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598. EUSTACE CHAPUYS to the EMPEROR.

The day before yesterday, the 11th inst., this King received letters from Rome of the 20th ult., which were by no means agreeable to him and to the Lady [Anne], as Your Majesty will judge by what I shall say hereafter. Last night the duke of Nolpholc (Norfolk) sent to ask me to *go* and meet him at the convent of the Grey Friars at nine in the morning, as he wished to speak to me. I went thither at the appointed hour and found the Duke, attended by the Treasurer and Dr. Estienne (Stephen Gardiner), the King's first secretary, Taking me into a secret chapel (*une chapelle bien secrete*) the Duke spoke first and said he had sent for me for the express purpose of acquainting me (both as ambassador of Your Imperial Majesty and as a friend whom he esteemed and knew to be well inclined and desirous of peace) with a statute made by the Estates of the kingdom, and which had been promulgated and preconized, against whomsoever should dare to execute mandates or provisions emanating from the Roman Court to the detriment of the honour, or authority of the King and kingdom. During the last two days they had received advices from Rome that the Pope, at the earnest request of the Queen's people, was on the point of issuing certain decretals very injurious to the King and to them, which should the Pope himself come to England to have them executed, not even they would be strong enough to save him from the popular fury. For which reason, he said, he begged and entreated me that should such decretals come to my hands I would not interpose to have them executed. **After which the Duke went on to say that the popes in old times had in vain attempted to usurp in England certain authority and prerogatives; the Kings predecessors on the throne had never consented to it, [23] and it was not to be expected that king Henry should suffer it at the present moment. He further went on to say that kings were before popes; the King [of England] was absolute master in his own kingdom, and acknowledged no superior. That an Englishman, that is Brennus, had once reduced Rome under his obedience. That Constantius had reigned in England, and that Helen, the mother of Constantine, was English by birth, and several other things as little pertinent to the matter in question as the above.**

After warmly thanking the Duke for the good-will he bore me, I told him in substance that my curiosity did not go so far as to inquire into the statutes and ordinances of their kingdom, by which I did not presume that they wished to bind the agents and ministers of Your Imperial Majesty. Respecting the rights which His Holiness assumed to exercise here, in England, though I had read something about them in their national chronicles, I had nothing to say. I did not wish to dispute the right and power which the Pope could exercise against kings and kingdoms disobedient to his authority. That was a notorious fact in full practice in our very days. If they wished to discuss this question in any way, or treat of matters concerning His Holiness, they had better address themselves to his Nuncio in England. In my humble opinion (I said) it would have been far more reasonable and expedient for them to procure the removal and eradication of those very evils which had caused the Pope to decree the mandates to which they alluded, than try by [royal] authority and against all reason to impede the judicial execution of the same, since the Pope proceeding, as he does, by the ways of justice could not do injury or detriment to the privileges of the kingdom or royal authority.

I told them besides that they might be sure that Your Majesty not only would not allow the proceedings to go on, but would never consent to an unreasonable sentence against the King, whose close ally, friend, and relative you were, nor against his kingdom, which you were prepared to protect and defend as well as your own. For my part, if I had orders from Your Majesty to procure the executions of any Papal decrees, they might be persuaded that all their warnings would not stand in the way of my duty, for whatever might be the

result of my act, I should faithfully execute the Imperial commands. As to the nation at large, I did not think that they would offer resistance to the Pope's decretals, but on the contrary help on their execution with all their power, for the principal cause for which the English people had begun to hate the Pope was their, imagining (as they did at first) that he wished to carry on the King's suit against the Queen. They ought to know that truth and justice had such inherent power that they must reign and rule everywhere, even among thieves (*larrons*). and in Hell itself; and that there is no nation, however uncivilised and rude, [24] that does not pay respect to them. "Believe me, (said I to the Duke) whatever fluctuations the Church of Christ may be subjected to, she was never so depressed, nor left so unprovided with defenders (*fauteurs*) as not to have been able, by her own authority, or by the favour and protection of truth and justice, to carry the world with her, nations as well as princes, who are especially instituted for the maintenance of the same." They (the English) had no reason to complain of Your Majesty, if after exhausting all the means of conciliation, and using all manner of gracious persuasions to recall the King to his duty, you caused justice to take her course. His reply was that they did not intend to complain of Your Majesty, but as to the Pope, they expected no justice at his hands, for if he had only chosen to do his duty he might have allowed the King to divorce his present wife and take another, as his predecessors in the papacy had done with other princes. These the Duke did not name, but I, fancying that kings Charles and Louis of France, and Ladislas of Hungary were meant, explained the difference in their case; and on his insisting that the archbishop of Canterbury was the only ecclesiastic to whom the cognizance of this present affair belonged, proved to him the contrary by many legitimate reasons, adding that it was a common saying, but a very true one, that things badly founded and badly begun could not have a good end, and that I wondered much that he (who in all other matters was considered most wise and clear-headed) could be so blind in this particular one (as if God had obscured his understanding) as to make the archbishop of Canterbury and other prelates subscribe certain letters addressed to the Pope, by means of which letters the said archbishop and prelates had notoriously rendered themselves suspicious, and incapable of associating with good Christians, a remark to which (though I begged him and Dr. Stephen to give an answer) they knew not what to say.¹

Perceiving, however, that they seemed more pleased than annoyed at my speech; thinking also that in the state of fear and doubt in which they were owing to the news lately received from Rome, my preaching to them might be of some avail, I seized the opportunity as a favourable one, and commenced to say: That though until that day I had carefully abstained from entering into a polemic with them on matters connected with the pretended divorce, since I saw that neither remonstrances nor prayers were of any use whatever, and that justice must needs have its course, yet since the occasion offered itself, and they seemed disposed to discuss the subject, I would at once tell them my mind. I did not hesitate to assure them [25] that had Your Imperial Majesty, who, owing to your many kingdoms so widely separated from each other, is in more need of a large number of male children than any other crowned prince, found yourself in the situation in which the King is, and likewise free to contract matrimony, but having such a daughter as the Princess [Mary], and should the King request you, as earnestly as you do request him, not to marry a second time, you would not have hesitated one single moment to please him in this respect in order to avoid the scandal and inconveniences whereof the Duke himself had once spoken to me, but that Your Majesty would willingly refrain from taking such a step. On this very topic I made them suitable observations, proving to them that Your Majesty could not possibly have taken another course in that affair, and that you were in duty bound to take up the defence of the Queen, your aunt. I told them that should the Princess marry there was a much greater chance of the King having thus a legitimate successor to his crown than by begetting a natural one in some other way, better able, and with greater hope of seeing very soon a masculine descent. "Besides," I added, "if it be true, as the

¹ "Par les quelles lettres quant yl ny auroit autre rayson du monde les dit contubery et autres prelatz se sont notoyrement renduz suspectz et forclus de toute cognoyssance, a quoy non obstant que le [s] requisse ne me sçurent donner

Duke himself said to me once, that the true and legitimate right of king Henry to the throne of England proceeded from the female line, that is to say, from his mother, it seemed as if God, reason, and honesty counselled such a course, since he was the father of so noble, virtuous, and accomplished a princess." To these arguments of mine the Duke knew not what to reply, except that, nevertheless, if the King *could* marry again he would certainly take another wife, by which expression, if he *could*, I was particularly struck as it was the first time that I heard it from his lips.²

Among other casual remarks which would take too much time to relate, I told them that Your Majesty and the Queen, your aunt, had more reason to be discontented with the Pope in this business than the King himself, whom he had gratified and favoured as much as he could. Upon which the Duke, coming to speak incidentally about the Council, said in plain terms that it might perhaps happen that His Holiness would be a loser by the bargain (*ne sen trouveroit le mellieur marchant*). I replied that they (the King and his ministers), had partly been, without their being aware of it the cause of its convocation, for the Pope wishing to justify himself as to the many slandering and calumnious reports circulated here about his person and acts, and in order to shew to the World that he had never given the King and kingdom cause to proceed against him or the ecclesiastical order, had in fact waived his fears and scruples, and finally given his sanction to the measure. Nothing, moreover, could be better for the King than the meeting of a [26] General Council, wherein he might bring forward his complaints of His Holiness, if he has any, or propose the reformation of the English clergy, of which the Duke had often spoken to me. His Holiness had acted in this case as a good prelate and the shepherd of the Christian flock, since being, as he is supreme judge in such matters, he consented to be judged by others.

The Duke's answer was that the Pope had no business to interfere in affairs of this kind, except to decree and discuss the cases of heresy.

Though the friendship now existing between *Your Imperial Majesty and the Pope*, and the sense of honour and duty by which I consider myself bound, prompted me *to take up the defence of the Pope* in this instance, yet I must confess that had I not been compelled to do so by *the accusations of the Duke and his colleagues I might not have carried my apology so far*.

After the above arguments (which I think were taken in good part) the Duke went on to say that some days ago he had had occasion to shew to the French ambassador a copy of the inscription on the tomb of king Arthur (I could not understand at the time to which of the Arthurs he alluded), which inscription he produced in a parchment roll out of his pouch and handed over to me, adding that he had caused it to be transcribed for my use. I looked at it, and saw only these words written in large letters PATRICIVS ARCTVRVS BRITANNIE, GALLIE, GERMANIE, DACIE IMPERATOR. My answer was that I was sorry to see that he was not entitled also Emperor of Asia, IMPERATOR ASIE, as he might have left the present king Henry for his successor in such vast dominions; but that as all things in this world were so subject to change, it was reasonable that an English monarch of our days should conquer a portion of the provinces above named, since in those very countries men had been found who had conquered and held for a long time this very kingdom of England, where the succession of William of Normandy still lasted. If by shewing me the inscription the Duke meant that the present king Henry might be such a conqueror as king Arthur, I could not help observing that the Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans had also made great conquests, and everyone knew what had become of their empire.

In short, I told them that it seemed to me as if the King, their master, had much better allow the Pope's mandates to be intimated to him and to two or three more persons whom they concerned, than follow the example of Philip, the father of Alexander [the Great], who would not dismiss from his service a man who was continually criticizing his own acts and speaking ill of him, because, he said, he preferred the slanderer to remain where

2 "A ce ne me sçeut le duc que respondre sinon bien froydement que non obstant tout cella, que si le roy pouvoit encoures se voudroit yl bien marier, de la quelle condition (sil pouvoit) ne mavoit encoures usé."

he was, and spread his calumnies within the precincts of his palace, to sending him away to spread the same [27] through the World. Should the King for the same reason oppose the execution of the Papal mandates here in England, they might perhaps be printed abroad and circulated, thus making the affair food for public scandal, which after all would be worse for him than if he had graciously received the intimations in due obedience to the Holy Apostolic See. This last objection of mine provoked no answer from the Duke or from those present, *and certainly, should the King obstinately persist in his determination, it appears to me that it would be expedient* to have the whole of the Papal decisions (*provisions*) from the very beginning printed and widely circulated.

This very day the duke of Norfolk has notified to the Papal Nuncio the pains and dangers to which any person attempting to have the mandate executed exposes himself. I am told that the notification has been made in rather sharp words, and that the Duke said to him how surprised he was to hear after the fine words and promises of His Holiness to cardinal de Grammont, that the Pope had sent orders to proceed in the suit, and still more to find that His Holiness had already made or was about to make certain provisions and mandates highly detrimental to the supreme authority of the King and kingdom, whereas he (the Duke) had more than once told him that the King would not proceed “de facto” in the affair, in which he assured him there was now less probability than ever of advancing, whatever might be said to the contrary. The Nuncio had no leisure, as he tells me, to respond or make any observations save that he knew nothing about the mandates to which he alluded, but that if the Pope sent them to him for execution there would be no pain or danger that would deter him from doing so, and that he should consider himself happy to run any risk or die for the sake of his lord and master.

The said Nuncio at my request has called to-day on the archbishop of Canterbury, on whom a good deal of the good and bad in the Queen’s business principally depends, to remonstrate with him and exhort him to have due regard to God, to his own conscience, to the authority of the Pope, and to the justice, welfare, and tranquillity of this kingdom. I am told that whilst the Nuncio and the Archbishop were together the King’s confessor, one of the promoters of this affair, came into the room. Owing to this circumstance the Archbishop had only time to tell the Nuncio that the King had come personally to his private dwelling, to try and win him over to his cause. His answer had been that on no account would he act against the Pope’s prohibition and his own conscience, and that next Tuesday he would say more about it; but the arrival of the King’s confessor, as I said above, had put an end to their conversation on the subject. I shall not fail to remind the Nuncio and prepare him for his visit, that we may, if possible, unravel the mystery, and learn what the King and his ministers [28] intend to do. The Nuncio, however, has not yet received an answer to the Papal brief addressed to the King respecting the convocation of a General Council, and fears that the answer will not come until that of the Most Christian King he known. Neither has the messenger sent to the king of Scotland with a similar brief returned from that country, though he is expected back every day.

I hear from a very good quarter that this King *was never in such a fright and perplexity as since he has load the last news from Rome*, so much so that the gentlemen of his chamber tell me that ever since he passes sleepless nights, and so does the Lady [Anne].

Yesterday the prelates met to deliberate and propose what matters were to be laid before Parliament, but there was no mention made of the Queen’s case, which circumstance, added to what the duke of Norfolk said to the Nuncio, is a sign that they do not intend at present bringing it before Parliament, that the session will be a short one, and that the assembly will be prorogued.

I have been told by an eye witness that when Jehan Jocquin was about to leave for France, and had received his last despatches he missed a memorandum which he himself had placed in the King’s hands; and upon one of the royal secretaries telling him that it should be sent after him, as the King had not yet perused it owing to his being ill in bed, in consequence of the grief and anger he had lately gone through, the ambassador said “No excuse of that kind will do for me. I must have my memorandum back and will not depart

without it.”³ Upon which they were obliged to go to the King, wake him from his sleep, and bring back the paper which Jocquin immediately threw into the fire, from which I conclude that there must have been something very important in it.

The same informer tells me that 4,000 or 5,000 crs. which were a year ago given to a German, about whom I wrote in one of my despatches, were spent in *procuring the opinions*[of lawyers and divines] in Germany, but that Luther and his followers have decided against the King in the divorce case, which circumstance is in my opinion enough to increase his head-ache and prevent his sleep. I beg to be excused if, in pursuance of orders received, and for the better fulfilment of my charge, I have been obliged to enter into such trifling details, &c.—London, 13th January [1531].

Signed: “Eustace Chapuys.”

French. Holograph. pp. 8.

3 "Car le roy lavoit questoit au lit, par conclusion bien marry et courrose quil estoit."