

Thomas More Excluded from Court Policy Session, 15 June 1530; Eustace Chapuys' Account to Emperor Charles V

From *Calendar of Spanish State Papers*, #354, 15 June 1530. †

–London, 15th June [1530]

Immediately after the dispatch of my last letters of the 10th inst. I received information that the King had written to certain of the prelates and high officials (*grans maistres*) of this country, desiring them to be present at his court on the 12th inst., each of them bringing with him his seal of office, and that such as for some sufficient cause could not be present themselves should at least send the said seals of office. On the 12th, which was last Sunday, the greater part of those who had been summoned appeared at Court, where, as I am given to understand, they were most urgently exhorted, as the representatives of one portion of the kingdom, to write conjointly to the Pope, explaining the necessity there was for the King to divorce the Queen and make another marriage, and pointing out also all the evils that would arise if this were not done. The address ended by praying His Holiness, in conformity with the opinion of the most famous universities and most learned men in Christendom, to declare the marriage between the King and Queen illegal, and authorise the King to take another wife, intimating that should His Holiness refuse to grant so just and reasonable a petition the King and his people must seek some other means of redress even if that should involve the summoning of a General Council; this last sentence being added to the document by way of a threat, as if they thought that what the Pope most fears is the calling of a Council of the Church. To give the address greater weight and authority it was to bear the signatures and official seals of all these prelates and gentlemen, and though **only those well known to be on the King's side were summoned to the meeting**, still they were unable at the time to come to a resolution, and therefore the meeting was adjourned until tomorrow, Corpus Christi Day. Not one of the prelates known to be favourable to the Queen received a summons, **nor the Chancellor either, whom they suspect**. I have been told that last Sunday, when this affair of the marriage was being discussed, it was asked why the King should not (having obtained the opinion of so many competent judges on this matter) marry at once, without awaiting any further approval of his conduct, especially as he had cause to be suspicious of the Pope. But few were found to support such an extravagant notion as this, or speak against it, until one of the King's chief favourites, fearing lest he should adhere to the proposal, and be persuaded to carry out his purpose, threw himself down on his knees and implored the King to take into consideration the slight symptoms of disaffection (*les petites esmotions*) appearing in many parts of the kingdom, and the inclination of the people, which the slightest provocation might kindle into a flame, and that if he was determined to make this marriage without awaiting the definitive judgment of the Church, that he should at least delay it until winter, when the general excitement might have somewhat subsided. Here the question remains for the present.

On this same Sunday the Queen spoke for some time with the King, exhorting him to be again to her a good prince and husband, and to quit the evil life he was leading and the bad example he was setting, and that even if he would shew no regard for her, who was, as he well knew, his true and lawful wife, that he should at least respect God and his conscience, and no longer ignore the brief which had been executed in Flanders. The King, after many words and much

commendation of those who had written in his favour, said that the brief was of very little consequence, and that even if it were he should not heed it much, because the Pope was compelled to act as the Emperor wished, and with that the King left the room abruptly without saying another word.

The Queen has since sent to ask me whether the said brief should be presented to the King. My answer has been that I think it expedient to do so, as he can then no longer allege ignorance of it, and we shall be able to obtain a last monition of excommunication (*reaggravatoyre*) against him. I believe this will be done tomorrow.

I wrote lately to Your Majesty that if the Lady [Anne] could only be kept away from Court for a little while, the Queen might still regain her influence over the King, for he does not seem to bear any ill-will towards her. Quite lately he sent her some cloth begging her to have it made into shirts for him....

Signed: "Eustace Chapuys."

¹ Great Britain. Public Records Office. *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish* . London: Longmans and Co., 1882.