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232. EUSTACE CHAPUEYS TO THE EMPEROR.

After my last despatch of the 9th inst. was sent off I received the Imperial letters of the 15th ult^o, of which, as well as of Your Majesty's earnest desire to do everything to assist the Queen in her trouble, I duly and at once advised her that she might receive some of that encouragement and comfort which she now needs more than ever. Indeed, she has daily more and more ground for complaint, the King's indifference to, and neglect of, her increasing rapidly, in proportion to his passionate attachment for the Lady. At no time was his love of this latter more apparent or his intention to carry out the unrighteous and scandalous act of forsaking her, and taking [366] the other for his wife more manifest. As I have had occasion to inform Your Majesty, it is to be feared that he may do this sooner than is anticipated unless God inspire him with repentance, or Your Majesty interfere actively to prevent it, *for, as I said before, the King thinks of nothing else but accomplishing his purpose*, and, as the duke of Norfolk declared once to me, *there is nothing the King would not grant Your Majesty were he to obtain your consent this divorce and new marriage, even to becoming Your Majesty's slave for ever.*

It is entirely in view of this that certain relatives of the Lady were lately created earls, for it was considered *essential that before her being raised to the rank of Queen* her own family should be somewhat *exalted*. In fact all the newly created earls are nearly related to each other, or close allies of the duke [of Norfolk]. When the ceremony took place Monseigneur de Rochfort¹ had double honour, for he was the first created, and had besides two earldoms given him, one in Ireland and the other in this kingdom, whilst the others had only one title each. Indeed, his prerogatives on the occasion were not small, for the day after, the King wishing no doubt to make it appear that the honours conferred upon the new earl were entirely owing to his daughter's favour, gave a grand fête in this city, to which several ladies of the Court were invited (among them queen Blanche and the two duchesses of Norfolk, the dowager and the young one), the Lady Anne taking precedence of them all, and being made to sit by the King's side, occupying the very place allotted to a crowned queen, which by the by is a thing that was never before done [in this country]. After dinner there was dancing and carousing, so that it seemed as if nothing were wanting *but the priest to give away the nuptial ring and pronounce the blessing*. All the time, and whilst the carousal was going on, poor queen Katharine was seven miles away from this place holding her own fête of sorrow and weeping.

The King's demoiselle (*fillie dame*) has, moreover, been the chief cause and instrument of Cardinal Wolsey's ruin, for she was heard to say a few days before that *it would cost her a good 20,000 crs. before she had entirely done with him, and that if she had any influence over the Pope he (the Cardinal) would have none of it*. This may be considered certain and that she will do all she can here *to deprive the said Cardinal of his annats*, as well of all or the greater part of his ecclesiastical authority in this kingdom.

The reform [of the Clergy], about which I wrote to Your Majesty, is partly owing *to the anger of these people at His Holiness advocacy of the divorce case to Rome*. Although many causes are assigned for it, there can be no doubt that last is the real one, and that having begun the said [367] reform, they will go on with it as quickly as they can, and this for many evident reasons. *First of all because they will get large sums of money by the sale of Church property*, and a judicious investment of the same. Secondly, because as nearly all the people here *hate the priests*, they may perhaps gain them over and persuade them *to consent to this marriage* and declare that *the Pope has no power to grant dispensations in marriages or in other matters and that no more of their substance shall go to Rome in future*. Indeed, it is evident that if the English [in this affair] have no other guidance but respect for the Pope they will not care much for him, and that if this

1 Written Rocchefort, and lower down Rocchestre by mistake.

state of things should last there will be no more obedience shewn to the Pope here than in Germany. Neither the leaders nor the rest [of the party] can now refrain from slandering the Pope. The other day *the duke of Norfolk* said openly to me that the Pope himself had been one of the first to perceive the *invalidity of this marriage, and had written to say that it could in nowise stand good, and that he would declare so himself or have it legally declared*, and yet that in consequence of his alliance with Your Majesty, and of his being, as it were, under your power, that same Pope *now would have the case tried and determined only as Your Majesty wished*. I am, moreover, much inclined to think that one of the reasons why the King *was so anxious for Your Majesty's departure for Hungary, was his thinking that he might during your absence [from Italy] do what he pleased with the Pope*.

In the event, however, of the divorce case being brought forward in Parliament, as there is every reason to fear, I am persuaded that *the Queen will want me to offer some sort of opposition or present a protest in Your Majesty's name*. Not having received special instructions upon this point, I should very much like to know how I am to act. My own impression is that some means ought and might be adopted with the Queen's approbation *to weaken the action of Parliament, or at least to defer it as long as possible*. Were I to propose, as if it came from myself, that *since these people are so very suspicious of the Pope and of the Queen they should consent, before any confusion arises, to refer the case to Cambray*, as they themselves proposed once, or if this should not meet with the King's approbation, that he should *send to Paris persons free from suspicion to represent him [at the Sorbonne] and there dispute the case with the doctors and divines appointed by the Queen*, I really think that some good might be done; for the proposition, if accepted, would in my opinion answer the purpose of checking the deliberations of Parliament, and affording time for Your Majesty's late instructions on this business to be carried into effect.

I likewise deem it advisable to try, in my own name of course, *what can be done with the duke of Norfolk*, and see whether we could not gain him over to our cause by means [368] of some promise of help and assistance in the marriage of his son to Princess Mary, which is so much spoken of here that I consider myself perfectly justified to urge it on by pointing out the mutual advantages to be derived from it, as well as the troubles and anxieties it would remove. I have no doubt that such motives would strongly work upon the Duke and yet there is ground for fearing that such a plan, if proposed will be rejected; for *should, the Queen regain her influence and position before his son's marriage takes place she is sure to have it broken off, and besides injure the Duke in many other ways; for he knows well that the Queen has never forgiven him some angry words which he and his wife, the Duchess, said on the occasion of her not allowing the latter to take precedence of her mother-in-law*, by which both were much offended, especially the Duchess, who belongs to the house of Lancaster. **The other motive of anxiety for the Duke is that should the King return to his duty towards the Queen, his lawful wife, and the Lady be consequently dismissed from Court, the Cardinal would in all probability regain his influence, as there is good reason for thinking owing to his uncommon ability and the King's readiness to restore him to his former favour. Indeed, everyone here perceives that the King bears the Cardinal no real ill-will, and that in acting towards him as he did, it was merely to gratify the Lady in this particular.** Should, however, the King's affection for the Lady abate in the least, the Cardinal would soon find means of settling this business [of the divorce] in a manner which *would not only cost the opposite party their lives*, but as they suspect, make the Queen, who has lately shewn some pity for the Cardinal's fall, help his return to power. It is, therefore, highly probable that they will all look more to their own immediate advantage or risk than to any chance for the future. Nevertheless, should the Queen approve of this plan of mine I will try my best with the Duke; no harm, in my opinion, can result therefrom, and in the meantime Your Majesty may carry out the suggestions conveyed in my despatch of the 9th inst.

I must add that when the King heard, as I failed not to assure him, that Your Majesty was fully convinced that all his steps about this divorce were merely owing to his scruples

and to the wish of relieving his conscience, he shewed great satisfaction

I am not sure that Your Majesty will believe what I am about to state; but it is a fact that in spite of all that has been said, preached, and circulated in this country [about this divorce], they have never been able to convince the people of its righteousness, for they know very well that it was the Holy League that first inspired the King's enmity towards Your Majesty, and that he has ever since become more blindly and passionately fond of the Lady. People, therefore, say that it is only the King's evil destiny that impels him, for had he [369] as he asserts, only attended to the voice of conscience, there would have been still greater affinity to contend with in this intended marriage than in that of the Queen, his wife, a fact of which everyone here speaks quite openly.

Lately one or two preachers have been suborned to preach publicly that the Pope (Julius) had no power to give dispensation for the marriage of the Queen, and that it was contrary to Divine law, over which popes have no control. There are not wanting preachers who, without any other motive than the love of justice and truth, have refuted [from the pulpit] the aforesaid proposition, but the former have not yet replied. It now remains to be seen how they will make their case good. For my own part, I imagine that they will probably keep silence, knowing that the best and most learned among the English prelates have written in favour of the Queen, and that the King himself and the noblemen of his party have declared that the prelates and divines, who hold for the Queen, are indeed good and respectable men, only too much self-opinionated.

Your Majesty must have heard from Mr. de Mingoal how the ratification of, and swearing to, the treaty of Cambray was effected here. The King was very much vexed that the ambassadors he sent to Your Majesty on this occasion should have delayed so long on the road, as he wished them to have arrived sooner at the Imperial Court, and there to have taken the oath in his name, as likewise to have been present at your entry into Bologna, and assisted in the deliberations of the assembly there convened for the purpose of repelling the threatened Turkish invasion and negotiating other matters.

Having lately written at some length to Your Majesty as well as to Mr. de Mingoal, concerning the members of the government here, I will only add that the duke of Norfolk's influence and power are daily increasing, a fact of which Your Majesty's servants and subjects will be soon aware and glad, should he (the Duke) continue as he has begun; for I do not hesitate to say that in everything in which I have applied to him, whether verbally or in writing, he (the Duke) has always shewn every desire to please us, favouring the Spanish and Flemish merchants much more than the French, of whom he seems just now as if he would be glad to rid himself. In proof whereof I can say that only yesterday he (the Duke) did them a bad turn in the shape of an ordinance forbidding French caps—which there is a large importation into this country—to be sold for more than about one-half of what the English ones cost, though superior in quality. This measure seems to be the beginning of the practical working of the measures which the Duke himself announced to the French ambassadors on the eve of the Conception of Our Lady, namely, that England would dispense in future with French commerce altogether.

The Cardinal (Wolsey) is still living at the house where he [370] was when the seals were taken away from him, leading a very devout life, saying mass daily, praising God for having afforded him this opportunity of acknowledging his errors, and saying to everyone he meets that he never enjoyed greater peace of mind than at the present moment, and that even if the King would restore him to his former position, as well as give him the entire administration of the kingdom, he would not willingly resume the charge of it. I hear, moreover, that the King allows him to retain one of his bishoprics. The vestments and other Church ornaments, which he once presented to his college at Auffort (Oxford), have been brought here [to London], and I hear from an embroiderer, who lives opposite my house, that some chappes and chasubles that were sent to him for the purpose of having the Cardinal's escutcheon removed therefrom were worth full 40,000 angelots, and that this was but a quarter of what he had elsewhere.

As regards the "fleur de lis" about which Your Majesty writes to me, it will be found

by the contents of my previous despatches that I have done all that was wanted in that business. I have always maintained that the King and his ministers were quite right in thinking that Your Majesty would much prefer these valuable jewels to remain in the hands of these people than in those of the French. As this, however, was only a private and personal idea of mine at the time, unwarranted by Your Majesty's instructions to that effect, I will at a proper time acquaint the King with Your Majesty's wishes in this respect. I believe that they would much prefer sending it on through Your Majesty's people to delivering it to the French; but should this last expedient be adopted, I shall at any rate witness the delivery of the "fleur de lis" attended by an expert so as to have it compared with the inventory. It has been lately reset and polished, as I am told, and should have been brought to me for inspection, had I not been too much occupied of late with affairs of another sort. I will, however, take care that it is properly examined before delivery.

During the last fortnight they have been trying to close this session of Parliament, and prorogue it until February next; but they have been unable to accomplish it. Indeed, yesterday the sitting was the busiest of all, so much so that the leading members had actually no time to take any refreshment until very late at night. I cannot learn that any fresh Bills have been passed since my last despatch. Commercial measures chiefly are now under consideration, the London merchants wishing to have heavy duties imposed on all foreign goods imported, that traders not English by birth should be compelled to quit, and not reside in this country, taking, as they say, the bread out of the mouths of the natives. I think, however, that now that the King has obtained from Parliament the loans he wanted, the session of that body would be soon over, were it not for two measures which the King [371] wishes to bring forward, one of them being to bleed (*donner la saignee*) the Clergy, and the other to lay before the members the opinion of the Paris University on the divorce case, which, they say, is daily expected. It would be a very fortunate thing if such opinions should prove upon the whole in favour of the Queen, as regards the value and number of voters.—London, 13th December 1529.

Signed: "Eustace Chapuys."

Addressed: "To the Emperor."

French. Holograph. pp. 8.

