

LIVES  
OF  
THE ENGLISH CARDINALS;

INCLUDING

HISTORICAL NOTICES OF  
THE PAPAL COURT,

FROM

NICHOLAS BREAKSPEAR (POPE ADRIAN IV.) TO THOMAS WOLSEY,  
CARDINAL LEGATE.

BY

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## BOOK THE FOURTH.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### CHRISTOPHER BAINBRIDGE, CARDINAL LEGATE.

**His Rise in the Church—becomes Master of the Rolls, Bishop of Durham, and Archbishop of York—His Negotiations—Katherine of Arragon—Objections to her Second Marriage—Necessity of having a Good Pope—Election of Pius III.—Designs of the King of France—The Bishop and the Spanish Ambassadors—Louis XII.'s Invasion of Italy—Julius II. and his Campaigns—League against Venice—Martial Cardinals—The Archbishop sent on a Mission to Italy—is created a Cardinal Legate—The Holy League—Papal Disasters—Opposition Council at Pisa—Ariosto and the Pope—Death of Julius—Patronage of Art—Leo X.—Pontifical Pageants—The Pope and Cardinal Bainbridge—Events in Rome during his Mission—His Letter to Henry VIII. denouncing the Bishop of Worcester—The Bishop causes him to be poisoned—Statements of William Burbank and Richard Pace.**

**C**HRISTOPHER BAINBRIDGE, or Bambridge, for the name is as frequently met in one form as in the other, was born at Hilton, near Appleby, in Westmoreland, and finished his education at Queen's College, Oxford. He studied for the Church, and having obtained holy orders, became rector of Allen, in the see of Bath. By the year 1486 he had contrived to secure three prebends in the cathedral of Salisbury. He continued in the performance of

these duties till 1495, when he took his degree of Doctor of Laws, and was elected provost of Queen's College. The flow of ecclesiastical patronage set in again a few years later; in September, 1503, he became a prebend in York; in December following he was elected dean. Before two years had elapsed he had added the deanery of Windsor to his preferments. Having thus found an avenue to the court, he shortly utilized it to the extent of securing for himself a seat in the Privy Council, and the appointment of Master of the Rolls.

An exalted career was now assured. In 1507 he was promoted to the rich see of Durham, and in the following year succeeded to the archbishopric of York; but the seizure of the throne by the duke of Gloucester was not more advantageous to him than it had been to his contemporary Morton: both suffered from Richard's abuse of power. Ample recompense, however, came after the usurper had been disposed of at Bosworth. Henry VII. not only appointed him his almoner, but appreciated his abilities as a statesman and a diplomatist, and entrusted him with important employments. The archbishop was sent on a mission to the emperor Maximilian, which he conducted so satisfactorily that he was engaged to proceed on another to Charles VIII., king of France. Henry scarcely felt his position secure, and needed a good understanding with the principal European powers; and this his almoner laboured to produce.

The conduct of Henry VII. to the daughter of the king of Arragon had been anything but creditable: it was occasioned solely by his disinclination

to refund her marriage portion when his son Arthur died.\* This created much ill feeling on the part of Ferdinand; but when the younger brother was proposed as her husband, the idea was favourably received both by Katherine and her father. The princess seems to have regarded her brother-in-law with a passion that excited the most intense hostility against any one who in the slightest degree opposed it. The person who first spoke of religious scruples was her Spanish confessor, without any communication with her husband or the privy council in England, King Ferdinand in Spain, or the papal court at Rome. The conscientious priest was recalled. Katherine hated him for having expressed such opinions. The Spanish ambassador, who had communicated them in his despatches, was also recalled; the princess hated him still more. After her second marriage, she was intent on making her father believe that she ruled paramount in England, and contrived to exercise the ambassadorial office till a new ambassador was appointed, keeping the king of Arragon under the impression that she was able to forward his policy.†

That Ferdinand intended making his son-in-law assist in his political schemes there cannot be a question, nor can there be the slightest doubt of his daughter's readiness to forward these before her

\* If Arthur had lived, and Henry VII. had fulfilled his intention of educating his younger son for the Church that he might be archbishop of Canterbury, the latter would, of course, have become a cardinal, a contingency that would probably have altered the course of history in a striking manner.

† "Archives of Simancas" (Bergenroth).

made as degrading as possible to the offenders ; but having endured it, they were restored to their privileges as princes and prelates.

During "the Cardinal of England's" stay in the city, that had now become not only the capital of the Christian world but the metropolis of art and learning, he enjoyed the fullest opportunities for observing the efforts of the enlightened pontiff who then wore the tiara for advancing both. The impulse there given to classical and oriental scholarship spread far and wide, and was not long before it manifested itself in England. The progress made in the arts of design by the liberal patronage and refined taste of Leo produced as large a measure of good in other countries, and though some little time elapsed before its advantages were fully developed, the impression became as lasting as it was beneficial.

There is a letter extant from Francis, marquis of Mantua, gonfalonier, dated 17th March, 1514, to the cardinal, thanking him for procuring him the king's favour, and desiring to present his majesty with a pair of the best horses in his stables.\* The marquis, on the 28th, wrote to the king of England, announcing that he had sent four horses.†

The cardinal grew dissatisfied with the want of consideration shown to his interests in England, and on the 18th of June, 1514, wrote a letter of complaint to the king, of injustice done to his servant, reminding him of his services.‡ On the 19th, the Pope writes to the king that the bishop of Worcester is to communicate his wishes to the king.§

\* "Letters and Papers," i. 767.

† Ibid., 773.

‡ Ibid., 827.

§ Ibid., 830.

That there was some intrigue going on in England against the cardinal, seems evident from a letter written by Fox to the Italian bishop of Worcester, at Rome, stating that the writer had seen the papal briefs sent by the Pontiff to express his desire for a general peace, and averring that the king is desirous of obliging the Pope in all things. He directs his correspondent to negotiate the business, as it would sooner in his hands come to good effect, than if left to be treated with great persons, "with their morose gravities, great pomp, ceremonies, and solemnities."

He says that the cardinal of York, so long the king's ambassador at Rome, cannot be sent as *legate à latere* either to the Emperor, or to England, without suspicion, and that the king is unwilling to admit such an official into England or Calais; therefore the Pontiff must provide, that in case he is sent as legate into Germany, he be not allowed to exercise that authority in places where the Emperor may be staying. It is also stated that the cardinal has announced an intention of the Emperor and the king to meet at Calais in May, where he intends to be in his legatine capacity.\*

On the 17th of the following December, Leo X. wrote to Henry VIII. to the effect that he understands the king's disinclination to permit the cardinal as legate to enter into pacific arrangements without the consent of the confederates. The Pontiff avers that he does not wish Bainbridge to abandon them, but to take away their hostility, and sow among them the seeds of peace; which he, the

\* "Letters and Papers," i. 708.

Pope, is enforced to do by his engagements to the Lateran council, and his obligations to promote the unity of Christendom; and as the holy purpose for which the king had recourse to arms has been secured, his Holiness hopes he will listen to proposals for an honourable peace.\*

So deeply interested was Leo in the subject, that he wrote again on the 19th, averring that he would not have sent a legate to England, if it could have been avoided; but that he is obliged, as a pastor, to fulfil the resolutions of the conclave. He requests the king will permit the cardinal of York to enter England, as he, the Pontiff, prefers him to any other person for that mission, which he has induced him to accept, though against his inclination. He will communicate the Pope's secret intentions regarding peace and war. He adds that he is under the impression that the king wrote to his predecessor to appoint the cardinal as legate.†

The bishop of Worcester addresses Henry on the 31st, but without any reference to the proposed legate. He merely announces the papal consecration of the sword and hat that the Pope had sent to the king.‡

The archbishop of York, as a member of the College of Cardinals, as well as of the diplomatic body, enjoyed the most favourable opportunities for seeing and knowing what was going on in Rome. Among other grand scenes daily enacted in that important theatre, he was present at the public reception by the Pope, of an embassy from the king of Portugal, then in high repute as a patron of geographical

\* "Letters and Papers," i. 709. † Ibid., 710. ‡ Ibid., 712.

discovery in the East, when the presents included a respectable menagerie—a huge elephant, a pair of leopards, a panther, &c. &c., which, with a stud of Persian horses, were paraded in procession through the city, preceded by a herald, till they reached the place in which his Holiness awaited them at one of the windows of his palace, when the elephant stopped, knelt, and bowed three times; finally, a vessel full of water having been brought for his refreshment, the monster filled his trunk, and scattered its contents among the spectators. There was a rhinoceros originally in the collection, but he had been accidentally killed while in course of shipment. The spectacle was made more sensational a week later, in the conservatory adjoining the pontifical palace, by a public display of the ferocity of some of the animals in taking their prey.

Other valuable gifts accompanied these, and the Pope was so gratified that he not only sent the donor the prized gift of a consecrated rose, but bestowed on his majesty all his newly acquired possessions, as well as all the countries that might be discovered; enrolled an amiable Portuguese queen among the saints, and some pious Portuguese colonists in Africa among the martyrs; lastly, granted him a considerable portion of the emoluments of his clergy, for the purpose of carrying on the war in Africa, together with the privilege of presentation to all ecclesiastical preferments in countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

We have already intimated that Cardinal Bainbridge had an episcopal colleague. Evidence came before him that this man, an Italian by birth, was



playing a double game, and he lost no time in acquainting his sovereign with what he had discovered. As the letter, besides its interest as an historical document, produced important results, we give it entire :—

*Cardinal Bainbridge to Henry VIII.*

“ Please it your Grace,—At sundry times heretofore I have written unto the same, the demeanours of sundry persons, that of duty should in word and deed be your Grace’s true and faithful subjects, which me seemed should have been looked upon, and hithertoward been little regarded by your Grace’s most honourable council. Albeit during the time of my abode here at this court, I neither can nor will desist to signify unto your Highness such things as I shall perceive that be dissonant either to your Grace’s honour or wealth of your realm. If my writing shall be regarded by your Grace and your said most honourable council, I shall be very glad ; if not, I shall most humbly beseech your Highness to accept my good mind, and to remember hereafter that as your true and faithful subject I did my duty in that behalf.

“ As touching my lord of Worcester, your Grace’s orator of late time, his secretary upon the dark night was met coming forth of the French king’s orator’s house, the bishop of Marsilia, with a torch-light borne behind him ; and where his way towards his master’s house lay straight by my gates, he went by the other way homeward by a secret back lane, a good space from thence : hereof is true and honest record. The said French orator