

belief in transubstantiation; second, the withholding of the cup from communicants; third, the celibacy of the clergy; fourth, the celibacy of those who had vowed or professed chastity; fifth, belief in private masses; sixth, belief in auricular confession. All these six articles were passed by parliament through the influence of the king. How far, then, was Henry VIII. a Reformer? And how far did Archbishop Cranmer consent to these hard articles? He could not have believed them, for his mind was fast taking hold of the new principles of religion that were influencing men's minds at that time to a great extent. A delegation of divines had just visited England from Germany, and the principles of Luther and Melancthon were placed fairly before the Archbishop and his suffragans, and though the propositions for union made by the Germans were not accepted, yet their arguments were not without effect upon the minds of those with whom they pleaded.

First among these was Cranmer, and when in the same year the six stinging articles were passed he must have been placed in a trying position. He does not seem even to have opposed them when they were passing through the House. It was his great weak point that he had no courage to oppose the king. His place he felt was submission, and when the six articles passed he yielded, though one of them bore heavily upon himself personally. It was number three, the celibacy of the clergy. He was himself a married man. Now he saw he must separate from his wife. This he did at once by sending her away to Germany. This was in the year 1539.

In the same year Henry required the services of the Archbishop to officiate at his fourth wedding. This time he took a wife "on sight, unseen," a foreign princess, Anne of Cleves, who came from her native land obedient to the monarch's call. Henry disliked her from the first, and was no sooner married to her than he sought a divorce. The obedient Archbishop procured it for him, and Anne was only too glad to retire (on a suitable allowance) from her dangerous position. Cranmer had to annul the marriage which he had but recently blessed.

In the following year the Earl of Essex, better known in history as Thomas Cromwell, the friend of Wolsey, the active first minister of the king, the instigator of the destruction of the monasteries, was branded on a charge, true or false, of treason. Without trial, the ruthless Henry allowed this man, who had done so much for him, to go to his death, although he made a most pitiful appeal to him for mercy. Mercy! His head had no sooner fallen from the block than the heartless monarch married his fifth wife, a girl still in her teens, the unfortunate Catharine Howard. Was Cranmer careful for his own head in such an awful reign as this? He might well be, for it was not easy,

under such a king, for a man in public life to keep his head on his shoulders.

It may well be imagined that Cranmer was better pleased attending to matters concerning the Church than when busied in the unsavory affairs of the king. We find him busy preparing or arranging homilies or published sermons for the clergy to preach, and in writing treatises for the spiritual benefit of the people. He assisted in drawing up the "Institution of a Christian Man," a manual of doctrine and devotion which possesses many excellent points.

But the affairs of Henry gave him no rest. Catharine had been queen but fifteen months when it was disclosed to Cranmer that she, young as she was, had led an improper life before her marriage. Cranmer felt it his duty to tell the king, and he did so in as delicate a manner as possible, praying at the same time that the young creature's life might be saved. The king promised that it should, if she would confess her fault. Whether to save her life, or from actual penitence, or from whatever motive it was, she confessed to the Archbishop, who, to his great sorrow, found that the promise was not to be fulfilled. The inexorable king had her condemned without trial and executed. How sick at heart must the Archbishop have been over all the terrible things which he had to do for the king! He had now assisted in making away with four women, either by divorce or death, to gratify the unhallowed desires of his sovereign.

In the following year (1543) Cranmer had a short time again for leisure, but Henry once more required his services. A sixth wife was found for him in Catharine Parr, who had been twice a widow—a quiet, matronly body, who did her best to nurse and nourish her new, yet somewhat worn-out, lord and master.

With Catharine Parr to care for the king, Cranmer now tried again to care a little for the Church, but he soon found that he had enemies. Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester; Bonner, Bishop of London, and many others, had been watching for an opportunity to accuse him of heresy and procure his death.

The old Roman principles still had their admirers in England, and, when the Act of the Six Articles was passed, arrests were made of people that were attached to the "new learning," and some were burned.

Among those marked for destruction was Cranmer, the Archbishop, who certainly would have perished had it not been for the personal influence of the king. And this is one bright spot in Henry's character. He was true to Cranmer. Well, indeed, might he have been. Yet princes are not always grateful, and we would not be surprised at any baseness that Henry might be guilty of. But he was not ungrateful here; he stood by his faithful Archbishop, and between him and all harm.