

From *Calendar of State Papers, Spain, vol. 4.2, 1531-1533*, edited by Pascual de Gayangos. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1882, pp. 38-41.

23 Jan. [1531]
K. u. K. Haus-
Hof-u.-Staats Arch
Wien. *Rep. P. Fasc.*,
c. 227, No. 6.

615. EUSTACE CHAPUYS TO THE SAME [THE EMPRESS]

In this Parliament, in which almost all the nobility and clergy of the country, besides a great number of other people, are assembled, no motion has yet been made concerning the Queen's case. Hitherto all that has been done is reduced to certain ordinances to be observed in times of plague, and other police regulations; also to passing a Bill for a composition the Clergy (*pour composer les ecclesiastiques*), which seems to be after all the principal cause for the meeting of this present Parliament, this King intending that all priests, who have tacitly or expressly recognized the legatine powers of the late Cardinal (Wolsey), should be arrested, and their property confiscated. And although the priests know very well that in obeying His Holiness' decrees they have neither transgressed the laws of the country, nor done anything to deserve punishment, yet feeling that there is no escaping from the King, they have presented him at the first swoop with 160,000 ducats,¹ [39] which sum, however, the King has refused to accept, swearing most solemnly that he will have full 400,000 out of them or else visit them with extreme rigour, so that the English clergy will in the end be obliged to grant this King's demands, and sell the very chalices and shrines of their churches, as otherwise they would be quite unable to pay one-fourth of that sum.

Five days ago it was agreed between the Papal Nuncio and myself that he should go to the place where the said ecclesiastics are now holding their congregation, and exhort them to uphold the honour, immunity, and authority of the Church; inform them about the state of the Queen's case [at Rome], shew them the letters which the Pope had written to him thereupon, and also offer his own services, and intercede with the King for the reduction of the tax he wants to levy upon them. And when the said Nuncio entered the room where the ecclesiastics were assembled, they were so astonished and thunderstruck (*escandalizés*) that without giving him time or leisure to say his errand, **they begged and entreated him for God's sake to leave them in peace; for they had no permission from the King to hold any communication with him.** If he came (they said) for the purpose of having a certain Apostolic mandate executed, against which they had already been sufficiently warned, he (the Nuncio) had better address himself to the archbishop of Canterbury, their primate, who was not present at the meeting. **The Nuncio, therefore, left without being able to inform them officially of the object of his visit,** though he failed not to acquaint with it the bishop of London, who acted as proctor to the congregation, and promised to report it, though I should think he will do nothing of the sort without first consulting the King and obtaining his permission, he (the Bishop) being, as is well known, one of the principal promoters of these affairs.²

Lately the *bishop of Rochester* sent me word that *the King* had made *attempts to corrupt him*, as well as the rest of those who stand up for the Queen, telling him and them *a thousand lies and also most foolish tales*, and among the rest that the Pope *had promised to cardinal de Grammont* that whatever mien he might put on *of wishing to proceed against the King*, they (the English) were not to be the least alarmed, *for he promised to favour them with all his power*. And, moreover, that *he (the Pope) was secretly a bitter enemy of Your Imperial Majesty* owing to your insisting *on the convocation of a General Council*, which is the thing in this world which His Holiness hates most, especially since he has heard that *his own deposition from the pontificate and the election in his room*

1 "Et combien, sire, que iceux ecclesiastiques sachent certainemant navoer en ce moment meffayt ne transgresse, toutes foyz voyant que c'est ung fere le fault, ilz ont presente de premier sault cent et soixante mille ducatz."

2 "Que luy dit en feroit le rapport, de quoy yl se gardera tres bien sans en avoer commandement du Roy, car cest le principal promoteur de ces afferes."

of cardinal Campeggio had for some time been in contemplation.³ The King tried also to persuade [40] bishop Fisher and the rest that by means of the marriages which *Jehan Jocquin was trying to promote*, having lately gone to France for that purpose, as I have had occasion to write to Your Majesty, they would ultimately and without fail *obtain from him [the Pope] anything they wished in that respect*.

Having heard the above, and knowing by experience that news of this kind would soon spread about in public places, I thought of putting the Papal Nuncio on his guard, that he might better test the vanity of these people. He told me that he had already heard some vague rumours, but that the report being a nonsensical one altogether he had made no further inquiries. I acquainted him with the answer, which the said *bishop of Rochester* had by my direction made to the King's messages,⁴ and begged him nevertheless, *for the confirmation and corroboration of the said answer*, since I myself was unable to *speak with the Bishop*, to go personally to him, and if he found a fit opportunity convince him of the falsehood of such reports, which the Nuncio has since done with very good grace. For I am told that no sooner did he *meet him*, than without the Bishop opening the subject he related to him in the most minute details how the thing had passed, and what the exact words were which the Pope had said to the Cardinal; so that he left him thoroughly informed and convinced.

Next day, early in the morning, the *King* sent for the *Bishop* to hear what had passed between the Nuncio and him. Eagerly interrogated by the King the *Bishop* answered that nothing particular had occurred, save that the Nuncio had called and told him that the *Pope was exceedingly annoyed at having to assemble a General Council*, and had requested him to use all his influence with the *King* and also with the *clergy of England* [to prevent its celebration].

Immediately after his interview with the King the Bishop called on the Nuncio, that *he might, if interrogated, make his answer agree with his own*.⁵

It is really incredible *how much intrigue and deceit these people are carrying on for the sole purpose of suborning all manner of people*; but whatever means they employ they do not succeed, which makes most people think that *they will not attempt to bring the Queens case before this Parliament*.

Some time ago the earl of Vulchier (Wiltshire) invited to supper Monsieur de la Guiche,⁶ for whose amusement he caused a farce to be acted of the Cardinal (Wolsey) going down to Hell; for which La Guiche much blamed the Earl, and still [41] more the Duke *for his ordering the said farce to be printed*. They have been ever since [Jocquin's departure] entertaining the said gentleman most splendidly, and making the most of him on every occasion, *and yet* I am told that however well treated by them he still says very openly what he thinks of them, and laughs at their eccentricities in matters of government and administration.⁷

Lately, at Calais, all the letters of merchants and others which a courier brought were opened, with the single exception of one small packet addressed to me from Flanders, which they could not discover. They took from him a document written on vellum, which he (the courier) believes related to the Queen's business, and about which we knew nothing here. This conduct on the part of the governors at Calais seems strange enough, if we consider that even during the last war such foul and disreputable means were never

3 "Et que plus est pour ce quil a entendu que vostre Majeste avoit dehu desia [machiner et proposer de le depointer et fere pape le cardinal Campeggio.]"

4 "Je luy dis la response quen avoye fayt fere audit [evesque], le priant ce non obstant."

5 "Et quil luy avoit prie bien a certes dy vouloer tenir la main de son possible tant envers icelluy [roy] que ausy vers les [ecclesiastiques], de quoy yl advertyt incontinent le dit nonce, &c."

6 "Claude de la Guiche, more correctly La Guische or La Guysche, a French gentleman, who, after the departure for France of Jean Jocaquin (Giovan Gioaehimo di Passano) remained in charge of the French embassy in England.

7 "Toutesfois ils nen sçauent tant fere quil ne sen gaudisse et ne leur die ce quil pense de leurs folles entreprinses en matieres de gouvernement et conseil."

resorted to. I fancy that this has been done with a view to prevent Roman briefs from reaching this country. They have not yet answered the one relating to the convocation of the Council, and still affect to disbelieve in the election of Your Majesty's brother as king of the Romans. It is not difficult to guess whence this incredulity and the above measure proceed, and therefore something must be done to stop such proceedings.—London, 23rd January [1531].

Signed : “Eustace Chapuys.”

French. Holograph partly in cipher. pp. 4.