

over, and that he stood really as high as ever in the tyrant's favour, he sent back his fool or jester, Patch, as a welcome present to his royal master.

For the rest of the story we have the "Chronicle" of "honest" John Stow to guide us. We read that Wolsey, having returned to Esher, continued there, with a numerous family of servants and retainers, for "the space of three or four weeks, without either beds, sheets, table-cloths, dishes to eat their meat on, or wherewithal to buy any; howbeit, there was good provision of all kinds of victual, and of beer and wine, whereof there was sufficient and plenty enough, but my lord was compelled of necessity to borrow of Master Arundell and of the Bishop of Carlisle plate and dishes both to drink in and to eat his meat in. Thus my lord, with his family, continued in this strange estate until after Halloweentide."

The cardinal then dismissed a large part of his attendants, and sent Thomas Cromwell, afterwards Earl of Essex, to London, to "take care of his interest at Court." But apparently Cromwell did not take much trouble in the matter, for though the charge of treason originally preferred against the cardinal was abandoned, Wolsey was subjected, as every reader of English history knows, to a *præmunire*, the result of which was to place him, with all his worldly goods and chattels, at the mercy of the king, his master.

During the next few weeks of Wolsey's existence our interest is fixed on the river-side at Esher. For it was here that, whilst his enemies were pursuing their plans for his destruction, the king sent him "gracious messages," betraying occasional symptoms of returning favour, first by Sir John Russell, and afterwards by the Duke of Norfolk; and it was whilst he was entertaining the duke here that Sir John Shelley, one of the judges, arrived for the purpose of obtaining—or, rather, of extorting—from Wolsey a formal cession of York House (Whitehall), the town mansion of the archbishops of that see.* We are told that the cardinal hesitated so much to execute this royal command that he put his pen to the parchment only upon being assured that the judges of the land considered it to be a lawful act and deed. It was thus, therefore, that, on finding all opposition vain, Wolsey did that which was required at his hands; but the deed threw him into a severe fit of illness. Dr. Butts, the Court physician, who came down to visit him here, was forced to go back to London with the news that his life was in danger; and it was here that, lying on his sick bed, Wolsey received the historic ring

which Henry, in a fit of ill-timed regret, sent to him with a "comfortable message." The latter was so far effectual, that the great statesman was somewhat cheered by the seeming kindness of his tyrannical master, and recovered for a time. It must, however, have been at Esher that the document was signed which alienated Whitehall from the prelates of York, and handed over that magnificent palace to the tender mercies of "Old Harry."

That he was "sick unto death" whilst here for the last time is clear from the cardinal's last letter to Stephen Gardiner, which is dated from Esher, and in which he writes:—"I pray yow at the reverens of God to helpe, that expedition be usyd in my persuits, the delay whereof so replensyth my herte with hevynes, that I can take no reste: not for any vague fere, but only for the miserable condycion that I am presently yn, and lyclyhod to contynue yn the same, onless that you, in whom ys myn assurdy truste, do helpe and releve me therein. For fyrst, contynuyng here in this mowest and corrup ayer, beyng enteryd into the passyon of the dropsy, *cum prostratione appetitis et continuo insomnio*, I cannot lyve; wherefor, of necessity I must be remoyved to some other dryer ayer and place, where I may have comodyte of physycians," &c.

A reference to Hume, or Froude, or to any other historian of the Tudor times, will serve to show the reader that only a few months subsequently the cardinal obtained permission from Henry to remove from Esher to Richmond, where he appears to have remained, making occasional expeditions to Esher, till his journey into Yorkshire, a few months previous to his death, which took place at the Abbey of Leicester, in November, 1530.

When Henry VIII. had resolved to constitute Hampton Court an "honour," and to make a "chase" around it, as stated above, he purchased several neighbouring estates, and among others that of Esher. In 1538, as we learn from Rymer's "Fœdera," Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, conveyed to the king "his manor of Asher, in Asher, Ditton, Cobham, Kingston, and Walton, William Basyng, *alias* Kingswell, prior of the monastery and cathedral of St. Swithin, at Winchester, confirming the deed." In consequence of these acts, this manor, with other lands, was annexed to the "honour and chase of Hampton Court" in 1540. Ten years afterwards King Edward gave the office of chief keeper of the manor of Esher, with its gardens and orchards, and that of Lieutenant of the Chase of Hampton Court, to John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and John, Lord Lisle, his son, for their joint lives and the life of

* See "Old and New London," Vol. III., p. 62.