

The Vicars of Bray

THE vicar of Bray, in Berkshire, was a Papist under the reign of Henry the Eighth, and a Protestant under Edward the Sixth; he was a Papist again under Mary, and once more became a Protestant in the reign of Elizabeth. When this scandal to the gown was reproached for his versatility of religious creeds, and taxed for being a turncoat and an unconstant changeling, as Fuller expresses it, he replied, "Not so neither; for if I changed my religion, I am sure I kept true to my principle; which is, to live and die the vicar of Bray!"

This vivacious and reverend hero has given birth to a proverb peculiar to this country, "The vicar of Bray will be vicar of Bray still." But how has it happened that this *vicar* should be so notorious, and one in much higher rank, acting the same part, should have escaped notice? Dr. *Kitchen*, bishop of Llandaff, from an idle abbot under Henry VIII. was made a busy bishop; Protestant under Edward, he returned to his old master under Mary; and at last took the oath of supremacy under Elizabeth, and finished as a parliament Protestant. A pun spread the odium of his name; for they said that he had always loved the *Kitchen* better than the *Church!*