

9. **Rise of the Protestant Party to power and Death of the King.** Meanwhile the King's health was gradually declining, and he became so weak, that he could neither walk nor stand. Gradually, too, his personal influence was becoming less felt, and the contests between the rival parties, the Roman Catholic and Protestant members of the Council, grew fiercer every day. The Roman Catholics were led by the **Duke of Norfolk**, and the Protestants by **Edward Seymour**, Earl of Hertford, and both leaders were doing their utmost to secure the Regency after the King's death.

It was clear, however, that in 1544 the Protestant party was in the ascendancy. In that year Cranmer ordered that prayers in English should be offered up for the success of the King's expedition to Boulogne, and in the same year he composed a **Litany** in English for the use of priests and people in processions. This may be considered as the foundation stone of the future book of Common Prayer. It was followed by a **Liturgy** consisting of the "Litany, Creed, Ten Commandments, and Lord's Prayer," and was ordered to be read in English. In 1545 an Act was passed for the dissolution of chantries, hospitals and free chapels, thus completing the destruction of all religious houses in England.

But persecutions were still rife. **Anne Askew**, a young lady of great learning and beauty attached to the Court, was condemned to death and burnt for denying the doctrine of the "Real Presence" in the Sacrament. Even the Queen, who was secretly inclined to the principles of the Reformation, on one occasion fell into great danger, and was only saved by her tact and discretion.

As Henry drew near his end, his sole aim was to secure a peaceful succession to the throne for his son. He was anxious that the power should not fall into Norfolk's hands, whom he regarded as a Roman Catholic of strong views, and a man likely to head any re-actionary movement against the Reformation. He therefore arranged that the **Earl of Hertford**, the boy's paternal uncle, should act as Regent after his death, and carry out his last wishes with regard to the succession. But Norfolk hated Hertford as an upstart and