both English and Spanish, accompanied him to his barge at the head of the pier. The bishop, indeed, entered the barge with him and crossed the water. He put the legate in possession of Lambeth, which had been splendidly furnished at the queen's expense, the rooms being hung with costly tapestry."

Soon, there followed the humiliating scene in which Queen, King Philip, and Parliament took part—since there being taken for consideration, on the nation, asking pardon of the Pope, Cardinal Pole declared it reconciled to the Holy See. Later, in 1554, by aid of Parliament, the act was passed by which the neck of Popery was fixed crushingly on the neck of England, but not, as it was supposed, forever. Speedily thereafter commenced that bloody persecution of Protestants which changed all loyal feeling towards the Queen, on the part of Anglo-Catholics (as distinguished from Ultramontanes) as well as of Reformers, into feelings of fear or detestation. Within three days, in March, 1554, as soon as Cranmer was burnt, Pole was ordained, consecrated, and consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, for her share in the new order of things, the extirpation of heresy, "Sometimes fifty poor wretches were left for execution, when the judge quitted an assize town." After all, Rome was not satisfied, for the Pontiff complained that Pole, who miserably failed in trying to play Cardinal Wolsey, was more careful of Spanish interests than he was of the Papacy. Pole, not being sufficiently servile to Rome, was smitten with a charge of heresy. Some faint trace of English spirit exhibited by Pole and the Queen caused this storm to blow over; but Rome remained as ready to insult the sovereign and the nation as if these had not fallen prostrate, and placed their heads beneath its feet.

"In fact, Paul the Fourth troubled himself no further in the matter, and Pole was contented to let things remain as they were. But notwithstanding this, the charge of heresy was not withdrawn; the storm being blown over, he was treated as a reputed heretic was never revoked. He who in England was condemning heretics to the stake, was aimed at Rome, in the furnace he heated for others, or almost he heated himself. So deeply did Pole feel, and so indignantly did he resent the injury, that he composed a treatise in Latin, in which he poured forth in a language to which his malignant passions would impel him when he went forth, pen in hand, to meet an adversary. It can be understood, therefore, why he should have been so anxious to have the treatise; and we are impressed with the depth and sincerity of his religious convictions, when we are invited to share in the same feelings. He thought of the curse which Ham had incurred (Gen. ix. 22-26), and saying, 'I will not discover my father's nakedness, nor will I bear the curse which he has incurred; but the truth, though often overlooked, cannot be concealed, that it was Reginald Pole's own conduct, and not that of his mother, that the majority of those persecutions for religious opinions took place which have attached forever the epithet of the 'bloody' to her name, and covered her reign with ignominy and disgrace.'"

"For these, and a host of other iniquitous proceedings, the Dean of Chichester holds Pole responsible. He gives both the narrative and his reasons at considerable length. Dr. Hook has also something to say in mitigation of judgment; at least on the Queen:—"So dear to our hearts are the interests of common sense and of the rights of humanity, that we are haughty for heresy; so vigilant were our fathers in their zeal for the rights of property that many a starving peasant has been consigned to the gallows for sheep stealing; so sacred are the game laws that men are still destroyed like vermin who cannot be made to understand that the rights of property extend only to the land, and not to the game as being wild. 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