

**A HISTORY  
OF THE PROTESTANT  
REFORMATION**

**LETTER SIX**



**By William Cobbett**

**1825**

**A HISTORY  
OF THE  
PROTESTANT "REFORMATION"  
IN  
ENGLAND AND IRELAND**

**Showing how that event has impoverished and degraded  
the main  
body of the People in those Countries**

**IN A SERIES OF LETTERS**

**Addressed to all sensible and just Englishmen**

**BY WILLIAM COBBETT.**

**LONDON**

**PRINTED AND PUBLISHED  
BY CHARLES CLEMENT  
No. 183, FLEET STREET**

**AND**

**SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS AND NEWSMEN.  
PRICE THREE-PENCE EACH NUMBER.**

**1825**

**Entered at Stationer's Hall**



**A HISTORY  
OF THE  
PROTESTANT REFORMATION  
LETTER VI**

**Confiscation of the Monasteries.  
Base and cruel Means of doing this  
The Sacking and Defacing of the Country  
Breaking up the Tomb of Alfred  
More Wives divorced and killed  
Death of the - Miscreant Cromwell  
Death of the Tyrant himself.**

**By William Cobbett**

**Kensington, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1823**

**Dear Friends,**

**165.** At the close of the foregoing Letter, we saw the beginning only of the devastation of England, in the present Letter, we shall see its horrible progress, as far as there is time for that progress during the reign of the remorse, is tyrant Henry VIII. We have seen in what manner it obtained the first act for the suppression of Monasteries; that is to say, in reality, for robbing the proprietors estates, and also the poor and the stranger. But, I must give a more full and particular account of the Act of Parliament itself, before I proceed to the deeds committed in consequence of it.

**166.** The Act was passed in the year 1536, and in the 26th year of. the King's reign. The preamble of an Act contains the reasons for its enactments; and, as this Act really began the ruin and degradation of the main body of the people of England and Ireland; as it was the first step taken, in legal form, for robbing the people under pretence reforming their religion; as it was the precedent on which future plunderers proceeded, until they had completely impoverished the country; as it was the first of that series of deeds of rapine, by which this formerly well-fed and Well clothed people have, in the end, been reduced to, and to a worse than jail allowance of food, I will insert its lying and villainous preamble at full length. Englishmen in general suppose, that there were always poor-laws and paupers in England. They ought to remember, that, for nine hundred years, under the Catholic religion, there were neither. They ought, when they hear the fat parson cry "no-popery" to answer him by the cry of "no pauperism". They ought, above all things, to endeavour to ascertain, how it came to pass, that this land of roast-beef was changed, all of a sudden, into a land of dry bread, or of oatmeal porridge. Let them attend, then, to the

base and hypocritical pretences that they will find in the following preamble to this atrocious act of pillage.

**167. Forasmuch** as manifest synne, vicious, carnal and abominable lying dayly used and committed commonly in such little and small Abbeyes, Priories and other Religious Houses of Monks, Canons and Nuns, where the Congregation of such Religious Persons is under the Number of twelve Persons, whereby the Governors of such Religious Houses, and their Convent, spoyle, destroye, consume and utterly waste, as well their Churches, Monasteries, Priories, principal Farms, Granges, Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments, as the Ornaments of their Churches, and their Goods and Chattels, to the high Displeasure of Almighty God, Slander of good Religion, and to the great Infamy of the King's Highness and the Realm, if Redress should not be had thereof.

**And** albeit that many continual Visitations hath been of heretofore had, by the Space of two hundred years and more, for an honest and charitable Reformation of such unthrifty, carnal and abominable Living, yet nevertheless, little or none Amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious Living shamelessly increaseth and augmenteth, and by a cursed Custom so rooted and infected, that a great Multitude of the Religious Persons in such small Houses do rather choose to rove abroad in Apostacy, than to conform themselves to the observation of good Religion so that without such small Houses be utterly suppressed, and the Religious Persons therein committed to great and honourable Monasteries of Religion in this Realm where they may be compelled to live religiously for Reformation of their Lives, the same else be no Redress nor Reformation in that Behalf.

**In Consideration whereof**, the King's most Royal Majesty, being supreme Head on earth under God, of the Church of England, dayly studying and devysing the Increase, Advancement and Exaltation of true Doctrine and Virtue in the said Church, to the only Glory and Honour of God, and the total extirping and Destruction of Vice and Sin, and having Knowledge that the Premises be true, as well as the Accompts of his late Visitations, as by sundry credible Informations, considering also that divers and great solemn Monasteries of this Realm, wherein (Thanks be to God) Religion is right well kept and observed, be destitute of such full Number of Religious Persons, as they ought and may keep, hath thought good that a plain Declaration should be made of the Premises, as well to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, as to other his loving Subjects the Commons, in this present Parliament assembled:

**Whereupon** the said Lords and Commons, by a great Deliberation, finally be resolved, that it is and shall be much more to the Pleasure of Almighty God, and for the Honour of this his Realm, that the Possessions of such small Religious Houses, now being spent, spoiled and wasted for Increase and Maintenance of Sin, should be used and committed to better uses, and the unthrifty Religious Persons, so spending the same, to be compelled to reform their Lives.

**168.** This preamble was followed by enactments, giving the whole of the property to the king, his heirs and assigns, to do and use therewith according to their own wills, to the pleasure of Almighty God, and to the honour and profit of this realm. Besides the lands and houses and stock, this tyrannical act gave him the household goods, and the gold, silver, jewels, and every other thing belonging to those monasteries. Here was a breach of **MAGNA CHARTA** in the first place; a robbery of the monks and nuns in the next place; and, in the third place, a robbery of the indigent, the widow, the orphan and the stranger. The parties robbed, even the actual possessors of the property were never heard in their defence; there was no charge against any particular convent; the charges were loose and general, and levelled against all convents, whose revenues did not exceed a certain sum. This alone was sufficient to show, that the charges were false; for, who will believe, that the alleged wickedness extended to all whose revenues did not exceed a certain sum, and that, when those revenues got above that point, the wickedness stopped? It is clear, that the reason for stopping at that point was, that there was yet something to be done with the nobles and gentry, before a seizure of the great monasteries could be safely attempted.

The weak were first attacked, but means were very soon found for attacking and sacking the remainder.

**169.** The moment the tyrant got possession of this class of the Church estates, he began to grant them away to his assigns, as the act calls them. Great promises had been held out, that the king, when in possession of these estates, would never more want taxes from the people; and it is possible, that he thought, that he should be able to do without taxes; but, he soon found, that he was not destined to keep the plunder to himself; and that, in short, he must make a sudden stop, if not actually undo all that he had done, unless he divided the spoil with others, who, instantly poured in upon him for their share, and they so beset him that he had not a moment's peace. They knew that he had good things; they had taken care to enable him to have assigns; and they, as they intended from the first would give him no rest, until he, to the pleasure of Almighty God and to the honour and profit of the realm, made them those "assigns".

**170.** Before four years had passed over his head, he found himself as poor as if he had never confiscated a single convent so sharp-set were the pious reformers, and so eager to "please Almighty God." When complaining to Cromwell of the rapacity of the applicants for grants, he claimed, By our Lady, the cormorants, when they have got the garbage, will devour the dish. Cromwell reminded him, that there was much more yet to come. "Tut, man," said the king, "my whole realm would not stanch their maws." However, he attempted this, very soon after, by a seizure of the larger monasteries,

**171.** We have seen, in paragraph 167, that the parliament when they enabled him to confiscate the smaller monasteries, declared, that, in the great and solemn monasteries (thanks be to God) religion is right well kept and observed. It seemed, therefore, to be a work of some difficulty to discover (in so short a time after this declaration was made) reasons for the confiscation of these larger monasteries. But tyranny stands in need of no reasons; and, in this case, no reasons were alleged. Cromwell and his myrmidons beset the heads of these great establishments; they threatened, they promised, they lied, and they bullied. By means the most base that can be conceived, they obtained from some few what they called a voluntary surrender. However, where these unjust and sanguinary men met with sturdy opposition, they resorted to false accusations, and procured the murder of the parties, under pretence of their having committed high treason. It was under this infamous pretence that the tyrant hanged and ripped up and quartered the Abbot of the famous Abbey of Glastonbury, whose body was mangled by the executioner and whose head and limbs were hung up on what is called the torre which overlooks the abbey. So, that the surrender, wherever it did take place, was precisely of the nature of those "voluntary surrenders" which men make of their purses, when the robber's pistol is at their temple, or his blood-stained knife at their throat.

**172.** After all, however, even to obtain a pretence of voluntary surrender was a work too troublesome for Cromwell and his ruffian visitors, and much too slow for the cormorants who waited for the plunder. Without more ceremony, therefore, an act was passed (31 Hen. VIII. chap. 13.) giving all these "surrendered" monasteries to the king, his heirs and assigns, and also **ALL OTHER MONASTERIES**; and all hospitals and colleges into the bargain! It is useless to waste our time in uttering exclamations or in venting curses on the memory of the monsters, who thus made a general sacking of this then fine, rich and beautiful country, which, until now, had been, for nine hundred years, the happiest country, and the greatest country too, that Europe had ever seen.

**173.** The carcass being thus laid prostrate, the rapacious vultures, who had assisted in the work, flew on it, and began to tear it in pieces. The people, here and there, rose in insurrection against the tyrant's satellites; but, deprived of their natural leaders, who had, for the most part, placed themselves on the side of tyranny and plunder, what were the mere common people to do? **HUME** affects to pity the ignorance of the people (as our stock-jobbing writers now affect to pity the ignorance of the country people in Spain) in showing their attachment to the monks. Gross

ignorance to be sure, to prefer easy landlords, leases for life, hospitality and plenty; gross ignorance and superstition to prefer these to grinding rack-rents, buying small beer at Bishop's palaces, and living on parish pay. We shall see, shortly, how soon horrid misery followed these tyrannical proceedings; but, we must trace Cromwell and his ruffians in their work of confiscating, plundering, pillaging and devastating.

**174.** Tyrants have often committed robberies on their people; but, in all cases but this, in England at least, there was always something of legal process observed. In this case there was no such thing. The base parliament, who were to share, and who did most largely share, in the plunder had given not only the lands and houses to the tyrant, or, rather, had taken them to themselves; but had disposed, in the same short way, of all the moveable goods, stock, on farms, crops, and, which was of more consequence, of the gold, silver and jewels. Let the reader judge of the ransacking that now took place. Poorest of the convents had some images, vases, and other things, of gold or silver. Many of them possessed a great deal in this way. The altars of their churches were generally enriched with the precious metals, if not with costly jewels; and, which is not to be overlooked, the people, in those days, were honest enough to suffer all these things to remain in their places, without a standing army and without police officers,

**175.** Never, in all probability, since the world began, was there so rich a harvest of plunder. The ruffians of Cromwell entered the convents; they tore down the altars to get away the gold and silver; ransacked the chests and drawers of the monks and nuns; tore off the covers of books that were ornamented with the precious metals. These books were all in manuscript. Single books had taken, in many cases, half a long life-time to compose and to copy out fair-whole libraries, the getting of which together had taken ages upon ages and had cost immense sums of money, were scattered abroad by these hellish ruffians, when they had robbed the covers of their rich ornaments. The ready money, in the convents, down to the last shilling, was seized. In short, the most rapacious and unfeeling soldiery never, in town delivered up to be sacked, proceeded with greediness, shamelessness and brutality to be at all compared with those of these heroes of the Protestant Reformation; and this, observe, towards persons, women as well as men, who had committed no crime known to the laws, who had had no crime regularly laid to their charge, who had had no hearing in their defence, a large part of whom had, within a year, been declared, by this same parliament, to lead most godly and useful lives, the whole of whose possessions were guaranteed to them by the Great Charter as much as the kings' crown was to him, and whose estates were enjoyed for the benefit of the poor as well as for that of these plundered possessors themselves.

**176.** The tyrant was, of course, the great pocketeer of this species of plunder. **CROMWELL** carried or sent it to him in parcels, twenty ounces of gold at one time, fifty ounces, at another; now a parcel of precious stones of one sort, then a parcel of another. **HUME**, whose main object is to blacken the Catholic religion, takes every possible occasion for saying something or other in praise of its destroyers. he could not, he was too cunning, to ascribe justice or humanity to a monster whose very name signifies injustice and cruelty. He, therefore, speaks of his high spirit, his magnificence and generosity. It was a high-spirited, magnificent and generous king, to be sure, who sat in his palace, in London, to receive with his own hands the gold, silver, jewels, and pieces of money, of which his unoffending subjects had been robbed by ruffians sent by himself to commit the robbery. One of the items runs in these words:

**ITEM**, "Delivered unto the king's royal Majesty, the same day, of the same stuffe, foure chalices of golde, with foure patens of golde to the same; and a spoon of golde, weighing all together an hundred and six ounces. Received: **HENRY REX.**"

**177.** There are high-spirit, magnificence, and generosity amongst the stock of this "generous prince's" pawnbroker's shop; or, rather, his store-house of stolen goods, were images of all sorts, candlesticks, sockets, cruets, cups, pixes, goblets, basons, spoons, diamonds, sapphires, pearls, finger-rings, and-rings, pieces of money of all values, even down to shillings, bits of gold and

silver torn from the covers of books, or cut and beaten out of the altars. In cases where the wood work, either of altars, crosses, or images, was inlaid with precious metal, the wood was frequently burnt to get at the metal. Even the Jew-thieves of the present day are not more expert at their trade than the myrmidons of **CROMWELL** were. And, with these facts before us; these facts, un-denied and undeniable; with these facts before us, must we not be the most profound hypocrites that the world ever saw; must we not be the precise contrary of that which Englishmen have always been thought to be, if we still affect to believe, that the destruction of the shrines of our forefathers arose from motives of conscience?

**178.** The parcel of plunder, mentioned in the last paragraph but one, brought into this royal Pea chum, was equal in value to about eight thousand pounds of money of the present day; and that parcel was, perhaps, not a hundredth part of what he received in this way. Then, who is to suppose that the plunderers did not keep a large share to themselves? Did subaltern plunderers ever give in just accounts? It is manifest that, from this specimen, the whole amount of the goods of which the convents were plundered, must have been enormous. The Reforming gentry ransacked the Cathedral Churches, as well as the Convents and their Churches. Whatever pile contained the greatest quantity of the same stuffe seemed to be the object of their most keen rapacity. Therefore, it is by no means surprising, that they directed, at a very early stage of their pious and honest progress, their hasty steps towards Canterbury which, above all other places, had been dipped in the "manifeste synne" of possessing rich altars, tombs, gold and silver images, together with "manifestly synneful" diamonds and other precious stones. The whole of this city, famed as the cradle of English Christianity, was prize; and the "Reformation" people hastened to it with that alacrity, and that noise of anticipated enjoyment, which we observe in the crows and magpies, when flying to the spot where a horse or an ox have accidentally met with its death.

**179.** But there were, at Canterbury, two objects by which the "Reformation" birds of prey were particularly attracted; namely, the monastery of Saint Austin and the tomb of **THOMAS A BECKET**. The former of these renowned men, to whose preaching and whose long life of incessant and most disinterested labour England owed the establishment of Christianity in the land, had, for eight or nine centuries, been regarded as the Apostle of England. His shrine was in the monastery dedicated to him; and as it was, in all respects, a work of great magnificence, it offered a opulent booty to the plunderers, who, if they could have got at the tomb of Jesus Christ himself, and had found it equally rich, would, beyond all question, have torn it to pieces. But, rich as this prize was, there was a greater in the shrine of **THOMAS A BECKET**, in the Cathedral Church. Becket, who was Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of Henry II., who resisted that king, when the latter was manifestly preparing to rob the Church, and to enslave and pillage the people, had been held in the highest veneration all over Christendom for more than three hundred years, when the Reformation plunderers assailed his tomb; but especially was his name venerated in England, where the people looked upon him as a martyr to their liberties as well as their religion, he having been barbarously murdered by ruffians sent from the king, and for no other cause than that he persevered in resisting an attempt to violate the Great Charter. Pilgrimages were continually made to his tomb; offerings incessantly poured into it; churches and hospitals and other establishments of piety and charity were dedicated to him, as, for instance, the church of St. Thomas, in the City of London, the monastery of Sende, in Surrey, the Hospital of St. Thomas, in the Borough of Southwark, and things of that sort, in great numbers, all over the country. The offerings at his shrine had made it exceedingly rich and magnificent. A king of France had given to it a diamond, supposed to be the most valuable then in Europe. **HUME**, never losing sight of the double object of maligning the Catholic religion and degrading the English nation, ascribes this sort of half adoration of Becket to the craft of the priests and to the folly and superstition of the people. He is vexed to death to have to relate, that more than a hundred thousand pilgrims to Becket's shrine have been assembled at one time in Canterbury. Indeed! why, then, there must have been some people living in England, even in those old times; and those people must have had some wealth too; though, according to the whole tenor of the lying book, which the Scotch call our history, this was, at the time I am now speaking of, a poor, beggarly, scarcely inhabited country.

The city of Canterbury does not now contain men, women and children, all counted and well puffed out, more than twelve thousand seven hundred and twenty souls! Poor souls! How could they find lodging and entertainment for a hundred thousand grown persons! And this, too, observe, at the corner of the Island. None but persons of some substance could have performed such a journey. Here is a fact that just slips out side-ways, which is of itself much more than enough to make us reflect and inquire before we swallow what the Scotch philosophers are now presenting to us on the subjects of national wealth and population. And, then, as to the craft and superstition which **HUME** says produced this concourse of pilgrims. Just as if either were necessary to produce unbounded veneration for the name of a man, of whom it was undeniably true, that he had sacrificed his life, and that, too, in the most signal manner, for the rights and liberties and religion of his country. Was it folly and superstition, or was it wisdom and gratitude and real piety to show, by overt acts, veneration for such a man for The bloody tyrant, who had sent Moore and Fisher to the block, and who, of course, hated the name of Becket, caused his ashes to be dug up and scattered in the air, and forbade the future insertion of his name in the Calendar. We do not, therefore, find it in the Calendar in the Common Prayer Book; but, and it is a most curious fact, we find it in Moore's Almanac: in that almanac it is for this very year 1825; and thus, in spite of the ruthless tyrant, and in spite of all the liars of the "Reformation" the English nation has always continued to be just and grateful to the memory of this celebrated man.

**180.** But, to return to the Reformation robbers; here was a prize! This tomb of Becket was of wood, most exquisitely wrought, inlaid abundantly with the precious metals, and thickly set with precious stones of all sorts. Here was an object for "Reformation" piety to fix its godly eyes upon! Were such a shrine to be found in one of our churches now, how the swaddlers would cry out for another "Reformation"! The gold, silver, and jewels, filled two chests, each of which required six or eight men of that day (when the labourers used to have plenty of meat) to move them to the door of the Cathedral! How the eyes of **HUME'S** high-minded, magnificent, and generous prince must have glistened when the chests were opened! They Tied, I dare say, with the diamonds themselves. No robbers, of which we have ever had an account, equalled these robbers in rapacity, in profligacy, and in insolence. But, where is the wonder? The tyrant's proclamations had now the force of laws; he had bribed the people's natural leaders to his side; his will was law; and that will constantly sought plunder and blood.

**181.** The monasteries were now plundered, sacked, gutted; for, this last is the proper word, whereby to describe the deed. As some comfort, and to encourage us to endure the horrid relation, we may here bear in mind, that we shall, by-and-by, see the base ruffian, **CROMWELL**, after being the chief instrument in the plunder, laying his miscreant head on the block; but, to seize the estates and to pillage the churches and apartments of the monasteries was not all. The noble Buildings raised in the view of lasting for countless ages; the beautiful gardens; these ornaments of the country must not be suffered to stand, for, they continually reminded the people of the rapacity and cruelty of their tyrant and his fellow plunderers partakers in the plunder. How the a property in the estates was disposed of we shall see further on; but, the buildings must come down. To go to work in the usual way would have been a labour without end; so that, in most instances, **GUNPOWDER** was resorted to; and thus, in a few hours, the most magnificent structures, which it had required ages upon ages to bring to perfection, were made heaps of ruins, pretty much such as many of them remain even unto this day. In many cases, those who got the estates were bound to destroy the buildings, or to knock them partly down, so that the people should, at once, be deprived of all hope of seeing a revival of what they had lost, and in order to give them encouragement to take leases under the new owners.

**182.** The whole country was, thus, disfigured; it had the appearance of a land recently invaded by the most brutal barbarians; and this appearance, if we look well into it, it has even to this day. Nothing has ever yet come to supply the place of what was then destroyed. This is the view for us to take of the matter. It is not a mere matter of religion; but a matter of rights, liberties, real wealth, happiness and national greatness. If all these have been strengthened or augmented, by

the "Reformation" then we must not approve of the horrible means; but, if they have all been weakened, or lessened, by that "Reformation" what an outrageous abuse of words is it to call the event by that name! And, if I do not prove, that this latter has been the case; if I do not prove, clear as the day-light, that, before the "Reformation," England was greater, more wealthy, more moral, and more happy, than she has ever been since; if I do not make this appear as clearly as any fact ever was made to appear, I will be content to pass, for the rest of my life, for a vain pretender.

**183.** If I look at the county of Surrey, in which I myself was born, and behold the devastation of that county, I am filled with indignation against the ruffian devastators. Surrey has very little of natural wealth in it. A very considerable part of it is mere, heath-land. Its present comparative opulence is a creature of the fictitious system of funding. Yet this county was, from one end of it to the other, ornamented and benefited by the establishments which grew out of the Catholic Church. At Bermondsey there was an Abbey; at St. Mary Overy there was a Priory, and this convent founded that very St. Thomas's Hospital which now exists in Southwark. This Hospital also was seized by the ruffians, but the building was afterwards given to the City of London. At Newington there was an Hospital, and, after its revenues were seized, the master obtained a licence to beg! At Merton there was a Priory. Then, going across to the Sussex side, there was another Priory at Reigate. Coming again near the Thames, and more to the West, there was a Priory at Shene. Still more to the West there was an Abbey at Chertsey, At Tandridge there was a Priory. Near Guildford, at Send, there was a Priory. And, at the lower end of the county, at Waverly, in the parish of Farnham, was an Abbey. To these belonged cells and chapels at a distance from the convents themselves: so that it would have been a work of some difficulty for a man so to place himself, even in this poor, heathy county, at six miles distance from a place where the door of hospitality was always open to the poor, to the aged, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. Can any man now, place himself, in that whole county, within any number of miles of any such door? No; nor in any other county. All is wholly changed, and all is changed for the worse. There is now no hospitality in England. Words have changed their meaning. We now give entertainment to those who entertain as in return. We entertain people because we like them personally; and, very seldom, because they stand in need of entertainment. An hospital, in those days, meant a place of free entertainment; and not a place merely for the lame, the sick and the blind; and the very sound of the words, "Old English Hospitality" ought to raise a blush on every Protestant cheek. But, besides this hospitality exercised invariably in the monasteries, the weight of their example was great with all the opulent classes of the community; and thus, to be generous and kind was the character of the nation at large: a niggardly, a base, a money-loving disposition could not be in fashion when those institutions to which all men looked with reverence, set an example which condemned such a disposition.

**184.** And, if I am asked why the thirteen monks of **WAVERLEY**, for instance, should have had £967. 13s. 1d. a year to spend, making about four thousand pounds a year of the money of the present day, I may answer by asking, why they should not have had it? And, I may go on, and ask, why any body should have any property at all? Aye, but, they never worked; they did nothing to increase the nation's store? Let us see how this is. They possessed the lands of **WAVERLEY**, a few hundred acres of very poor land with a mill, and, perhaps, about twenty acres of very indifferent meadow-land, on one part of which, sheltered by a semicircle of sand-hills, their Abbey stood, the river Wey (about twenty feet wide) running close by the outer wall of the convent. Besides this they possessed the inappropriated tithes of the parish of Farnham, and a pond or two on the commons adjoining. This estate in land belongs to a **MR. THOMPSON**, who lives on the spot, and the estate in tithes to a **MR. HALSEY**, who lives at a distance from the parish. Now, without any disparagement to these gentlemen, did not the monks work as much as they do? Did not their revenue go to augment the nation's store as much as the rents of Mr. Thompson, or the tithes of Mr. Halsey? Aye, and which is of vast importance, the poor of the parish of Farnham having this monastery to apply to, and having for their neighbour a Bishop of Winchester, who did not sell small beer out of his palace, stood in no need of poor rates, and had never heard the horrid word pauper pronounced. Come, my townsmen of Farnham, you, who as

well as I have, when we were boys, climbed the ivy covered ruins of this venerable Abbey (the first of its order in England); you, who, as well as I have, when looking at those walls, which have out-lived the memory of the devastators but not the malice of those who still taste the sweets of the devastation you, who, as well as I, have many times wondered what an Abbey was, and how and why this one came to be devastated; you shall be the judge in this matter. You know what poor-rates are and you know what church-rates are. Very well, then, there were no poor-rates and no church-rates as long as Waverley Abbey existed and as long as Bishops had no wives. This is a fact wholly undeniable. There was no need of either. The Church shared its property with the poor and the stranger, and left the people at large to possess their own earnings. And, as to matters of faith and worship, look at that, immense heap of earth round the church, where your parents and my parents, and where our progenitors, for twelve hundred years, lie buried; then, bear in mind, that, for nine hundred years out of the twelve, they were all of the faith and worship of the monks of Waverley; and, with that thought in your mind, find if you can, the heart to say, that the monks of Waverley, by whose hospitality your fathers and my fathers were, for so many ages, preserved from bearing the hateful name of pauper, taught an idolatrous and damnable religion.

**185.** That which took place in Surrey, took place in every other county, only to a greater extent in proportion to the greater wealth and resources of the spot. Defacing followed closely upon the heels of confiscation and plunder. If buildings could have been murdered, the tyrant and his Plunderers would have made short work of it. As it was, they did all they could: they knocked down, they blowed up, they annihilated as far they could. Nothing, indeed, short of diabolical malice was to be expected from such men; but, there were two Abbeys in England, which one might have hoped, that even these monsters would have spared; that which contained the tomb of St. Austin and that which had been founded by and contained the remains of Alfred. We have seen how they rifled the tomb of St. Austin at Canterbury. They tore down the church and the Abbey, and with the materials built menagerie for wild beasts, and a Palace for the tyrant himself. The tomb of Alfred was in an Abbey, at Winchester founded by that king himself. The Abbey and its estates were given by the tyrant to **WRIOTHESLEY**, who was afterwards made Earl of Southampton, and who got a pretty good share of the confiscations in Hampshire. One almost sickens at the thought of a man capable of a deed like the destruction of this Abbey. Where is there one amongst us, who has read any thing at all, who has not read of the fame of **ALFRED**? What book can we open, even for our boyish days, that does not sound his praise? Poets, moralists, divines, historians, philosophers, lawyers, legislators, not only of our own country, but of all Europe, have cited him, and still cite him, as a model of virtue, piety, wisdom, valour, and patriotism; as possessing every excellence, without a single fault. He, in spite of edifices such as no other human being on record ever encountered, cleared his harassed and half-barbarized country of horde after horde of cruel invaders, who, at one time, had wholly subdued it, and compelled him, in order to escape destruction, to resort to the habit and the life of a herdsman. From this state of depression he, during a not long life, raised himself and his people to the highest point of happiness and of fame. He fought, with his armies and fleets, more than fifty battles against the enemies of England. He taught his people, by his example as well as by his precepts, to be sober, industrious, brave and just. He promoted learning in all the sciences; he planted the University of Oxford; to him, and not to a late Scotch lawyer, belongs "Trial by Jury"; Blackstone calls him the founder of the Common Law; the counties, the hundreds, the tithings, the courts of justice, were the work of **ALFRED**; he, in fact, was the founder of all those rights, liberties and laws, which made England to be what England has been, which gave her a character above that of other nations, which made her rich and great and happy beyond all her neighbours, and which still give her what she possesses of that pre-eminence. If there be a name under heaven, to which Englishmen ought to bow with reverence approaching towards adoration, it is the name of **ALFRED**. And we are not unjust and ungrateful in this respect, at any rate; for, whether Catholics or Protestants, where is there an Englishman to be found, who would not gladly make a pilgrimage of a thousand miles to take, off his hat at the tomb of this maker of the English name? Alas! that tomb is no where to be found. The barbarians spared not even that. It was in

the abbey before mentioned called **HYDE ABBEY**, which had been founded by Alfred himself, and intended as the place of his burial. Besides the remains of Alfred, this abbey contained those of **ST GRIMBALD**, the Benedictine monk, whom Alfred brought into England to begin the teaching at Oxford. But, what cared the plunderers for remains of public benefactors. The abbey was knocked down, or blown up; the tombs were demolished; the very lead of the coffins was sold; and, which fills one with more indignation than all the rest, the estates were so disposed of as to make the loan-makers, the **BARINGS**, at this day, the successors of Alfred the Great!

**186.** **WRIOTHESLEY** got the manor of **MICHDELVER** and **STRATTON**, which, by marriage, came into the hands of the family of Russell, and, from that family, about thirty years ago, they were bought by the **BARINGS**, and are now in possession of **SIR THOMAS BARING**. It is curious to observe how this Protestant "Reformation" has worked. If it had not been, there would have been no paupers at **MICHELDEVER** and **STRATTON**; but, then the **RUSSELLS** would not have had the estates, and they could not have sold them to the **BARINGS**; aye, but then there would have been, too, no national debt, as well as no paupers, and there would have been no loan-makers to buy the estates of the **RUSSELLS**. Besides this, there would have been no bridewell erected upon the precise spot where the abbey-church stood; no tread-mill, perhaps, over the very place, where the ashes of Alfred lay; and, what is more, there would have been no need of bridewell or tread-mill. It is related of **ALFRED**, that he made his people so honest, that he could hang bracelets up by the way side, without danger of their being touched. Alas! that the descendants of that same people should need a tread-mill! Aye, but, in the days, of **ALFRED** there were no paupers; no miserable creatures compelled to labour from month's end to month's end without seeing meat; so thousands upon thousands made thieves by that hunger, which acknowledges no law, human or divine.

**187.** Thus, then, was the country devastated, sacked and defaced; and I should now proceed to give an account of the commencement of that poverty and degradation, which were, as I have pledged myself to show, the consequences of this devastation; and which I shall show, not by bare assertions nor from what are called "histories of England"; but, from acts of parliament, and from other sources, which every one can refer to, and the correctness of which is beyond all dispute. But, before we come to this important matter, we must see the end of the ruffian "Vice-Regent," and also the end of the tyrant himself, who was, during the events that we have been speaking of, going on marrying, and forcing, or killing, his wives; but, whose career was, after all, not very long.

**188.** After the death of Jane Seymour, who was the mother of Edward VI., and who was the only one of all the tyrant's wives who had the good luck to die a queen, and to die in her bed; after her death, which took place in 1537, he was nearly two years hunting up another wife. None, certainly, but some very gross and unfeeling woman could be expected to have, voluntarily, any thing to do with a man, whose hands were continually steeped in blood. In 1539 he found, however, a mate in **ANNE**, the Sister of the **DUKE OF CLEVES**. When she arrived in England, he expressed his dislike of her person; but he found it prudent to marry her. In 1540, about six or seven months after the marriage, he was divorced from her, not daring in this case; to set his myrmidons to work to bring her to the block. There was no lawful pretence for the divorce. The husband did not like his wife: that was all: and this was alleged too as the ground of the divorce. **CRANMER**, who had divorced him from two wives before, put his irons into the fire again for this occasion; and produced, in a little time, as neat a piece of work as ever had come from the shop of the famous "Reformation" Thus the king and queen were single people again; but, the former had another young and handsome wife in his eye. This lady's name was **CATHARINE HOWARD**, a niece of the **DUKE OF NORFOLK**. This Duke, as well as most of the old nobility, hated **CROMWELL**; and now was an opportunity of inflicting vengeance on him. **CROMWELL** had been the chief cause of the king's marriage with **ANNE OF CLEVES**; but, the fact is, his plundering talent was no longer wanted, and it was convenient to the tyrant to get rid of him.

**189. CROMWELL** had obtained enormous wealth, from his several offices, as well as from the plunder of the church and the poor. He had got about thirty of the estates belonging to the monasteries; his house, or rather palace, was gorged with the fruits of the sacking; he had been made Earl of Essex; he had precedence of every one but the king; and he, in fact, represented the king in the parliament, where he introduced and defended all his confiscating and murdering laws. He had been barbarous beyond all description towards the unfortunate and unoffending monks and nuns; without such an instrument the plunder never could have been effected: but, he was no longer wanted; the ruffian had already lived too long; the very walls of the devastated convents seemed to call for public vengeance on his head. On the morning of the 10th of June, 1540, he was all powerful: in the evening of the same day he was in prison as a traitor. He lay in prison only a few days before he had to experience the benefit of his own way of administering justice. He had, as we have seen in the last Number, invented a way of bringing people to the block, or the gallows, without giving them any form of trial; without giving them even a hearing; but merely by passing a law to put them to death. This was what this abominable wretch had brought about in the case of the Countess of Salisbury; and this was what was now to fall on his own head. He lived only about forty-eight days after his arrest; not half long enough to enable him to enumerate, barely to enumerate, the robberies and murders committed under his orders. His time seems, however, to have been spent, not in praying God to forgive him for these robberies and murders, but in praying to the tyrant to spare his life. Perhaps, of all the mean and dastardly wretches that ever died, this was the most mean and dastardly. He, who had been the most insolent and cruel of ruffians, when he had power; was now the most devastatingly lavish and base. He had, in fact, committed no crime against the king; though charged with heresy and treason, he was no more a heretic than the king was; and, as to the charge of treason, there was not a shadow of foundation for it. But, he was just as guilty of treasons the Abbots of Reading, Colchester, and Glastonbury, all of: whom, and many more, he had been the chief instrument: in putting to death. He put them to death in order to get possession of their property; and, I dare say to get at his property, to get the plunder back from him, was one of the motives for bringing him to the block. This very ruffian had superintended the digging up of the ashes of Thomas a Becket, and scattering them in the air; and now, the people who had witnessed that, had to witness the letting of the blood out of his dirty body, to run upon the pavement, to be licked up by cats or dogs. The cowardly creature seeing to have had, from the moment of his arrest, no thought about any thing but saving his life. He wrote repeatedly to the king, in the hope of getting pardoned, but, all to no purpose: he had done what was wanted of him; the work of plunder was nearly over; he had, too, got a large share of the plunder, which it was not convenient to leave in his hands; and, therefore, upon true "Reformation" principles, it was time to take away his life. He, in his letters to the king, most vehemently protested his innocence. Aye; no doubt of that: but, he was not more innocent than were the butchered Abbots and Monks; he was not more innocent than any one out of those thousands upon thousands, whom he had quartered, hanged, burned, or plundered; and, amongst all those thousands upon thousands, there never was seen one, female or male, so complete a dastard as himself. In these letters to the tyrant, he fawned on him in the most disgusting manner; compared his smiles and frowns to those of God; besought him to suffer him to kiss his balmy hand once more, that the fragrance thereof might make him fit for heaven"! The base creature deserved his death, if it had only been for writing these letters. **FOX**, the Martyr man, calls this **CROMWELL**, the valiant soldier of the "Reformation/" Yes, there have been few soldiers to understand sacking better: he was full of valour on foraging parties; and when he had to rifle monks and nuns and to rob altars: a brave fellow when he had to stretch monks and nuns on the rack, to make them confess treasonable words or thoughts; but when death began-to stare him in the face, he was, assuredly, the most cowardly caitiff that ever died. It is hardly necessary to say, that this man is a great favourite of **HUME**, who deeply laments **CROMWELL'S** fate, though he has not a word of compassion to bestow upon all the thousands that had been murdered or ruined by him. He, as well as other historians quote, from the conclusion of one of **CROMWELL'S** letters to the king, these abject expressions:-

"I, a most woeful prisoner, am ready to submit to death, when it shall please God and your Majesty; and yet the frail flesh incites me to call to your grace for mercy and pardon of mine

offences. Written at the Tower with the heavy heart and trembling hand of your Highness's most miserable prisoner and poor slave, **THOMAS CROMWELL**. Most gracious prince, I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy!

That is the language of Fox's valiant soldier. Fox meant valiant, not in the field, or on the scaffold, but in the convent, pulling the rings from women's fingers, and tearing the gold clasps from books: that was the Protestant valour of the "Reformation." Hume says, that **CROMWELL** deserved a better fate. Never was fate more just or more appropriate. He had been the willing, officious, the zealous, the eager agent in the execution of all the tyrannical, sacrilegious, and bloody deeds of his master; and had, amongst other things, been the very man who first suggested the condemning of people to death without trial. What could be more just than that he should die in the same way? Not a tear was shed at his death, which produced on the spectators an effect such as is produced when the foulest of murderers expiate their crimes on the gallows.

**190.** During the seven years that the tyrant himself, survived this his cruel and dastardly Vicegerent, he was beset with disappointments, vexations and torments of all sorts. He discovered, at the end of a few months, that his new queen had been, and still was, much such another as **ANNE BOLEYN**. He, with very little ceremony, sent her to the block, together with a whole posse of her relations, lovers, and cronies. He raged and foamed like a wild beast, passed laws most bloody to protect himself against lewdness and infidelity in his future wives, and got, for his pains, the ridicule of the nation and of all Europe. He, for the last time, took another wife; but, this time, none would face his laws, but a widow; and she very narrowly escaped the fate of the rest. He, for some, years before he died, became, from his gluttony and debaucheries, an unwieldy and disgusting mass of flesh, moved about by means of mechanical inventions. But, still he retained all the ferocity and bloody-mindedness of his former days. The principal business of his life was the ordering of accusations, executions and confiscations. When on his deathbed every one was afraid to intimate his danger to him, lest death to the intimated should be the consequence; and he died before he was well aware of his condition, leaving more than one death-warrant unsigned for want of time!

**191.** Thus expired, in the year 1547, in the fifty-sixth year of his age and in the thirty-eighth of his reign, the most unjust, hard-hearted, meanest and most sanguinary tyrant that the world had ever beheld, whether Christian or Heathen. That England, which he found in peace, unity, plenty and happiness, he left torn by factions and schisms, her people wandering about in beggary and misery. He laid the foundations of immorality, dishonesty and pauperism, all which produced an abundant harvest in the reigns of his unhappy, barren, mischievous and miserable children, with whom, at the end of a few years, his house and his name were extinguished forever. How he disposed of the plunder of the church and the poor; how his successors completed that work of confiscation which he had carried on so long; how the nation sunk in point of character and of wealth; how pauperism first arose in England; and how were sown the seeds of that system of which we now behold the effects in the impoverishment and degradation of the main body of the people of England and Ireland; all these will be shown in the next Number: and shown, I trust, in a manner which will leave, in the mind of every man of sense, no doubt, that, of all the scourges that ever afflicted this country, none is to be put in comparison with the Protestant "Reformation"

## The End of Letter 6



**THE NEW CHRISTIAN CRUSADE  
CHURCH**

**CALLING THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN**

**At last the bible makes sense!**

**At last we know its meaning.**

**Its the book of the RACE**

**"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the  
Word of the Lord from Jerusalem"  
(Isaiah 2:3)."**

