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26 Mar. [1532]
K. u. K. Haus-
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926. EUSTACE CHAPUYS TO THE EMPEROR.

Your Majesty's letter of the 29th ult^o came to hand yesterday with its proscripts of the 3rd and 6th inst. I shall not fail to act according to the instructions contained in them. The article about the annats having passed the assembly of prelates and lords of this kingdom, the procurators and deputies of the towns and villages (*communes*) dissented, and offered as much opposition as they could to the measure though they had almost all been chosen, as I informed Your Majesty in a previous despatch,¹ at the King's wish. And although they were given to understand that in Spain, as well as in several other countries, the said annats had not been levied by the Pope's collectors, although it was clearly proved to them by the rolls and accounts that for the last 50 years nearly two millions of gold had left this country on account of the said annats;² although they had the King's promise that for a whole year no other attempt should be made against His Holiness' authority, inasmuch as the King himself intended treating with him and coming to an agreement during that period, the Commons, as I said, strongly opposed the Bill. At last the King, perceiving that remonstrances were in vain, thought of a plan, which proved ultimately successful, viz., that those among the members [of Parliament] who wished for the King's welfare and the prosperity of the kingdom, as they call it, should stand on one side of the House, and those who opposed the measure on the other. Several of them for fear of the King's indignation went over to the King's side, and in this manner was a majority obtained, and the Bill passed, though somewhat amended from its original wording, for it says that after the expiration of one year the Pope shall only receive 20 per cent. of the annats he used to take formerly, and that in case of his refusing to consent to the reduction, the two archbishops of this country (Canterbury and York), or in their place two bishops appointed by the King, shall have the power of conferring all ecclesiastical dignities, consecrating, &c.

(*Cipher:*) Though the above transaction and several small details, which I omit for brevity's sake, are perfectly true and patent to everyone, yet the King and his ministers do not perhaps intend to carry things to extremities,³ though it must be said that they are making great efforts to persuade the people that they are in earnest. To this end the duke of Norfolk, riding past the Nuncio's house yesterday, as he was going to [417] a country house of his, alighted from his horse and said to him, that as most likely people would give diverse accounts of what had just been decided about the annats, he had expressly called to inform him of the truth, that he might acquaint His Holiness. And after begging the said Nuncio to listen to what he had to say, and protesting that nothing but the plain truth should issue from his lips, he strove hardly to persuade him that it was not the King but the Commons (*le peuple*) who had of their own accord brought forward the motion about the annats, besides many others against Papal authority, and that the King—who was a good and devout son of His Holiness—had marvellously worked to defend his rights and authority in this country. That with regard to the annats, the King was the sole arbiter between himself and his subjects. It rested entirely with the Pope to preserve all his annats and other prerogatives in this kingdom.

Such was the Duke's statement to the Nuncio, after swearing on his honour that he would say nothing but the plain truth, and begging him to write to Rome! The Nuncio, however, after listening to the Duke's words, could not help remarking on the conduct

1 That of the 20th, No. 922, p. 410.

2 "Et nonobstant quil leur fust donne detendre que en hyspaigne et plusieurs autres lieux icelles annates ne se prirrent, nonobstant ausy que leur fust remonstre par roullez et compez que puyz cinquante aua les dites annates avoint couste a ce royaume prez de deux milions dor."

3 "Le roy et les siens nont point de regard de uouloir despenser (?) le cas tout au rebourd."

of the King and of his ministers in this business of the annats, which has been, as I have informed Your Majesty, so different from the Duke's statement, to which most opportune observation the latter knew not how to answer, except by saying that he did not speak of the means employed, but only of the effect produced, and so avoided any further discussion on the subject.⁴

The French ambassador has also been well primed (*abbreuve*) in the same line, and I suppose has been told to come to me and represent the affair in the very same language that the Duke did to the Nuncio, for at the moment I write he is leaving my room after wasting all his rhetoric on me. I fancy also that he will write to his master much as these people desire. As to the Nuncio, he tells me that he will write to Rome the whole truth, and ask for a prompt remedy [to the impending evil].

According to the Frenchman's statement the mission of the Scottish ambassadors now going to France is to ask for a wife for their master, the King. He thought, however, that they would not be able to obtain the hand of any of the King's daughters, but might get that of Vendosme (Antoine de Bourbon) or Guyse (Claude de Lorraine), or the sister of the prince of Navarre. After this the French ambassador went on to talk about Monsieur de Savoye (Carlo), whom he strongly blamed for having accepted the county of Asta (Asti), which (he said) the King, his master, could not suffer to be in other hands than his own, any more than the duchy [418] of Milan, which (he said) was the patrimonial estate of his children. Monsieur de Savoye, he observed, was perhaps the prince who had the least title of any to the said county of Asti, and therefore the King could not bear with patience his retaining possession of it.

This last observation eliciting no answer from me the French ambassador changed the conversation and passed to another topic, &c.—London, 26th March [15]32.

Signed: "Eustace Chapuys."

Indorsed: "From the ambassador in England, 26th March. Received on the 14th of April."

French. Holograph. pp. 4.

4 "Le dit nonce apres auoir ouy les dits propos luy mis en auant les façons de fere que le roy et les siens auoient tenu au dit affere des annates, questoient bien disformes aux susdits propos, a quoy ne luy sçeut le dit due que repondre synon quil ne luy parloit point des moyens tenus ains tant seullement de leffet, et ne voulet (*sic*) entrer plus auant en disputes."