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156. EUSTACE CHAPUYS TO THE EMPEROR.

It seems, as I lately informed Monseigneur de Granvelles (sic), that Cromwell is trying to ascertain what may be the object and aim of the Calais meeting before he makes any overtures; for, although he has often promised me to look to this shortly, he has done nothing up to the present hour, nor is there any appearance of his intending to take up the [452] affair in hand. True it is that since his late illness he has only gone to Court once, four days ago; and I fancy he may have had no opportunity to speak to the King, owing to the variety and pressure of other business to be despatched. On his return from Court after his second visit I shall be able to judge better whether he is, as I suspect, dissembling; for I never entertained great hopes of these people being brought by mild terms to anything approaching a reasonable or honest termination of the affair in hand.

This King's deputies to the Calais meeting are to take their departure on the 11th inst.,—lord Rochefort, the lady's brother, going thither in the room of Cromwell, *who, many think, has declined the appointment, owing to the small chance he thinks there is of the matters there under discussion being brought to a satisfactory issue.*

Three days ago the two doctors sent by the people of Lubeck arrived here, *in order, as I have been told, to solicit money from this King towards further improving their defences against the reported invasion by the combined forces of the Palatine and duke of Olstein (Holstein). I will try, when I next see Cromwell, to ascertain what truth there may be in that, without omitting to make him understand at the same time that the contumacious behaviour and practices of the King, his master, are by no means consistent with the confirmation of friendship, which we both are looking for at present, much less with the preceding treaties of peace between the two Crowns.*

The enormity of the case, *and the confirmation of the small hope I have of this King's repentance,*¹ compel me to inform Your Majesty that **yesterday three Carthusians, and one monk of the Order of St. Brigitis, all men of good and sound doctrine, as well as exemplary life and reputation, were dragged through the streets of this capital to the place of execution, and there put to death** for no other cause than their having said and maintained that the Pope was the true chief and sovereign of the universal Christian Church, and that, according to God, reason, and conscience, it did not appertain to this King to usurp the sovereignty of the Church and supremacy over the English clergy. Which declaration, for the relief of their own and the King's conscience, the said monks went of their own accord to make before Cromwell about three weeks ago; and upon the latter pointing out the danger of such uncalled-for declaration, and advising them to take warning before matters went any farther, all resolutely answered that they would rather suffer one hundred deaths than change their opinion. About a week ago the duke of Norfolk, in representation of the King, his master, assisted by the Chancellor (Audeley), Master Cromwell, the ordinary judges of the kingdom, the [453] knights of the Garter who had attended the solemn ceremony of St. George, and several other lords, sat in court and interrogated the said monks, who made most commendable answers to all questions, and maintained their assertions until, as I have been told, it being deemed impossible to convince them by reasoning, they were told that the statute had been made, and was not to be disputed, and that unless they retracted and spoke in other terms they had better withdraw, and come next day to hear their sentence. Accordingly, the day after the monks appeared again before the Court, and were again much exhorted to retract; and upon their refusal to do so, they were, after long disputation, condemned by lay judges, and declared guilty of treason and the crime of "læsæ majestatis." There was no question of degradation, nor unfrocking. The same fate was shared by a priest for having spoken and written against

1 "Et pour la confirmacion du peu despoir que jay a la resipicencee de ce roy."

this King and his government.

I must here record a most singular fact, which is that the dukes of Richmond and Norfolk, the earl of Wiltshire (Thomas), his son (George), and several other lords and gentlemen courtiers, were present at the execution, openly and quite close to the victims. *It is even reported that the King himself showed a desire to witness the butchery; which is likely enough, considering that nearly all his courtiers, even his own privy and principal chamberlain, Master Noris, with 40 horsemen [of the King's body-guard], attended. It is also reported that the last-named gentleman was one of five, who went to the place of execution, accoutred and mounted as if he were going on an expedition to the Scotch borders, and that all carried arms secretly, and had besides masks on their faces; which tended considerably to arouse suspicion, for the mask of Norfolk's brother having given way, he was easily recognized as one of the five masked gentlemen, upon which the courtiers [suspecting that all was not right] began suddenly to leave the place one by one.*²

A rumour is afloat that this King has had summonses served on the bishop of Rochester (Fisher), on Master Mure (Sir Thomas More), on a doctor, once his confessor, as well as on one of the Queen's chaplains, and on the Princess's tutor (*precepteur*), enjoining them to swear to the statutes lately promulgated here against the Pope, and against the said Queen and Princess, as otherwise they will be dealt with as were the aforesaid monks. A term of six weeks has been granted to them to advise on the matter; and I am given to understand that all, without exception, have answered that they are ready to suffer martyrdom at the King's pleasure, and [454] that neither the six weeks' respite granted to them, nor six hundred years, if they could possibly live through them, would work any change in their opinion. *It is generally believed that they will be dispatched as were the others. And, as several worthy personages conjecture, should this King lose all shame, and get used to such cruelties, it is to be feared that the lives of both Queen and Princess will be in jeopardy, and that they will be dispatched secretly, if not in public, the King's mistress helping with all her power towards that end; for she is known to have frequently reproached the King, and told him that it was a shame for him and for the whole kingdom not to punish them as traitors and defaulters against the letter of the statutes. Indeed, the concubine is now fiercer and haughtier than ever she was, and has been bold enough to tell the King, as I hear, that he is as much indebted to her as ever man was to woman, for she has been the cause of his being cleansed from the sin in which he was living; and, moreover, that by marrying her as he had done, he had become the richest monarch that ever was in England, inasmuch as without her he would never have been able to reform the affairs of the Church in his kingdom, to his very great personal profit and that of his kingdom.*³

For some time back the Queen has been apprehensive of some bad turn or other being played to the Princess, her daughter, as appears from a letter which she wrote to me some time ago, and which I enclosed to Monseigneur de Granvelle.

Presuming that the Queen herself is writing to Your Majesty respecting her own affairs and the condition in which she is at present, I abstain from saying anything further on that topic.—London, 5 May 1535.

2 “Et tient lon quil estoit du nombre de cinq questoient la venu[s] accoustrez et monstrez (sic) comme ceulx des frontieres descosse, lesquels estoient armes a la secrette pourtant couruettes (?) deuant la visage, dont celle du frere du due de Norphock se destacha que esbranla grandement laffaire, ioinct quil fut note que partant les dictz cinq ainsi vestuz et bouchez, tous ceulx de court deslogearent (sic).”

3 “A quoy poussera de tout son pouvoir la concubine que naguieres a pluseurs fois affirme et inculpe au dit roy que ce luy estoit honte et a tout le royaume quelles nestoient pugnies comme traicteresses a la forme des statuz. La dicte concubine eat plus fiere et haultaine quelle ne fut onques, et oze bien dire au dit roy, ainsi que ientende, quil est austant tenu a elle que home pourroit estre tenu a femme, car elle estoit cause lauoir oste du peche ou il estoit, et dauantage quil sen alloit le plus riche prince que oncques fut en angleterre pour autant que sans elle il neust reforme les affaires ecclesiastiques de ce royaulme a son tres grand prouffit et aussi de tout ce peuple.”