

SOME NEW BOOKS.

Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex.

A successful attempt to portray a man who played a great part in the history of the Church of England is made in the two volumes collectively entitled Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell by ROGER BIRLOW...

When we consider the evidence and power to which Thomas Cromwell rose it is astonishing how little accurate knowledge we have concerning his birth and early years. We know not certainly where and when he was born. In view, however, of his probable age at the time of his accession...

That Thomas Cromwell had a quarrel with his father which caused him to leave England when a boy is pronounced probable. Bandello's statement that he came to Italy, "leaving from his father," and Chapuys's assertion that he was ill-begotten when young, together with the many entries in the Rolls concerning his father's tempestuous and disorderly conduct...

Another of the martyrlogist's stories strengthens the theory that Cromwell was in Antwerp some time after the battle on the Garigliano. According to Foxe, Geoffrey Chambers was sent to Rome as a representative of the Guild of Our Lady in St. Botolph's Church in Boston...

doubt that Cromwell had at least become known to Wolsey, but no other mention of Cromwell in connection with the Cardinal occurs till 1523, when he drafted a petition to Wolsey in Chancery for a client.

After the year 1521 there is no further mention of Thomas Cromwell as a cloth merchant and wool-dyer. He had now become a successful solicitor and lawyer, was rapidly advancing in favor and intimacy with Cardinal Wolsey. In the beginning of 1525, Wolsey recognized that he had in Cromwell an agent capable of being trusted with the performance of a work near the Cardinal's heart, namely, the destruction of some of the smaller monasteries...

It is well known that in October, 1529, Cardinal Wolsey lost the King's favor, and fell into disgrace. He was forced to give up the Great Seal, to resign his office of acknowledging writs, to forfeit most of his lands, possessions and offices, and to retire to his seat at Esher. Being on Cavendish, his biographer, Cromwell has been represented by Shakespeare and by Froide as faithful to his fallen master, usefully and exclusively devoted to his interests.

When Cromwell entered the King's service as a member of the Council, as he seems to have done immediately after Wolsey's death, the situation of England, both at home and abroad, was one of the most critical in the history of the Government with Rome were strained, owing to Henry's proceedings in the divorce of Queen Katherine, and both France and Spain might become foes at any moment.

When he came in contact, and in his manner, behavior and expression varied accordingly. No one knew better how and when to flatter than Thomas Cromwell; on the other hand, no one could be more harsh and cruel than he when he was in a position to dictate. If once he knew himself to be completely master of the situation, he became contemptuous and overbearing.

At this small fee he was highly civilized reason. Of his good taste and love of beautiful things there are many evidences. There is extant a long and complimented correspondence with his friend Stephen Vaughan about an iron chest of very curious workmanship which he wanted for his house at Austin Friars, a chest so expensive that Vaughan was almost afraid to buy it.

Another way in which Cromwell's fundamental characteristic evinced itself was through his utter lack of emotion. It was this quality which enabled Cromwell to look on his contemporaries as mere machines, as if they were items in an account, or to send people to trials of which the verdict had been determined beforehand, as for example, the Abbess of Reims, to be sent down, to be tried and executed at Reims.

From the close of the year 1532 until his fall the entire domestic administration of England was in Cromwell's hands. From the moment that he entered the King's service, he had definitely committed himself to the policy which he was to follow to the end of his days. His own theory of internal government, the conditions of the Tudor monarchy and the situation of the realm at the time of his accession to power...

of the Exchequer had followed in 1533. Cromwell became Principal Secretary to the King in 1534, Master of the Rolls in the same year, Vicar-General and Visitor-General of the Monasteries in January, 1535, Lord Privy Seal, Vice-gerent of the King in Spirituals in July, 1536. He was also created Baron Cromwell of the latter in August, 1537. During the last seven years of his Ministry, he had granted to him no less than nineteen minor offices, through which his income must have been very greatly increased.

When Cromwell entered the King's council, the King's attitude toward him was that of a man who had been brought to the King's notice by the people at large, and whose real position should be generally known. The efforts which Henry and his Minister made to conceal the identity of the true author of the sweeping changes of the years 1530-34 bear testimony as to the fact that they were both perfectly aware of the opposition the new measure must arouse in the minds of those who were outside the court circles.

At the very time, however, when he thought himself secure in his most exclusive enjoyment of his master's favor, Cromwell took a measure which was destined to conduce directly to the formidable rising in the northern counties known as the Pilgrimage of Grace. The moment Cromwell as Vicar-General, sent out his agents to visit the monasteries, the country Englishmen began to realize that the puzzling changes of which he had hitherto understood but little, were going to have an important and disagreeable effect on his whole life.

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As a reward for his success in the management of domestic affairs, the King conferred on him the many dignities and titles which in 1538 mark the height of his power. He had been raised to the office of Privy Councillor, Master of the Jewels, Clerk of the Hanaper, and Master of the King's Wards in 1531 and 1532. The Chancellorship of the Exchequer had followed in 1533.

alliance for which he had labored hard, Cromwell ambed himself for a time with a feeble plan for gaining Italian friends against the Pope, and proposed the league with the Dukes of Ferrara, Mantua and Urbino, but the princes of Northern Italy were too weak, and the scheme was abandoned. Cromwell's real interest in it was as soon as the King again consented to approach the Lutherans.

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to forgive. In spite, however, of the efforts made by his enemies to compass his ruin, Cromwell managed to avert the catastrophe until the end of May, 1540. There was even a temporary and ostensible reconciliation between him and the most dangerous of his foes, Gregory, Bishop of Winchester. As we have previously noted, on April 18, those who had prophesied the fall of the King's Minister were amazed by his being created Earl of Essex and Great Chamberlain of England. During the month of May it became evident that the ground under Cromwell's feet was being cut away, and on June 10 he was arrested and committed to the Tower.

The only man who dared to say a word to the King on Cromwell's behalf was Cranmer. He pleaded in vain. The fallen Minister was not even permitted a trial in which he could be heard in his own defence. That terrible engine of extra legal destruction, the attainder, by which so many of his enemies had been annihilated, was used as a swift and sure means to send him to the block. The act of Parliament which attained him was read in the House of Lords just one week after his arrest, and was quickly passed. He was condemned to suffer as a heretic at the King's pleasure, and to forfeit all property held since March 31, 1538.

The latest edition to the "English Men of Letters" series is a volume of some two hundred pages devoted to George Eliot by LESLIE STEPHEN (Merriman). It may be remembered that Mr. Herbert Spencer lately pointed out in "Facts and Comments" that George Eliot, whom he knew long and well, now holds a lower place in popular esteem than she occupied during her lifetime, and that he added that, in his opinion, she would eventually be rated higher than she is today.

George Eliot herself believed that a work of art not only may, but must, exercise also an ethical influence. Mr. Stephen is disposed to think that, so far as an influence is exerted on the reader, it is due to the last rather to the personality of the novelist. In other words, from reading George Eliot's novels we are influenced in the same way as we should be by an intimacy with George Eliot herself. "We feel," he says, "that the writer with whom we have been in contact possessed a singularly wide and reflective intellect, a union of keen sensibility with a thoroughly tolerant and a desire to appreciate the good and pardon the evil in the human mind."

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don," but, if not handsome, he had the power to induce companions to forget any such defects. Lewes had been married eleven years, and in 1841 was living in the same house with Thornton Hunt, who had created a wretched party in connection with him. Mrs. Lewes performed a service to Hunt by her husband, an incident that led to a break-up of his family. In those days a legal divorce was impossible for an Englishman who had not money or influence enough to procure the passage of a special act of Parliament. George Eliot held that the circumstances justified her in forming a union with Lewes, which she considered as equivalent to a legitimate marriage.

There is no doubt as Mr. Stephen testifies, that George Eliot's relation to Lewes was serious enough in her sense of the word. It lasted through their common lives, and their devotion to each other was unlimited and appears only to have strengthened with time. She never misses an opportunity of expressing her affection for her "husband," or her gratitude for the blessings due to his devotion. Lewes expressed his personal feelings with equal emphasis. In a journal of 1852, speaking of a walk with Mr. Herbert Spencer, he recalls how Mr. Spencer's friendship had roused him from indifference to fresh intellectual interest and adds: "I owe Spencer another and a deeper debt. It was through him that I learned to know Marian—to know her as I love her—and since then my life has been a new birth. To her I owe all my prosperity and all my happiness. God bless her!"

It is certain that Lewes looked up to George Eliot as in her own life an entirely superior being, the front rank of contemporary genius. Their house became a temple of domestic worship, in which he was content to be the high priest of the presiding deity. He stood as much as possible between her and all the worries of the outside world. He transacted her business, wrote her letters, kept her from the knowledge of unpleasant criticism, read all her books with her as they were composed, made suggestions and occasional criticisms, but, above all, encouraged her by hearty and sincere praise during the fits of depression to which she was constitutionally liable.

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