

The chief interest of the poem, however, does not lie in its poetry. It forms one of the most curious illustrations I know of the strong anti-Popish zeal, apart from religious feeling, which was so general in England during the last century, and which, in the Lord-George-Gordon mobs, showed itself so very formidable a principle when fairly aroused. Dickens' picture, in "Barnaby Rudge," of the riots of 1780, has the merit of being faithful ; — his religious mobs are chiefly remarkable for being mobs in which there is no religion ; but his picture would be more faithful still, had he made them in a slight degree Protestant. Shenstone, like the Lord-George-Gordon mob, was palpably devoid of religion, — "an elegant heathen, rather than a Christian," whose poetry contains verses in praise of almost every god except the true one ; and who, when peopling his Elysium with half the deities of Olympus, saw nymphs and satyrs in his very dreams. But though only an indifferent Christian, he was an excellent Protestant. There are passages in the "Ruined Abbey" that breathe the very spirit of the English soldiery, whose anti-Popish huzzas, on the eve of the Revolution, deafened their infatuated monarch in his tent. Take, for instance, the following : —

"Hard was our fate while Rome's director taught
Of subjects born to be their monarch's prey ;
To toil for monks, — for gluttony to toil, —
For vacant gluttony, extortion, fraud,
For avarice, envy, pride, revenge, and shame !
O, doctrine breathed from Stygian caves ! exhaled
From inmost Erebus !"

Not less decided is the passage in which he triumphs over the suppression of the Monasteries, "by Tudor's wild caprice."

"Then from its towering height, with horrid sound,
Rushed the proud Abbey. Then the vaulted roofs,
Torn from their walls, disclosed the wanton scene