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HENRY VIII



SIR RICHARD SOUTHWELL,
AUDITOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

AND

THE ENGLISH MONASTERIES

*AN ATTEMPT TO ILLUSTRATE THE HISTORY OF THEIR
SUPPRESSION*

BY

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SOMETIME PRIOR OF ST. GREGORY'S MONASTERY DOWNSIDE BATH

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TO THE READER.

Although this second volume is larger than the first, it must not be supposed that the limits of "an attempt to illustrate," fixed by the title, have been in any way overpassed. I have steadily resisted the temptation to make use of many incidents which would have added interest to my pages, and which bore more or less upon my subject, but which were not necessary to its illustration. The mass of records ready to hand is all instructive and would furnish material for special monographs on many subjects of deep and present interest not merely to the historian, but to the political inquirer.

My sincere thanks are due for constant and invaluable aid to many friends, amongst whom I trust I may reckon the officials of the Museum and Public Record Office, to whom I had such good reason to express my indebtedness in my first volume. The kindness of one friend has relieved me of the irksome task of making the "Index," another, Mr. Marsham Adams, has helped me in the concluding chapter; while to Mr. Edmund Bishop, who, from first to last, has aided me by counsel and suggestion as well as by his careful examination of every proof sheet, I owe a debt of gratitude which I gratefully here record. The Maps both in this and Vol. I. are the work of Dom. Conrad Banckaert, of Downside.

*St. Gregory's Monastery, Downside,
8th December, 1888.*

HENRY VIII.

AND

THE ENGLISH MONASTERIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE LESSER MONASTERIES.

By the spring of the year 1536 Henry had partially succeeded in his designs against the monasteries. The parliament, acting according to his royal will and pleasure, had in March granted him power to deal with the possessions of every religious house, the income of which did not exceed £200 a year. The time was marked by events of importance, both to the church and the nation at large. Death had ended the troubles of the unfortunate queen Katherine in January. And the sudden fall and execution of Anne Boleyn four months later seemed to offer a favourable occasion for the reconciliation of Henry with the pope. The king of France had shown the English ambassadors, immediately upon the news of Anne's degradation, that there could not be "a better opportunity of wiping out the stains on