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922. EUSTACE CHAPUYS TO THE SAME [THE EMPEROR].

Since my last, in answer to Your Majesty's letter of the 18th ult^o, I have duly received those dated Mayence (Maintz) the 9th inst., the contents of which have been a great source of consolation for the Queen, in view of the great affection you bear her and the care you take of her wretched affairs. She had, indeed, almost lost all hope of the suit terminating favourably, when Your Majesty's letter came to comfort her in the midst of her tribulations and sufferings, since perceiving the continual suspensions and delays obtained by the opposite party, and the calumnies propagated by her enemies—who boldly assert and boast that no sooner will Your Majesty be back in Spain than they will do what they like with the Pope and the rest—she was, as I said before, almost in despair. She has accordingly charged me to beg and entreat Your Majesty verily to write to His Holiness that he may accelerate the definitive sentence in her case. [411]

As to acquainting Her Majesty, the Queen [dowager] of Hungary, with events in this country, I have not failed to send her advices from time to time, and will continue to do so, in compliance with Your Majesty's commands. I will do the same with regard to Mons. de Libzerke¹ in all matters relating to Your Majesty's interests.

Lately the King has personally attended three different sessions of Parliament, and played his cards so well (*et a ioue son roule de sorte*) that the article of the annats, about which I wrote to Your Majesty by my despatch [of the 28th ulto.],² has passed, notwithstanding the opposition of all the bishops and of two abbots: almost all the lords (*grans*), who were 30 in number, voted in favour of the article with the single exception of the earl of Arundel, so that the majority was in reality for a Bill calculated to reduce considerably the Pope's annual revenue in this country. I pray to God that this disorderly behaviour may not be the source of worse evils for the Queen's case, which, however, has not yet been brought before Parliament. Nor has any other important measure that I know of been discussed or announced. It will be known on Saturday next what their intention is, for Parliament will then be prorogued until St. George's Day (23rd April). Yesterday the safe-conducts were granted for the Scottish ambassadors now going to France, namely, for a bishop, and one secretary only with their respective suites (the other lords who were to accompany the embassy remaining behind), and to-day (the 20th) the king-at-arms who came for the said safe-conduct will return [to Scotland] accompanied by another one from this king.³

Two days ago, by the command of the queen of Hungary, I called upon the duke of Norfolk, and spoke to him on behalf of certain merchants of Dunkerke, whose ships had been plundered at sea. The Duke assured me at once that prompt redress would be made, but this cannot be done (as he says) before the recess of Parliament, with which he is so much occupied at present that he cannot possibly attend to any other business. The delay, however, is more annoying to the French ambassador than to us, for besides the uncertainty of the settlement (his hopes not being quite so strong as mine), the sum he has to claim exceeds 10,000 frs. whereas all the losses sustained by Your Majesty's subjects does not amount to 200. But I must observe that scarcely had I explained my business to the Duke than he began to speak about the descent of the Turk, which, he said, was most certain; adding that the king of France had, to his own knowledge, actually made [412]

1 Liederkerke? If so, he must be Jean Hannaert, Counsellor of State to the Emperor in Flanders, and later, in 1535, ambassador to France.

2 See above, No. 907, p. 390.

3 "A sçavoir pour ung évesque et ung secretaire avec leur train, et non point pour autres seigneurs; et doit partyr au iour dhuy pour son retourd le roy darmes que porsuyt le dit saulffconduyt accompagnie dung autre de ceux de ce roy."

very considerable offers to co-operate in the resistance to the Infidel on certain conditions to be accepted by Your Majesty. These were that the ransom money paid for his two sons should be returned, or else the kingdom of Naples made over to him. On these terms (the Duke said) the king of France would undertake to defend that country and the rest of Christendom also against the attacks of the Infidel.⁴ My answer was, that on the subject so often discussed of the defensive alliance against the Turk, I had nothing to add to my former statement. As to the terms to which he (the Duke) alluded, I was sure the king of France was too virtuous and too wise a prince to propose such conditions considering the sincere friendship existing between you two. Upon which the Duke observed that he also believed the king of France to be incapable of such an act, and yet he had heard the news from a quarter which though not sufficiently authentic, was still worthy of credit He could, however, point out to me other more credible facts, such as the promise made by the Swiss at the King's request of raising 10,000 infantry whenever he should want them for any foreign war; and upon my inquiring where he thought the said Swiss might be wanted, the Duke answered with some hesitation: "Perhaps the King wants them to march against the Turk."

A priest has lately been arrested on the charge of having preached here, at St. Paul's Cathedral, against the divorce. Having been examined by the members of the Privy Council and questioned as to who had persuaded him to take such a course, he answered that truth, the service of God, and the honour of the King, his lord, had been his only motives. In consequence whereof I am told that the King has issued general orders for all the preachers in this country to speak in favour of his case, and that in obedience to such orders one of them, in Campeggio's bishopric,⁵ began actually to preach a sermon in that sense, though with such ill-success that he was hooted and hissed by the audience, and had not the authorities of the place interfered he might have suffered much at the hands of women and other people in the church, which example, I fancy, will deter others from again preaching in favour of the divorce.

A messenger was some days ago dispatched to Rome, who is to be followed by a second this very day. The object, as far as I can learn, is to intimidate His Holiness by means of this Act of Parliament lately passed about the annats, and also to try and corrupt the cardinals and others with money and the promises of ecclesiastical benefices in England— London, 20th March [15]32.

Signed: "Eustace Chapuys."

4 "Et en apres me dit que le roy de France avoit fait ung bel offre pour la resistance du dit turc, porveu que lon vouldist accepter les conditions questoint que vostre maieste luy rendist sa rançon, ou luy remist le royaume de Naples, et yl se feroit fort de bien le deffendre."

5 That of Salisbury.