CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

European History

This series includes accounts of historical events and movements by eye-witnesses and contemporaries, as well as landmark studies that assembled significant source materials or developed new historiographical methods. It covers the social and political history of continental Europe from the Renaissance to the end of the nineteenth century, and its broad range includes works on Russia and the Balkans, revolutionary France, the papacy and the inquisition, and the Venetian state archives.

Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII

Sebastiano Giustinian (1460–1543) served as the Venetian ambassador to the court of Henry VIII between 1515 and 1519, during which time he sent back frequent and detailed dispatches to the Signory of Venice. In 1515, when Giustinian arrived at the English court, Henry was only twenty-four and described as 'expert in arms, and of great valour, and most excellent in his personal endowments'. In this first of two volumes, Giustinian's letters paint a vivid portrait of a diplomat's life at court, covering treaty negotiations, meetings with Cardinal Wolsey, and the personal qualities of the monarch and his queen. Translator and editor Rawdon Lubbock Brown (1806–83) had an unrivalled knowledge of the Venetian archives: he was the first historian to appreciate the importance of the dispatches sent from London by the Venetian ambassadors. His edition of Giustinian's correspondence provided an entirely new insight into Henry's reign when it was first published in 1854.

Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII

Selection of Despatches
Written by the Venetian Ambassador,
January 12th, 1515, to July 26th, 1519

Volume 1

Sebastiano Giustiniani
Edited and translated by
Rawdon Lubbock Brown

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paolo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108060011

This edition first published 1854
This digitally printed version 2013

ISBN 978-1-108-06001-1 Paperback

FOUR YEARS

AT THE

COURT OF HENRY VIII.

SELECTION OF DESPATCHES

WRITTEN BY THE VENETIAN AMBASSADOR,

SEBASTIAN GIUSTINIAN,

AND ADDRESSED TO THE SIGNORY OF VENICE,

JANUARY 12TH 1515, TO JULY 26TH 1519.

TRANSLATED BY RAWDON BROWN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 65, CORNHILL.
1854.

London :
Printed by STEWART & MURRAY,
Old Bailey.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.

VOL. I.

ERRATA IN VOL. I.

Page	45,	line	26,	*for*	proficiscitentibus,	*read*	proficiscentibus.
,,	76,	,,	9,	,,	delegnamente,	,,	degnamente.
,,	133,	,,	26,	,,	manfrino,	,,	manfrini.
,,	113,	,,	26,	,,	to,	,,	for.
,,	138,	,,	23,	,,	the,	,,	these.
,,	160,	,,	21,	,,	Mr. Lanch,	,,	Dr. Karl Lanz.
,,	169,	,,	3,	,,	ambassadors,	,,	ambassador.
,,	214,	,,	15,	,,	Zanini,	,,	Zanina.
,,	262,	,,	34,	,,	at,	,,	as at.
,,	273,	,,	3,	,,	Esté,	,,	Este (no accent over).
,,	280,	,,	33,	,,	the date of this,	,,	this.
,,	288,	,,	4,	,,	Vienna,	,,	Verona.
,,	288,	,,	30,	,,	? not importunate,	,,	now importunate.
,,	327,	,,	12,	,,	Fioramondo,	,,	Fioramonda.

INTRODUCTION.

THE archives of Venice, as might be anticipated from the nature of her ancient institutions, are singularly rich in the materials of history: the machinery of a republican government, whose executive committees kept minutes of their proceedings, and whose legislative assemblies required numerous reports for their information, had the effect of rapidly multiplying State papers.

The department of foreign affairs possesses unusually ample documents. The ambassadors of the Republic kept up a double correspondence with the Doge (to whom, by official etiquette, all their communications were addressed): the ordinary and ostensible despatches were intended for the information of the College and Senate, while the more secret and confidential were reserved for the Doge and the Council of Ten.

But besides this minute correspondence, which

commenced on the ambassador's departure from Venice, and was not closed till he again reached the Lagoons, it had been enacted by the Grand Council in 1268, and again in 1296, that each ambassador, on his return, should make to the College and Senate a general report on the government, condition of the country, and character of the potentate to whom he had been accredited. These, together with the instructions addressed by the Signory to its diplomatic agents, and all other papers connected with its foreign relations, were carefully arranged and consigned to the ducal chancery. Fortunately, a considerable portion of the State records thus accumulated in the course of so many centuries, escaped the patriotic excesses which followed the French invasion, and the fall of the old Republic in 1797; and, having safely passed through all subsequent vicissitudes, they are now under the care of the "Keeper of the Imperial Archives,"* in the ex-Franciscan monastery at Venice,

* At p 188-189, vol. ii., it has been stated in a note, written in 1851, that the archives of Venice contain no copies of any missives sent by the State in the spring of 1518 to the ambassador in England. This assertion it is now in the power of the translator to correct.

A fresh arrangement of the *Cancellaria Secreta* was completed by the Signor Cesare Foucard, under the guidance of the Imperial Equerry and Director of the Venice Archives, the Cavaliere Fabio Mutinelli, whose exertions, coupled with those of his officials, namely, the above-mentioned Signor Foucard, and Signor Teodoro Toderini, have rendered the ex-monastery of the Franciscans one of the most interesting and impressive sights in the lagoons, from the excellent method adopted by him in filling its spacious corridors with the records of a thousand years!

The labours of these gentlemen brought to light a variety of valuable documents, including the minutes of the despatches, addressed by the College to the Venetian ambassadors at foreign courts; and through the

where, under certain restrictions, they are accessible to the student.

But before transmitting the official documents to the government, it seems to have been the general practice to retain a copy for the family library, or muniment room (the *archivio*), of the ambassador himself; and thence, or perhaps from the notes of some one who heard them read in the Senate and committed their substance to paper, these "reports," not unfrequently even in early times, and despite the prohibition of the Signory, found their way to the public. It is surprising that a government so jealous, whose omniscient activity and mysterious ubiquity were at once so much vaunted and dreaded, should have permitted its orders on so delicate a point to be infringed; but these interesting documents early excited public curiosity, and supply follows demand, even in the middle ages, and in spite of Inquisitors of State.

It is certain, that as early as the close of the sixteenth century several of these diplomatic fragments got into print and were sold, even in the Venetian territory. Orazio Busino, a subject of the Signory, who visited Oxford in the year 1618, mentions having seen in the Bodleian library manu-

kindness of Cavaliere Mutinelli, I lately perused the one alluded to by Sebastian Giustinian in his letter from Lambeth of the 22nd May, 1518.

It is dated Venice, 20th April 1518, and mentions, among other things, that the French ambassador in Spain had told the Venetian ambassador there that Francis I. meant to seize Tournai and Calais.

script copies of many of these State papers, which had found their way there (he complains) "in the teeth of the Senate."* And in the year 1668, John Bulteale published in London a translation of the Report on the Papal Court, by the noble Correr, whom, in admiration of his sagacity, he styles a "*Politique Astrologer*."

On the fall of the ancient Republic, whatever restraint had been imposed on the divulgation of these documents was at once removed. In those disastrous times, and the subsequent half century, many noble families were ruined, or became extinct, and much property changed hands. Many of the ancient palaces were sold, and their magnificent contents, including the libraries and MSS., were scattered. In some instances the family archives have been transferred, by bequest, to the great public libraries; in many others they have been dispersed by sale among the private collections of Europe.

* Some years ago, at the sale of the Tiepolo library, the translator purchased a MS. which purported to be "The report, by Francesco Contarini, of his misssion to England in 1609." Appended to this document is a note by Contarini himself, who states that *he bought it at Rome*, where he was ambassador many years later; that it is not a true copy, but that it contains much of the substance of his report.

It is a proof of the estimation in which these state papers were held, that apocryphal reports were so often forged. In the year 1587, the attention of Europe was anxiously directed to England, to observe her preparations to resist the Armada; and forthwith a "report" appeared, professing to be written by an Envoy sent by the Council of Ten to London on the occasion. It contains some curious matter, and appears to be written by an eye-witness; but there is documentary evidence in the Venetian archives to prove that it is not what it pretends to be—the work of a diplomatic agent. A copy of this report existed in the library of the Count Leonardo Manin, nephew of the last Doge of Venice.

To this multiplication of official papers, however reprehensible it may have appeared to the Council of Ten, the modern student is indebted, not merely for increased facilities of access to original documents, but also for the supply of many a *lacune* in the public archives, which must otherwise have remained unfilled; for, in consequence of losses occasioned by fire, and by removals on a change of offices, the early part of the diplomatic records is very imperfect. The instructions and commissions addressed by the Senate to its diplomatic agents, have been kept from the earliest times with considerable regularity; but the series of Reports and Despatches does not begin till the middle of the sixteenth century: and although from that period the despatches, or ambassadorial "registers," as they are termed, have been preserved without interruption, the "reports" have been to a great extent lost or destroyed, so that, to supply all these deficiencies, the student must turn his attention to the copies which have been preserved in the private archives of the writers.

To trace among the many sources of information thus laid open to the student, the antiquities of the old Venetian Republic, and the history of her worthies, has for many years formed the chief occupation of the translator of the following pages. But he has always found himself more especially attracted by the notices of his own country, which abound, espe-

cially among the diplomatic papers; and in this preference, he feels little doubt of the sympathy of the English reader. The national portrait traced by a foreign pencil, though its traits are not always flattering, is always interesting. The testimony of the Venetian diplomatist has more than ordinary claims on our attention; few witnesses could be expected to exhibit so much impartiality: he was beset by no early prejudices, he had none of the hatred of near neighbourhood to warp his judgment. The commercial interests of Venice connected her with England, and she was alienated by no political jealousy. As an observer, he was more than usually qualified to form a sound opinion.

Wicquefort, in his often quoted treatise on "*The Ambassador and his Functions*," remarks that no diplomatists had acquired so high a reputation for sagacity and ability as the Venetian, and this pre-eminence he attributes to their education. In no state, he observes, was so large a portion of the citizens trained up from early life to the conduct of public business: he might have added that in none was more care taken to select men of weight and talent, who were capable of advancing the interests of the State they represented. The ambassador to England was usually a veteran who had served his country in various capacities, and possessed all the materials for comparing and judging which could be afforded by an acquaintance with the principal states of the Continent. The

Venetian diplomatist was not forced to conciliate or to flatter the prejudices and weaknesses of the sovereign or the favorite who gave him his commission. He served a government which, beyond all that have ever existed, was unimpeded in its march by the passions and the intrigues of individuals. In some of the despatches intended for the Senate, we may perhaps detect a little anxiety to treasure up all the compliments and professions of respect which have been paid to "Our State" and "Our Signory," but in all substantial matters the ambassador seems to have no desire but to approve his zeal and sagacity, by sending as much of the pure ore of truth as he can collect, and as little as he can help of any baser alloy.

The translator has endeavoured to trace the earliest indications of intercourse between the great mercantile power of the middle ages and her destined successor; but, as might have been anticipated, the first relations between the countries are commercial rather than diplomatic.

As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, there is documentary evidence to prove that the trade with England had assumed a regular and systematic form. We learn from Marin Sanuto that in his time there sailed annually from Venice, a little fleet, known by the name of "the Flanders Galleys." These used to touch at some of the principal ports of the Adriatic, Sicily, and Spain, and then pass on to their destination at Hampton (now Southampton),

where the flag-galley and the commodore were wont to remain, whilst the rest of the fleet went on to Middleburg, Antwerp, or Helvoetsluys, returning again to Southampton, which was their appointed rendezvous before setting out on their homeward voyage. Their cargo (the word itself is pure Venetian, a corruption of the Tuscan word *carico*) consisted of the produce of the Levant, and all that as yet reached our shores from the Indian marts. Moreover, they brought with them "the fashions of proud Italy," then the centre of taste and luxury; wines from Greece and Tyre, from Candia and the Morea, and from Spain; and lastly, an article for which, except on the authority of our own parliamentary records (also corroborated by the ambassador Giustinian), we could scarcely believe that we were in any degree indebted to strangers: namely, bow-staves. In 1472 it was enacted that four *bow-staves* should accompany every ton of Venetian merchandise; and again, by an act of the 12th Edward III., the importation of Venetian merchandise is forbidden, unless they "bryng with every butte of Malvesy and with every but of Tyre x bowe staves good and hable stuffe upon peyn of forfeyture of 13s. 4d. for every but of the said wynz so brought and conveied, and not the said nombre of bowe staves with the same butt."

It is a further proof of the close commercial connection of the two countries, that the introduction of the Venetian copper and base coinage was made a

serious subject of complaint, as will be seen in date of July 22, 1519; and by an act of Parliament of the year 1409, the Legislature prohibited the circulation of the small Venetian coins, called "galley half-pence," specifying by name the "Suskin and Dotkin." The former, called by Fynes Moryson "Sussine," is, in Venetian, "Sisìn;" it was of very small value, and must not be confounded with the "Sequin," a gold coin, which it slightly resembles in sound. The "Dotkin" is the "Daottin," which has also ceased to exist; though the term is still preserved in the colloquial language of Venice.*

Those who love to connect the history of fiction with the history of nations, and to observe how the former will sometimes embalm a fact of which the latter has scarcely deigned to preserve any trace, will be interested in hearing that a proof of the close intimacy once subsisting between Venice and Southampton is still to be found at the *Marionette*, or puppet-show theatre of Venice, where the history of Sir Bevis, the legendary hero of "Hampton," forms to this day one of the stock pieces of the Lilliputian stage.

But in truth, so intimate in former times was the connection between Venice and Southampton, that

* The exact value of the "Dotkin," was eight Venetian *soldi*, in like manner as the "Sisin" or "Sesin," represented a "Soldo" and a half. Both the Suskin and Dotkin were of silver, but with much alloy, and were most probably prohibited, as calculated to debase the standard. Dr. Johnson derives "doit" from *duyt*, Dutch, and *doyght*, Erse: the reader will perhaps think it possible that the Venetian coin *daottin* may also have stood co-sponsor for this word.

the English sea-port shared the paralysis with which the Queen of the Adriatic was struck on the discovery of the new passage to India. Amongst the Statutes of the Realm (22 Hen. VIII., c. 20), a petition is extant from the corporation (A.D. 1530-31) praying to be relieved from a yearly tax of 40 marks, on the plea that since "the Kyng of Portyngale toke the trate of spicis from the Venyzians at Calacowte," their "carreckis and galeis" came less frequently to the port.

In the mean time, the diplomatic relations of the two countries were formed gradually and slowly, and few traces of them can be found till the period which is emphatically that of modern history.

In the war of Chioggia, in 1379, when Venice was struggling for existence with her rival, Genoa, she applied for English aid; but it was to individuals, and not to the Crown, that she addressed herself. Having failed in a negotiation with Sir John Hawkwood (whose tomb under his Italian name of Acuto, the travelled reader may remember to have seen in the Duomo at Florence), she applied to another English trader in war, a condottiero of the name of Cook, who, with his mercenary soldiers, seems to have served the Signory with courage and fidelity, and is said to have turned the fortune of the day in favour of his employers at Borondolo.

Sixteen years later, we find that Carlo Zeno, the Commander-in-Chief during this memorable war with

Genoa, was sent as Ambassador to England, to persuade Richard II. to assist the Emperor Michael Palæologus against Bajazet IV. He is said, by his biographer the Bishop of Belluno, to have been successful in his mission (the business of which, we are further told, was conducted in Latin); but when we consider the disturbed state of England at the time, it is difficult to suppose that Richard's promised aid can have much benefited Christendom. The translator regrets to say that he has searched in vain for Zeno's despatches or "Report."

For many following years, few or no traces of diplomatic connection, though many of friendly intercourse, are to be found.

During the wars of the Roses (those who maintain the brutal ignorance of the feudal nobility, will hear with surprise), Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, filled a professorial chair at the University of Padua; and in 1481, the responsible office of Rector of that "Nursery of Arts," was conferred on one who is rather vaguely styled "Thomas of England."

"Banished Norfolk," the readers of Shakspeare—and who is not a reader of Shakspeare?—will remember found an asylum at Venice, A.D. 1399; and there—

> "he gave
> His body to that pleasant country's earth;
> And his pure soul unto his Captain Christ,
> Under whose colours he had fought so long."

A monumental achievement to his memory,* was placed in the corridor of St. Mark's Church.

After the battle of Bosworth Field, Doge Barbarigo was the first potentate to congratulate the victorious Richmond on his accession to the throne; and to the letter which he wrote on this occasion it is recorded, as a mark of unusual magnificence and respect, that there was appended a silver seal.†

In acknowledgment of this compliment, there was sent as ambassador to Venice the same "*Christopher Urswick, a priest*," who appears as one of the dramatis personæ of Shakspeare's Richard III.

No trace, however, of a Venetian embassy to England is to be found before 1497,‡ when Andrea

* It was a flat stone, of the kind called in Italy, "Sigillo sepolcrale," and its sculpture is emblematical. This memorial was originally placed in the year 1400; and, on the removal of the body to England, A.D. 1533, it was inserted vertically in the wall of the Ducal Palace, near the ancient Granary Office, fronting the island of S. Georgio Maggiore. It was preserved by the mason who had been ordered to deface it at the time of the French occupation in 1810, and was disinterred by the translator in 1839. It is now at Corby Castle.

† It would probably be hopeless to search for this curious document. The carelessness with which our national records have been kept is a a subject of deep mortification to the antiquarian. In the year 1838, no less than eight tons' weight of curious documents were sold by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer to Mr. Jay, a fishmonger, at the price of 8*l.* per ton. Many of these have been since purchased at high prices by the British Museum, and by the Government itself. For some curious details on this subject, see "Mr. Rodd's Narrative;" 1845.

‡ In the year 1496, the diplomatic affairs of the Signory with Henry VII. were transacted by two merchants of Venice, established in London, by name Piero Contarini and Luca Valaresso. They induced the King to join the so-called "Holy League;" and on the 18th of July in that year, a "broadside," with a wood-cut of Henry VII., appeared in the thoroughfares of Venice; and as very few documents of this kind have been preserved, especially of so early a date, the reader

Trevisan was appointed Ambassador to Henry VII. The despatches and the "Report" of this diplomatist no longer exist. But the notices of England which were collected to form its materials yet remain, and have been given to the world in a very spirited and correct translation by Miss Sneyd, with some valuable prefatory notices by the late Mr. Holmes, of the British Museum, respecting the Venetian "Reports" of England now existing in this country.

Trevisan was succeeded in 1502 by Francesco Capello, of whose diplomatic papers no remains have been found, except an insignificant letter (now pre-

may be interested with the following copy and description of it, which are extracted from the MSS. diaries of Marin Sanuto :—

"Questo è Papa Alexandro che corregie,
I error del mondo con divine legie." } Papa.

"Viva lo Imperador Cesaro Augusto,
Maximilian Re de' Romani justo." } Maximiliano.

"Questo è il gran Re di Spagna e la Regina,
Che de' infedeli ha fatto gran ruina." } Spagna.

"Questo è quel Re il qual darà ancor briga,
A ogni nemico de la fidel liga." } Angelterra.

"Potente in guerra et amica de pace,
Venetia el ben' comun sempre le piace." } Venetia.

"Questo è colui ch' a' l sceptro justo in mano,
Tien el felice Stato di Milano." } Milan.

The portraits of the allies figured at the close of their respective couplets, Doge Barbarigo representing Venice and Henry VII. England. According to Rymer, this treaty was signed by Henry VII. at Windsor, in September, 1496, the Venetian and Milanese *ambassadors* being present; but, in reality, Contarini and Valaresso were neither ambassadors nor special envoys, but are called by Sanuto "our quasi *submandataries*."

served in the Correr Museum,* at Venice), which was addressed to him by the King, from "our Manor of Woodstock," on the 20th of July in that year. The paper on which it is written, is of the manufacture of Flanders, which at that time supplied all the paper needed for the correspondence of England. The water-mark is a hand, whose middle finger is connected by a straight line or stem with a star. This water-mark is not without interest, for a reason which will shortly be apparent.

In 1506, the Archduke Philip, with his consort Queen Joanna of Castille, when on their voyage from the Netherlands to Spain, were driven by stress of weather to Falmouth, and remained in England some weeks. They were accompanied by the Venetian Ambassador to their court, Vincenzo Querini, who employed his leisure on drawing up a "Report" on the state of England. Several copies of this state paper exist in our own libraries, and a version of it was published at Florence in 1839.

In 1509, when the League of Cambrai threatened the existence of Venice, the Signory despatched Andrea Badoer to prevent the adhesion of England to the confederacy, and to obtain her good offices; but no further memorials of his correspondence are to be found, than are contained in the summaries of Marin Sanuto.

* I was first made acquainted with this document by the courteous director of the Museum, Dr. Lazari, who allowed me to have it lithographed.

Andrea Badoer was succeeded by Sebastian Giustinian, whose despatches form the subject of the present work.

When the translator first ventured to entertain the hope that a selection of the papers which had furnished so much amusement to himself might possess some interest for the public, he did not hesitate in fixing his choice on the despatches of Giustinian.

It is so much more difficult, in proportion to the remoteness of the period, to picture to the imagination its manners, motives, and modes of thinking, that contemporary letters full of the hopes, the fears, and the reports of the day, acquire a vast additional interest by their antiquity. And as they become more interesting, unfortunately they are also more scarce: no unbroken *series* of letters, such as the Giustinian correspondence from 1515 to 1519, has hitherto appeared in print, whether written from London or any other capital.

It is surprising how few contemporary authors are quoted by the historians of the period embraced by these despatches. In the course of these four years, we find occasional references to Peter Martyr, to Erasmus, to Messieurs de Bellai and de Fleuranges, to the mendacious Polydore Virgil, to Sir Thomas More, and to Edward Hall: the last a mere youth at the time of Giustinian's sojourn in England; but in none of these writers are to be found the minute

details and graphic touches which give life to the Venetian Ambassador's correspondence.

The discovery of the Giustinian correspondence is recent. In the year 1843, the noble Girolamo Contarini bequeathed to the library of St. Mark, his family collection of books and MSS.; amongst their contents was a bulky folio volume to which my attention was first drawn by Signor Giovanni Battista Lorenzi, one of the officers of St. Mark's library, to whose zeal we owe the catalogue of the Contarini legacy, and of the museum of the "Marciana," and to whose accurate knowledge, the frequenters of that institution are indebted for so much information. The paper is of the same manufacture, and bears the same water-mark as that on which was written the letter of Henry VII., previously described. The volume contains 226 letters, copies of those addressed by Sebastian Giustinian to the Signory during his English embassy. They are transcribed by his secretary—himself a man of some note in Venetian annals. The copy is dated 1515 to 1519; it is headed according to the pious form of the day "In nomine Domini," and is thus attested by the transcriber at the end:—

"Nicolaus Sagudinus fideliter exemplavit."

As the entire collection is too large for publication, the translator has endeavoured to select such letters and parts of letters as seem most likely to interest, by their graphic touches and lively notices

of the events of the day, or by their bearings on English history and literature.

The archaic phraseology employed in this translation has not been adopted merely for the sake of bringing the style of the work into keeping with its subject matter: in fact, it was not entirely a matter of choice. The careless and familiar phrases, the quaint expressions and frequent redundancies of the old vernacular Italian, when they are literally translated into English, fall naturally into periods resembling the prose of Elizabeth's or James's days. Had the translator succeeded in recasting the whole into the flowing paragraphs of a modern newspaper (and he must candidly own that he frequently made the attempt in vain), he could not have effected so great a change without a metamorphosis which would have affected more than the language, and would have seemed to attribute the ideas as well as the expressions of the nineteenth to the sixteenth century.

In rendering Venetian titles of office, it has, in many cases, been found impossible to give any exact equivalent. To quote one instance among the many that might be cited: the "captain" of a subject town, signifies simply the governor, without any reference to a military charge or character, further than is always included in the idea of the supreme power. This and similar peculiarities the translator has thought it right to preserve, and in such cases he has generally given

the most literal translation of the Venetian title, accompanied with an explanation of its practical import.

The subject of Italian titles generally is one which occasions some difficulty to a translator; especially at the period to which these despatches refer. It was not till the close of the sixteenth century, when the supremacy of Spain had been long established in Italy, that the code of etiquette was fixed, and the gradation of titles, which had been multiplied with boundless prodigality, was determined. In earlier times, "Signor," when strictly applied, was a very high title, implying actual sovereignty or feudal superiority. The noblest citizens of Venice or Florence, forbidden to take feudal titles, were styled "messer," a title which most nearly resembles "master," but for which, nevertheless, "master" affords no equivalent. To the surnames of the Venetian nobles was applied, in lieu of title, the prefix of "the noble," "the patrician;" but the citizens of Florence were compelled to affect humility. Magnifico seems to have been not so much a title, as an expression of respect applied to magistrates, and others to whom honour is due or adulation is addressed; nor indeed would it always be easy, when we classify the various forms of address employed at this period, to draw any definite line between the tribute of voluntary respect and claims sanctioned by custom and law.

Even the titles of sovereigns were unfixed. Charles V., as is well known, was the first monarch—