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16 April [1532]
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934. EUSTACE CHAPUYS to the SAME [the Emperor]

(*Cipher:*) This king perceiving that his brother of France did not shew the least inclination to take his part in case of a war with the Scotch, has now adopted the expedient of making the said king and his ministers interfere so as to conclude a new treaty of peace between the two kingdoms, or at least to have the [old] truce renewed. To this end the French ambassador, at the earnest request and prayer of this king, has written home and dispatched an express [425] to Scotland, having besides spent at Court three whole days for the double purpose of attending exclusively to this Scottish affair, and persuading the king of France, his master, to try every possible means of pushing the divorce suit at Rome, and having it decided according to this king's wishes. This information I obtained from the French ambassador himself, who also told me, without my asking him, that considering the close friendship and alliance which existed between them his master could not do less than take up this king's cause. He said more; he hoped Your Imperial Majesty would not take his interference in bad part, as the affair was one in which you were not personally concerned, and that you ought not after all to take so much trouble for a woman.¹ "If this king (continued the ambassador) wishes to be married again he should not listen to those who advise him to waste time and money in that pursuit, but marry at once the woman he likes most as king Louis [XII.] did in similar circumstances."²

Against these arguments of the ambassador I strongly remonstrated, saying that it was Your Majesty's duty to see justice done in an affair of this kind, not so much perhaps on account of the Queen, your aunt, as for the sake of this king's own honour and conscience, and to obviate the bad example and scandal given throughout Christendom. The king of France (I said) had hitherto held very different language, and as to king Louis his case was not the same. This remark of mine did not please the ambassador; he remained silent and thoughtful for some time as if he were sorry for what he had said, and then changing the conversation said to me that though the Scottish ambassadors had actually obtained a safeconduct to go to France, passing through England, he believed they had already crossed over to that country. He further added that he had had letters from the French ambassador residing in Venice stating that an intrigue had been detected there for the Spaniards to watch their opportunity and get possession of that city, at which the Signory was exceedingly hurt and displeased. Which piece of news, as I am told, the Frenchman has divulged with great glee all over this place, imagining perhaps that it might eventually be the cause of alienating the affections of the Venetians. He ended by telling me that lately, as he was sending an express to France with important despatches, the messenger was stopped on the road between this and Dover and the packet taken from him, at which he (the ambassador) had been very angry, and that although he had done his utmost to recover the letters he had not yet succeeded. [426]

(*Common writing:*) Yesterday, after presenting Your Majesty's letter in favour of a poor man from Antwerp (*ung povre homme denvers*) the King deliberately asked me what news were contained in a packet of letters sent by his deputies at the conference "pour l'affaire de la contractation, "and which being addressed to me had been forwarded that very morning. My answer was that the packet in question was from Maistre Jehan de la Saulx.³ Upon which the King immediately observed that the pretensions of the said La Saulx and

1 "Et que vostre maieste ne le prendroit en male part veu que ce nestoit chose contre icelle ne que luy touchast beaucop, et que pour une femme vostre maieste nen deuroit [faire] tant destime; et dauantage ma dit, etc."

2 In 1499 Louis XII. repudiated his first wife Jeanne de France, daughter of Louis XI., to marry Anne de Bretagne, the widow of Charles VIII.

3 This name is generally written Le Sauch.

the rest of the Imperial deputies were most exorbitant, since they refused taking in payment and compensation for their claims the very substantial offers (such he called them) that had been made by his subjects, and that if through inordinate and selfish motives (*par affection disordonnee*) the Low Countries now disdained the advantages and great profit which commercial intercourse with this country afforded them, and thus gave occasion for his English subjects to follow another course and take their goods elsewhere, they would very soon find that they had sustained irreparable loss when, though they might repent of their error, it would no longer be time to bring matters back to the state they were in before. The King owned that any change in commercial relations might at first affect the interests of his subjects, but that in the end (he was sure) “they would be the winners; besides which (he said) it would be wrong to alter such relations, as no one could say what might happen in consequence, were the treaties of peace and alliance between the two countries to be broken. “This last sentence the King uttered half between his teeth not so clearly as the rest.

My reply in general terms was that Your Imperial Majesty had always done everything in your power to maintain peace, amity, and friendly intercourse between the two countries in this instance as well as in others, as he (the King) had no doubt observed. To which assertion the King made no reply, but went on complaining of the Imperial deputies, who (he said) were proceeding in the matter merely out of selfish regard to their own interests, not out of zeal for justice, and he at last appealed to my judgment saying: “If you have carefully examined the papers you must admit at once the truth of my remark.”

Now in consequence of some English merchants residing in Flanders having written to their colleagues in this city that there was a question of imposing certain duties on English goods the ships that were here ready to sail for Bergues⁴ have by the King’s orders been stopped for eight or ten days, as it was thought imprudent to let them go under such circumstances. The importunities of the merchants at [427] last prevailed, and while the affair was being discussed in the Privy Council (*cipher:*) the duke of Norfolk came in and announced to the archbishops sitting therein that the Turk had made most formidable preparations to invade the dominions of Your Majesty and of the king of the Romans, wishing no doubt to imply by that, that you would have shortly your hands full and many other things to think of save molesting your neighbours. And thereupon the Duke recommended the officers in charge of the Customs to look more closely than they had done hitherto into all goods and merchandize entering or leaving this country, and most strictly oblige all those who imported goods from abroad to consign them to a merchant of this place.⁵

I find also that though the King had some time ago sent the duke of Norfolk and others [of his ministers] to speak to the Papal Nuncio about the annats, he himself has now sent for him to signify and make him write to His Holiness that the Bill reducing the amount of the said annats would in the end prove highly beneficial [to him] provided his (the King’s) demands [respecting the divorce] were granted. The Nuncio, however, that he might the better inform His Holiness of the whole affair, asked for a copy of the Bill and ordinances to that effect but it has been refused to him.

(*Common writing:*) Parliament (*les Estatz*) has met again, and to-day the Chancellor, the duke of Norfolk and several other grandees (*grans*) went to the Commons for the purpose, as I am told, of urging the necessity there is at Dover of having a good and safe harbour, also of fortifying the frontiers of Scotland, and preparing in time of peace against any future wars, which, in my opinion, is equivalent to saying that a new tax (*taille*) is about to be imposed on the people. It has not yet been stated in public what amount of money the King requires for this purpose, but it is reported that he is to have one tithe from

4 That Chapuys frequently wrote Belgues for *Bergues* has already been shown; he may on this occasion have written *Bergues* for Belges, according to the almost general custom of Spaniards and Italians at this time, who readily changed *l* into *r* and vice versa. If so by Belges, “la Flandre Belgique” is probably meant here.

5 “Et quilz facent obliger plus estroietment ceulx qui appourtent marchandise du dehors de la connectir (*sic*) en aultre du royaulme.”

the clergy and one and a half from all the rest, and it is generally believed that Parliament will grant him anything he wishes for in this way, since the members have been elected at his pleasure (*car les deputez ont este choysiz a sa main*). Some, however, think *that when the tax comes to be levied there will be riots in the country*. No other measure of importance has yet been brought forward.

(Cipher:) **On Easter Day the Provincial of the Minor Friars preached in their convent at Grynuyche (Greenwich) in the royal presence. They say that the King was much displeased with the sermon owing to the Provincial having alluded, though in general terms, to the fact that the excessive affection of princes and false counsellors often precluded the knowledge of truth. And I hear that the King himself, happening to converse privately with the said friar after the sermon, heard from his lips what was not much to his taste, [428] for the Provincial spoke openly to him about the royal marriage in contemplation, telling him in plain words that if he did not take care he would be in great danger of losing his kingdom, since all his subjects, high and low, were opposed to it. It appears that the King hearing these words from the mouth of the Provincial, and being unable to make him change his opinion on the subject, dissembled at first, and would not shew his temper at the time, but readily granted him afterwards the permission he asked to go to Thoulouse [in France]. No sooner, however, had the Provincial taken his departure than the King, in defiance of the rules of the Order, and the will of the Guardian of the convent at Greenwich, insisted that a chaplain of his household should preach another sermon in his presence at the very same convent. The chaplain began at once to refute the arguments of the Provincial, adding that he wished his opponent were present that he might answer him. Hearing which the Guardian interrupted him, and said that in the absence of his minister he was ready and willing to take his place and respond for him. The King's chaplain then was bold enough to assert at the end of his sermon that all the universities and doctors had declared the divorce to be lawful, which being heard by the said Guardian, he lost all patience, got up and said within the King's hearing that the whole of what the chaplain had said was a fabrication and a lie. So angry was the King at this speech of the Franciscan guardian that he has since caused all the bishops of his kingdom to write a letter to the Provincial (who hearing of the affair returned immediately to Greenwich) commanding him to deprive the Guardian of his office in the Order, and have him punished for the offence. This, however, the Provincial has flatly refused to do, and the King in consequence yesterday ordered them both to prison, where they will remain until through fear or persuasion they are induced to change their opinion. But the King is much mistaken, for as both have assured me many a time they will rather die than own that they are in the wrong. The Provincial, I must observe, had gone on the Continent for the express purpose of having a book printed in favour of the Queen rather than of attending the General Chapter of his Order as he had publicly announced.**

(Common writing:) **Meanwhile the King fancies that he can improve his case by ordering the Clergy throughout the country to preach in favour of his divorce, but I should think that the effect will be quite the reverse, for the people cry out most incredibly at it.**

I have already informed Your Majesty that the duke of Norfolk had assured me many a time that in order to remove all suspicion of his aiming at a marriage between his son and the Princess he was designing some suitable alliance for him. He has now accomplished his purpose, and married his son to the daughter of a nobleman of this kingdom; but the Duke must have had very urgent reasons for acting thus, [429] since his son will not be in a condition to marry for the next three years, and besides the lady is neither rich nor a very desirable alliance otherwise. *And I have been told that not only has the Lady Anne been the promoter of this marriage, but she has almost compelled the Duke to take that step lest he should aim at the hand of the Princess, and that his credit and favour with the King increasing he may hereafter attempt something against her.*

As the Queen herself writes to Your Majesty about her own private affairs, I will say no

more about them, &c.—London, 16th April [15]32.

Signed: “Eustace Chapuys.”

Addressed: “To the Emperor.”

French. Holograph partly in cipher, pp. 7.