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44. EUSTACE CHAPUYS TO THE SAME [THE HIGH COMMANDER OF LEON].

Since my last of the 12th, nothing of sufficient importance has occurred to require a long despatch, the more so that I doubt whether this one will reach in safety, for on Sunday last the officer of Calais opened the two letter-bags from Flanders,¹ and examined their contents. Perceiving, however, that one of them was entirely filled with merchants' letters, he allowed the courier to pass with it. The other, in which was a packet of letters from the Queen, governess [of the Low Countries], was handed over to a gentleman, and then with a new cover to it brought here by the said Calais gentleman, who arrived in Court the day before yesterday (the 14th), in company with the courier. As my letters were not forthcoming I this morning, sent a message to Cremuel (Cromwell) inquiring for them. His answer to the man, bearer of my message, was that what the officer of Calais had done was entirely owing to certain strange words uttered by the courier himself, and that he could assure me upon his faith and honour that the packet had not been touched or opened, and would be delivered to me this very evening with such excuses and explanations as I could not fail to accept. *I have not the least doubt that great efforts will be made to colour so unwarrantable an action, but in [124] my opinion it will be a very difficult task for them to disguise their offensiveness and wickedness; for, in the first place, the excuse given about the courier has no weight at all.*² *Had he been arrested in consequence of words uttered by him at Calais, that was no reason for tampering with the letterbags destined to the merchants of this place, who could not be made responsible for the courier's words. As soon as I know what excuses these people make for so flagrant a breach of faith, I will immediately apprise Your Majesty thereof, but in the meantime I have sent an express to the Queen Regent, your sister, informing her of what has happened, and warning her to be in future more guarded about our official correspondence.*

*The Scottish ambassadors are in daily communication with these ministers. Besides their attending Court almost daily, Cremuel (Cromwell) and the Chancellor (Audeley) go often to visit them in their lodgings, where they are to dine together this very day. There is besides a rumour that one of them is shortly to return home, for the purpose, as it is said, of more closely binding the King, his master, to certain designs of this one;—which are, as some people say, the intervention of Scotland, England, and France in the affairs of the Continent; which, by-the-by, I do not believe possible, unless there be first an agreement between the king of Scotland and this one, who, in this particular negotiation, suspects the French exceedingly.*³ *One of the said Scottish ambassadors has twice within the last few days sent me word to the effect that nothing had yet been settled, and that if there was, he would let me know. I have not heard from him since. No doubt his frequent communications with the King's ministers have prevented him lately from calling, if, as people here seem to think, negotiations have already begun.*

This morning some one has called and told me that the bishop of Rochester (Fisher), the late Chancellor (More), and several other worthy people, have been sent to the Tower for their refusing to swear to the statutes lately passed, and that for fear of a similar punishment the Lord Mayor⁴ and the corporation of this city have tendered their oath.—

1 "Attendu que le debitis de Callaix ouvrist les bougelles des deux courriers que venoient de Flandres." "Debitis" is the name given at that time in Calais to the chief of the Customs.

2 "Si crois-je quilz auront bien affere de bien le colorer qui ny ait de lordure et malignite, et desia lexcuse que dessus nest legitime ne vraysemblable."

3 "Il est bruyt que lung des dicts ambassadeurs doit en bref aller vers le roy leur maistre pour estraindre (*sic*) les affaires, et dient aucuns quil se traicte de l'interuencion du dit [roy] descosse dela mer avec celluy de France et cestuy, ce que je ne crois, si ny a premierement appointement entre le dict roy descosse et cestuy, le quel en cest endroit a pour tres suspectz les françoys."

4 At this time Sir John Champneys was Lord Mayor of London.

London, 12 April 1534.

Signed: "Eustace Chapuys."

French. Original. pp. 2.