

Henry VIII. was annoyed by so much clamor against the oppressions of his father's agents, that he caused Sir Richard Empson to be imprisoned in Northamptonshire, where he was tried, convicted and returned to the Tower.*

In the next Parliament of 1510, Sir Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley were attainted of High Treason. While in the Tower, Mr. Dudley wrote a book of counsel and advice to Hen. VIII., hoping thereby to extricate himself from his desperate condition. But it was not put into the king's hands till too late, or it might have saved him ;

* Hall's Chronicle says (12th Henry VII. A. D. 1497) : " He appointed ii. masters and surveyers of his forfays, ye one Syr Richard Empson, and the other Edmund Dudley, bothe learned in the lawes of the realme. And thus two persons contended, whiche of them by mooste bryngyng in might most please and satisfye his master's desyre and appetide. Wherefore, in the beginnyng, they, armed with a companie of accusers (commonly called promoters), whyche brought to them the names of the offenders, esteemed and regarded so muche the gayne of money, that they clerely forgate and banyshed oute of their remembraunce their duetye present, the peril that might ensue, and the thanke and good will that they might have obtayned, and yet they had warnyng of greate and sage persons to close their hands from such uncharitable doynges and cruell extremitie, accordyng to the adage, the extremitie of justice is extreme iniurie."

"(22d year. A.D. 1507.) But now the thyrd plague egall with the pestilence ensued by the workyng of the masters of the forfaytures, by the king appointed as I shewed you before By whose meanes many a ryche and welthy person, by the extremitie of the lawes of the realme were condemned and brought to misery. The matre is as wonderfull to be heard, as pittifull and miserable to be done, and yet it is called the law, where as it is rather peruerse abuse and disordre of a law, politiquely at the begynning inuented to cause the people the soner to conforme themselves to such as demand their right of them, but craftely practised to the utter confusion of many by antrue officers. For if a man put his adversary in suite before ye Judges, of whiche complaint or accis, he neither thinketh nor hath knowledge if he appere not at the last calling of the exigent, whiche is called in a shyre where he never came (for how can he appere, if he be ignoraunt of the prosecution of the cause, and dwell, iiC myles fro that place), then doeth he forfeit all his substance and mouables, and his body to captiuitie as an enemy, and rebel to the lawes of the country. And yet the prynce shall enjoy the goodes so confiscate, and the party copleynant or playntife that is wronged recovereth not one myte, and yet loseth bothe his payne and costes. And all such persons that be so condemned and adjudged, be called outlawes, that is deprived of all laws of the lande, to the whiche he was by the custom of the country inheritable. These outaries olde recognisances of the peace and good aberyng, escapes, ryottes and innumerable statutes penal, were put in execution and called upon by Empson and Dudley, so that every man, both of the spiritulitic and temporalitic, having either land or substance, was called to this pluckyng haucket, accordyng to the Psalmist sayyng, all declyned and fell together, and no man although he were never so clere and gyltes, in conclusion durst aventure a trial, seynge the experience of them that passed before. For these two ravenyng wolves had suche a garde of false periured persons apperteignyng to them, whiche were by their commandmet empanyeled on every guest, that the kyng was sure to wynde whosoever lost. Learned men in the lawe, when they were required by their advise, would saye to agree to is the counsayl that I can gueu you. By this undewe meanes, these covetous persones filled the kynges cofers, and enryched themselves. And at this unreasonable and extorte doyng, noble men grudged, meane men kycked, porre men lamented, preachers openly at Paules crosse and other places exclaimed, rebuked and detested, but yet they would never amende. Howbeit the good kyng in his last dayes conserved and pardoned his poor subiectes of such uncharitable yokes and ponderous burdens as they were laden withall."