

From *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, vol. 5: 1531-1532*, edited by James Gairdner. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1880, pp. 59-60.

March [1531]
Vienna Archives

120. CHAPUYS TO CHARLES V.

The Jew called hither, finding his first opinion not accepted, has forged another equally illfounded, and says it is indeed lawful to marry a brother's widow, provided it is done with the will and intention to raise issue for the deceased brother; but without such intention the marriage is unlawful, and that God has reprov'd such unions by the mouth of Moses, so that issue shall not proceed of them, or shall not live long; and that it has been seen that the male children the King had of the Queen scarcely lived at all; from which he inferred that the King had not the said intention, and consequently that the marriage is unlawful. The Parliament continues, but has done nothing, as I am told, and it is supposed the King keeps it sitting for some mysterious purpose. Everybody is tired of it; and every day some one asks leave of absence, which is never refused to those who take the Queen's part, so that it is expected that the divorce will be treated of, and that the King is only waiting for favorable news from France. By feasting La Guiche, who is still here, they will probably get all they want. He banquetted this Shrovetide in company with the Lady and several others, when the King drank to him in the name of his master, and repeated that if he could be always assured of the reciprocal friendship between the king of France and him, he would not [60] fear any others. The King had not yet been at the Parliament since it recommenced, till late yesterday, when he remained an hour and a half or two hours in the House of Lords, and did not go down to that of the Commons. He expressed to them his desire for justice and the defence of the kingdom; and afterwards desired them to take into consideration certain liberties of the Church in this kingdom by which malefactors had hitherto full immunity. He also called their attention to the matter of the bishop of Rochester's cook, a very extraordinary case.

There was in the Bishop's house about ten days ago some pottage, of which all who tasted, that is nearly all the servants, were brought to the point of death, though only two of them died, and some poor people to whom they had given it. The good Bishop, happily, did not taste it. The cook was immediately seized, at the instance of the Bishop's brother, and, it is said, confessed he had thrown in a powder, which he had been given to understand would only hocus (*tromper*) the servants without doing them any harm. I do not yet know whom he has accused of giving him this powder, nor the issue of the affair. The King has done well to show dissatisfaction at this; nevertheless he cannot wholly avoid some suspicion, if not against himself, whom I think too good to do such a thing, at least against the lady and her father. The said bishop of Rochester is very ill, and has been so ever since the acknowledgment made by the clergy, of which I wrote. But, notwithstanding his indisposition, he has arranged to leave this tomorrow by the King's leave. I know not why, being ill, he is anxious to go on a journey, especially as he will get better attendance of physicians here than elsewhere, unless it be that he will no longer be a witness of things done against the Church, or that he fears there is some more powder in reserve for him. If the King desired to treat of the affair of the Queen, the absence of the said Bishop, and of the bishop of Durham, late of London, would be unfortunate. I have learned that Tallebout (the earl of Shrewsbury) keeps in his hands, as belongs to his office, the queen of England's crown; and since neither he nor any of his house ever incurred reproach, he would take care not to allow it to be put upon any other head; in which opinion, I believe, he will persist, both for the sake of his own honor and for the affection he bears to the Queen. **In this he will also be supported by his great friend the Chancellor,¹ who, as I have formerly written, has conducted himself most virtuously in this matter of the Queen, and certainly showed himself as well inclined to your Majesty as could be. He is the true father and protector of your Majesty's subjects.** Whenever any man of my

1 The word moings occurs here, apparently reversing the sense of the passage, but is evidently erroneous.

suite has been at court, he has broken off conversation with everybody else to attend to our business, and every one whom I have recommended to him he has despatched with a favorable answer.

At Calais lately they opened all the letters that came from Rome, even that which was addressed to the cousin of Gregory Casale resident here, of which some have been detained two or three days. It is thought that in them there has been some disclosure of intelligence of the late Cardinal's physician,² who, since the receipt of the said letters, has been kept in a chamber in the duke of Norfolk's lodgings, for what reason is not yet known. I have today obtained a copy of certain articles drawn up on the King's part to be notified to the Parliament, I know not to what effect exactly, but certainly not to the advantage of the Pope. You will learn by them more than I can write. London, 1 March.

Hol., Fr., pp. 4, from a modern copy.