

tance of securing, if possible, the much-desired divorce of Henry from his wife. Here Cranmer saw things connected with the papacy and the Roman clergy which opened his eyes to the necessity for reformation, in some form or other, in matters religious. He also met some of the German princes, who had already joined what was known as "The Protestant League," and, though he could not move them to take an interest in the divorce question, yet he learned many things from them which greatly influenced his after life, long after the all-engrossing affairs of the divorce were over.

At the present, however, he appeared before the pope as a true and loyal son of the Church, representing a monarch who wished to be known to the world as an upholder of the Catholic religion and the "Defender of the Faith." When abroad he heard much of Luther, but he was not prepared to sympathize with him in his doctrines, which, nevertheless, were shaking terribly the earth. Yet he learned a great deal of the Reformation as it was going on in Germany. It was his pleasure to meet with some of the scholars and great men of that country of letters and learning. Among these he was particularly taken with Andreas Osiander, a German Reformer, whose real name was Andrew Hoseman, with whom he remained for some time.

Cranmer was no believer in the celibacy of the clergy. He had himself married in England, as we have seen, but became a widower. We now find that the niece of Osiander so far attracted him as to lead him again into matrimony. He and the fair Margaret were married. In this he was conscientious. Clergymen of all ranks in those days thought nothing of living unlawfully with women, though they held it to be a dreadful thing to enter the honorable estate of matrimony. Cranmer was sensible enough to see the immorality of this.

It was about this time that Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, died. Henry VIII. at once nominated Cranmer as his successor. His marriage did not seem, either in his own mind or that of others, a bar to his being Primate of England, for the consent of the pope and all others concerned in the matter was readily obtained. It is probable that his marriage was kept as much as possible in the background.

Cranmer accepted, but he showed some hesitation in taking the oaths of office, binding him as they did to the supremacy of the pope. Henry, however, was so deeply involved in his matrimonial affairs that he could not allow any delay in the matter of Cranmer's appointment. To save the good name of Anne Boleyn a speedy marriage must take place, and did take place, for the king was married to his new love before the sentence of the court freed him from his old.

Cranmer was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury at Westminster on the 30th of March, 1533. His primacy proved to be a very celebrated one, but by no means an easy one for him. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a more trying position than his. He had never expected such a high position, or, if he had expected it, he must have felt that his marriage, of which he made no secret, was a final blow to it. But it was not. The king was bent upon his own affairs. His own affairs demanded that the man who had fought his divorce case through so faithfully must be his chief officer in Church; hence Cranmer was speedily, almost forcibly, thrust into the archbishopric. And when once there he had to support his royal master. It may have been distasteful to him, yet he felt that it was the right thing for him to do. His king must be upheld, and yet to uphold a king like Henry VIII. was no light undertaking. The conscience of the Archbishop must have been put to a very severe strain several times, and never more so, perhaps, than when he was obliged to pronounce final sentence upon the unhappy Katharine and send her out to the world, as far as the law could do it, disgraced and dishonored.

And all this when, in point of fact, the king had been already secretly married to another. The events of this whole business, as regards Anne Boleyn, have never been made very clear in history, yet they all have an unsavory character which cannot exonerate from blame any one who, in any way, assisted the king in his unrighteous deeds. So much for the Archbishop, even making every allowance for the extreme difficulty of his situation.

England was shocked at the whole wretched business. There were no newspapers in those days to keep people informed regarding public events, and to influence their feelings regarding them; but there were preachers who had the power and the mind to do what is now largely done by the press. The king and the Archbishop and all concerned in the divorce case were so indignantly and fiercely denounced by the monks and clergy that all preaching was forbidden. For this high-handed and despotic measure no defence can possibly be urged. Archbishop Cranmer was deservedly unpopular, yet he defended the king throughout, and, when preaching within certain limit was allowed again, he openly defended the king in everything that had been done.

In the meantime, the Church of England kept growing further and further away from the Church of Rome. The chief move that had been taken in 1531, when the King of England was declared supreme head of the English Church instead of the pope, was followed by alterations in the ecclesiastical laws, all looking towards the independence of the Church. The Parliament of 1534 considered and enacted some of these laws.