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Amongst the various figures, however, Cranmer holds the position of pre-eminence. Our Reformation in the sixteenth century may be described as having had four stages. During the first there is a movement intellectual and moral, but legislation does not intervene. This closes in 1529. In the second stage the fundamental feature is the assertion of Secular supremacy over Ecclesiastical administration; in the third it is the revision of ecclesiastical ordinances. The fiery interlude of Mary's reign leads to the fourth stage—in effect the confirmation of the two preceding in a recognised and established system. The Reformation becomes an accomplished fact. From that time the body ecclesiastical, as recognised by the State, alters very little in character; any vigorous reforming movements thereafter, the lines of which extend beyond the scheme of the Elizabethan settlement, tending to result in separation from the established organisation rather than in changes within it.

In the first of these four stages Cranmer does not appear. He belonged to the movement, but he had no active part in it. In the second stage the leading figures are Henry VIII. and Thomas Cromwell: Cranmer fluttering through it, sometimes encouraging, generally acquiescent, occasionally offering a somewhat ineffective resistance, never more than an influence. In the third he is the controlling character; not indeed displaying a vigorous mastery, but on the whole successfully maintaining a position which but for him would

assuredly not have been maintained at the time nor accepted—as it was—in the fourth stage, when he had already earned the martyr's crown. In these two stages, the second and third, the work of the Reformation was wrought, and the course shaped which it should take in the future. It is right, therefore, that his should stand as the representative name. The first stage is in this volume treated as an extended prologue; the fourth only as epilogue.

The telling of this story involves certain difficulties. An attitude of enthusiasm would be pleasant; but for the most part the subject forbids enthusiasm. To play the advocate for a party is easy; but with Henry and Cromwell, Cranmer and Gardiner, Northumberland and Mary Tudor to depict, it is in no wise easy to "nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice." It appears all but impossible to write of those times without yielding either to the Roman, the Anglican, or the Puritan bias. Till a comparatively recent period there was no hearing for any but the last school; of late years those Anglicans who reject the name of Protestant have held the field, save for some acute, if not always convincing, expositions of the Romanist point of view. It is hardly possible to make a single statement as to the beliefs, motives, intentions, or character of any one of our *dramatis personæ* which will not be quite honestly and quite flatly contradicted by the adherents of one or other of the three schools: so that the discovery of truth becomes a highly complicated process.

To this must be added a special perplexity—party terminology. Convenience brought about the practice of using the term Catholic as equivalent to Romanist,

and opposing it to the term Protestant. Then came a revival of "Catholic" in its wider and legitimate sense; but it was still maintained as a contrary to Protestant, the sense of which was narrowed till it became almost equivalent to Calvinist; and the two words have become party badges within a Church which is at once essentially Catholic in virtue of its continuity, and essentially Protestant in virtue of its Reformation.

I have attempted in these pages to revert to a legitimate use of these terms. The primary antagonism is between the Romanists, who maintained the papal authority, and the Protestants, who rejected it. The secondary antagonism is between the Catholics, who maintained the authority of tradition and the early Fathers, and the Puritans, who held by the words of Scripture. The Catholic may be either Romanist or Protestant. The Protestant may be either Puritan or Catholic. The mutually exclusive terms are, Romanist and Protestant, Puritan and Catholic.