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978-1-108-07731-6 - Despatches of Michele Suriano and Marc' Antonio Barbaro: Venetian Ambassadors at the Court of France, 1560–1563

Edited and Translated by Sir Henry Layard

Excerpt

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Despatches of Michele Suriano.

From Orleans, Nov. 1, 1560.

To the DOGE,

SURIANO announces that he had left Lyons on the 6th (? of October¹), and had travelled with all despatch to Paris, expecting to meet the Court at St. Germain; but it had already left for Orleans. He then determined to remain in Paris until he could obtain positive information of the movements of the King, as it was the habit of the Court not to remain for long in any one place. As soon as he had obtained this information, he proceeded to Orleans, arriving there at the same time as the King of Navarre, his brother the Prince of Condé, and the Cardinal d'Armagnac, all three with few attendants. On their arrival no one received them in the name of the Most Christian King; although on the previous day the Cardinal de Bourbon and the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yonne, who was of the blood royal and belonged to the same house (Bourbon), had gone out to meet them. The King, (of Navarre) with those who were with him, dismounted at the quarters of His Most Christian Majesty, who, when he heard of their coming, retired to the room of the Queen-mother, in which were the Most Christian Queen, the Cardinal de Lorraine, M. de Guise, and all the principal persons of the Court. Many who were present remarked that although the King (of Navarre) contrary to his usual custom, on entering the chamber, and approaching the Most Christian King, made many very humble bows, almost kneeling, His Majesty received him with great coldness, motioning him to bow first to the Queen-mother, who was beside him. His Majesty thus desired to shew that he received the King of Navarre as a subject and not as a sovereign. Moreover, he did not move a step to meet him, and scarcely raised his bonnet (baretta). He not only treated in the same way the Prince of Condé, who was presented to His Majesty by the King of Navarre, although he was in the habit, on other occasions, of saluting even every simple gentleman among his subjects, but he made no answer to the few words which the Prince addressed to him. It was also remarked that they (the King of Navarre and Condé) neither exchanged salutes nor words with the Cardinal and M. de Guise, who were standing at a window behind the Queen-mother. Shortly afterwards His Most Christian Majesty, together with the Queen, the King of Navarre, the Cardinal de Bourbon his brother, and M. de Guise, with the Chancellor, withdrew into the room of the Queen-mother, and sent for the Prince of Condé. Immediately afterwards the Prince was given over to four Captains of the Guard to be taken to prison. This was forthwith done, and he was led away by a secret passage, and placed in the custody of two 'Knights of the Order.'² In vain the King of Navarre and the Cardinal, his brother, most urgently besought His Most Christian Majesty, even, it was said, going on their knees to him, to allow them to have the custody of the Prince, engaging to produce him whenever His Majesty might require them to do so. This arrest had caused the greatest commotion and consternation in the Court, as no one desired or expected it.

It had been generally anticipated that the Prince would have been warmly and favourably received. The King (of Navarre) his brother, on that very solemn All Saints day (on which SURIANO wrote), pretended to be ill, and had neither left his house, nor allowed himself to be seen in public, on account of the grief he felt (at the arrest of his brother). It was said that

¹ In the text '6 del presente'; but the despatch is dated November 1st.

² Order of St. Michael. (?)

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orders had been given for the Vidame of Chartres to be brought from Paris, probably to confront him (with Condé).

Orleans was guarded with the greatest vigilance, there being in the city four old companies of infantry, whilst four others were expected, with two thousand Germans, whom, it was said, the Duke of Lorraine was about to send. Further, in order to prevent any rising or tumult, the townspeople were ordered by a royal Edict, under the severest penalties, to bring all arms, even knives above a certain size, to the Hôtel de Ville (Casa della Città). SURIANO found that the Cardinal de Tournon had arrived in Orleans four days before. He had been received with every possible honour, all the Princes and Gentlemen of the Court having gone out to meet him. He was held in so much esteem and credit, that the Queen-mother had twice visited him in his lodgings. He went every day to the meeting of the Council for State affairs; but he declined to be present on the previous day when the Prince of Condé was arrested. The day before, M. de Maligni, one of the chiefs of the Conspiracy of Amboise, and M. de Montbrun were beheaded in effigy. The latter had taken refuge, with his wife and children, in Geneva. His castle of Montbrun had been razed to the ground, and all his property confiscated: the Cardinal de Tournon had, however, obtained the latter from the King for M. de Montbrun's two little sons, whom the Queen had taken, and was bringing up as her own kinsmen (nipoti).

From Orleans, Nov. 10, 1560.

To the DOGE,

The night after the arrest of Condé, His Most Christian Majesty had summoned from Paris to Orleans, the President de Thou, the 'greffier' Jean du Tillet and two other principal Councillors of the Parliament, with the 'Procureur du Roi,' who had all arrived at Court, to assist in the proceedings against Condé. The Prince had hitherto been strictly guarded by one hundred archers. He was not allowed to speak to any one, nor to be waited upon by more than two servants, who were never permitted to leave his room. In the meanwhile the King of Navarre, and the Cardinal de Bourbon his brother, and d'Armagnac, the relation and confidant of both, had been engaged during several days, either alone or together, in close and long conferences with the Queen-mother and the Cardinal of Lorraine, with whom the King, however, refused to speak for two or three days after his arrival. His Majesty had done the same with regard to M. de Guise, thus shewing decided enmity to both of them, but they had since been reconciled. And although His Most Christian Majesty had been most gracious to the King of Navarre, who had been almost daily present of a morning in the Council, and had gone privately to hunt with him, nevertheless, persons well acquainted with Court affairs said, that the proceedings against the Prince would last for a long time, and God only knew what the result would be. The Prince de la Roche-sur-Yonne, who was also of the blood royal, was now convinced that such would be the case, and a person in his intimacy and confidence had told SURIANO that he was very greatly distressed at having been the principal cause that these gentlemen, relying on his word, had placed themselves so unreservedly in the hands of His Majesty. The Queen-mother had given him a solemn promise that neither of them would be arrested, and the contrary having occurred, he had remonstrated earnestly with her. She had excused herself by saying that the proceedings against the Prince had been taken by order of the King, her son; but that she would do her utmost in his (Condé's) behalf.

The same person had informed SURIANO that the charges against the Prince were very serious. Not only had he been denounced by almost all those who had been put to death at Amboise, and in the proceedings against the insurgents of Montpellier and other parts of the Kingdom; but had been gravely accused by those who had been taken during the last rising in Lyons, not only as an accomplice in, but as the instigator of, that affair, and in such wise that he could not deny the charge. Nevertheless, one day that SURIANO and his colleague*

* Michiel was then associated with Suriano as special Ambassador from the Republic.

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had been with the King of Navarre, when taking leave of them he said "Signori Ambasciatori, I pray you not to form a bad opinion of the Prince my brother, who desired to obey his Sovereign Prince and Lord, and to present himself, as was his duty, with all humility and submission, and to place himself entirely in his hands. And I can assure you that he will come out with honour, as he has never committed any act unworthy of him, nor formed any design against the Crown. And you may give this assurance in my name to the Signoria."

Mad^e. de Roze, the mother of the Prince's wife, and sister of the Cardinal de Châtillon, known to be a woman of great spirit, had also been arrested by order of the King. She had ventured some days before to write a letter to the Queen-mother, asking for a safe-conduct for her daughter, to enable her to join her husband, when he was with the King of Navarre. This letter was thought exceedingly arrogant, and gave rise to a suspicion that she was privy to, and was a participator in, the matters of which the Prince was accused.

There had also been arrested on that morning, in His Most Christian Majesty's apartment, a servant of the King of Navarre, who was suspected of being a spy, employed to inform him of all that was said and done at Court, and especially in His Majesty's Chamber.

In the city of Bourg-en-Bresse, within the jurisdiction of the Duke of Savoy, there had also been arrested, by command of His Majesty, a Frenchman, who was held to be one of the chiefs and principal authors of the rising in Dauphiny and Languedoc, and who had assumed different names, at one time that of La Fratet, at another that of M. Fontana, and at other times, other names. It was reported that to obtain his release, the people of Geneva would have paid as much as thirty thousand scudi, to prevent him falling into the hands of His Majesty. But he had been already given over to Ministers. There had also been much talk of late of the intentions of M. Damville, the second son of the Constable, who was held to be a man of great daring, and to have a much larger following than all his other sons. But all reports concerning him had proved unfounded, and he was expected to arrive at court in a few days with his father and brothers.

There had also been similar reports respecting the Admiral, M. Dandelot his brother, the Count de la Rochefoucault brother in law of the Prince of Condé, and M. de Senerpont, all of them Knights of the Order, and persons of great consideration.

Notwithstanding all these rumours and reports, the Cardinals de Tournon and d'Armagnac had told SURIANO that, much to their consolation, and in consequence of the efficient measures which had been taken, there would not be any more religious disturbances or risings. The Cardinal of Lorraine had also assured him that both his brothers were keeping quiet, and were convinced that it would be impossible to take any other course. The Cardinal had good hopes that matters would end well, and without giving rise to more trouble.

His Most Christian Majesty had summoned all the 'Knights of the Order,'¹ both those in France and those in Italy, to attend a General Chapter, which was to assemble on the second feast after Christmas. It was said that to this Chapter would be communicated the proceedings taken against those Knights who had been arrested, so that it might decide not only what should be done to remedy the abuses which had arisen in the Order, but to make enquiries as to those who were suspected of heresy, with a view to expelling them from the Order, into which no one was admitted who was not a Catholic and did not live as one.

From Orleans, Nov. 20, 1560.

To the DOGE,

The Most Christian King had determined to go on the previous Monday to Chambord with the Queen, and to another place called Chenonceaux about twelve leagues distant from Orleans, and to remain there, for pleasure, to the end of the month. But on the Sunday he had been seized with a severe shivering fit (*freddura*) and fever. It was said that this illness to which His Majesty was subject was a kind of catarrhal flux, which he had inherited from his father and grandfather. It had shewn itself by a running from the right ear, which, when checked, led to severe pains in the teeth and jaws, and to a swelling behind

¹ Order of St. Michael. (?)

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the ear as large as a big nut, which became smaller and larger as the matter increased or diminished. This illness continued, but although he was getting better, he was not free from fever, notwithstanding that it had reached the fourth day. Not only was he unable to leave either the house or his room, but also his bed, and no one except those in his immediate service was allowed to go to him.

The cause of this illness was believed to be a sudden change in the weather, which having been as mild as spring, had suddenly turned to excessive cold. His Majesty had not taken proper care of himself, and was now obliged to remain in bed, to his great annoyance, as his mother desired it. For this reason it was said by many persons that his illness was very serious, and that those who treated it as of little consequence had an interest in doing so. It was thought that the state of His Majesty's health shewed that there were defects in his constitution. It was further remembered that the astrologers had predicted that he would not live more than eighteen years. Every one was consequently taking the view which best suited his own interest, with the conviction that if any fatal results should ensue, which may God prevent, not only would those who then ruled the country be entirely excluded from power, but there would be a complete revolution in the kingdom as regarded religion, as the successor to the throne, being of tender age, would be placed under tutelage—probably under that of the King of Navarre, as the eldest (of the family) and the nearest in blood (to the King). He (Navarre) either to humour the populace, who were for the most part infected with this plague*, or unable to repress and hold them in restraint, would open the way to licence and disorder, which would lead not only to the ruin of the Kingdom (of France), but to that of all Christendom; for with such an example before them, the populations of the adjoining states, and especially of Italy, would become insolent, and their Princes would no longer be able to govern them.

From Orleans, Nov. 22, 1560.

To the DOGE,

The Most Christian King continued to get better; and although he was still confined to his bed, with some fever during the night, every one was convinced that his illness was not dangerous, and that in two or three days he would be completely cured.

In the meanwhile public business had not been suspended, nor the trial of the Prince of Condé. The Chancellor, with the other persons appointed to frame the indictment against the Prince, having gone to him to commence proceedings, received, in reply to their interrogatories, the answer, that being a Prince of the blood, the Parliament and twelve Peers of France should, according to custom, be his judges, whereas in these times Kings aimed at supreme authority in everything. He was told that they had not been sent by His Majesty to adjudicate upon his case, but only to initiate the proceedings, which, when once commenced, would be referred to competent judges. He replied that he knew very well that the Chancellor and the other commissioners were dependent upon his enemies, who sought to deprive him of his honour and of his life, and that consequently he would never give any other answer; but that if His Majesty sent him judges properly qualified to try a Prince of the blood, and they named commissioners to carry on the proceedings, he would reply to everything that was asked him, and that his innocence would be fully established. As they were unable to obtain any other answer from him, they had reported to the Council for public affairs, which was about to resolve that as the Prince refused to reply he should be considered guilty, that the witnesses (against him) should be confronted, and that judgment should be pronounced. But this having come to the ears of the King of Navarre, and of other relations of the Prince, they besought the Council for the love of God, not to proceed in this manner against a Prince of the blood, as it would set a bad example to all the Parliaments in the kingdom, and would make a very unfavorable impression upon foreign Princes. Consequently the proceedings had been suspended, and would remain so until the meeting of the States, and perhaps even longer.

* i.e. Protestantism, or the reformed religion.

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From Orleans, Nov. 25, 1560.

To the DOGE,

The English Ambassador had been called to the Court, and had been told by M. de Guise, who spoke in the name of the Most Christian King, that His Majesty would not, for the present, further ratify the treaty of peace, and that he would send a person to England to explain to the Queen of that country the reason which led him to defer doing so. This resolution on the part of His Majesty had appeared to the Ambassador the more serious as he considered that the Queen, his mistress, had been deceived; for when she was prepared for war she had been promised that the treaty would be ratified at the time appointed. Now that she had completely disarmed, she had been put off on various pretences, which were no longer available, as an Ambassador had already arrived from Scotland, to whom the whole of that kingdom had given full powers, when this determination had been communicated to him (the English Ambassador). On the other hand, this treaty was one which the King of France could not approve. He had accepted it, it might be said, with the halter round his neck. By doing so he had not only lost all authority in his kingdom of Scotland; but had, to a certain extent, consented to cede it to the Queen of England, who had taken it under her protection against His Most Christian Majesty. It was true, that as at that time the English were in arms, whilst the French had been almost entirely withdrawn from Scotland, which was full of disorders, it was not considered advisable to refuse the conditions then proposed; but the matter was delayed by discussions, with a view to gaining time. The result proved that this was the wise course, as the Queen of England had already disarmed, and the King of France was consequently at liberty to ratify the treaty or not, as he might think fit. And so matters remained. It had been studiously reported that someone was to be sent to England; but this was only to gain time. It was, however, true that for this mission M. de L'Isle, the brother of the resident Ambassador at Venice, had been named; but his departure would be delayed as much as possible. If he should be under the necessity of going, he would first visit Scotland, in order to learn the state of affairs in that kingdom; but under the pretence of ascertaining the nature of the commission which had been given to the Ambassador (from Scotland), who had arrived in France—whether he had the authority and consent of the whole kingdom, or only of a small part of it, as was generally suspected. For although this Ambassador was one of the principal men in Scotland, he was not much trusted, because he had been an ecclesiastic and a Knight of Malta, and without other authority than his own, had become a layman and had married.

On the 24th November, SURIANO had been informed on the best authority, that the King was very weak and languid, and that having that morning, before daybreak, taken a purge, he had rejected it a few hours afterwards. SURIANO could not understand why the French physicians had given him medicine on the seventh day, as he (SURIANO) knew that the (Venetian) doctors would have considered it a great mistake to do so, especially as the most trifling circumstance much affected His Most Christian Majesty. Although the fever had, during the few previous days, been very light, the King was seen to be in so much distress, that he appeared almost out of his mind. SURIANO had been told this by a person of importance, one of the few who had access to His Majesty's chamber, and who was almost always in it. He had begged that it might be kept most secret.

SURIANO had learnt, on good authority, that the King of Navarre, when speaking to His Majesty and the Queen-mother in the privy Council, overcome by emotion, had said that two of his brothers had died for their King—one, M. d'Enghien, who had defeated the Marquis del Guasto at Cérisola, and who was accidentally killed, and the other who fell in the rout of the Constable. As a reward for their services, the third brother was now to be put to death—such was the thirst after his blood! As he was about to say more in his anger, he was interrupted by the Queen-mother, who said to him that, if he would restrain himself, only the strictest justice would be done. The King of Navarre, seeing that he had gone too far, asked pardon of His Majesty, offering, as an excuse, the love he bore to his brother.

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SURIANO *à propos* to the King of Navarre, states that the Cardinal d'Armagnac had told him what the DOGE, he thought, must already have heard, that when the King (of Navarre) was about to join the Court, he had sent an agent to Rome to declare his obedience to the Pope, with a profession (of faith), and his desire to become a devoted son of the Apostolic Church. Having arrived at Orleans he had, SURIANO understood, confessed to His Most Christian Majesty that he had been seduced by the Heretics, and excused himself by saying that, not being a man of learning, he had fallen into error for which he prayed God to forgive him. He prayed His Majesty not to impute what he had done to anything but ignorance. Whilst in this state of excitement he not only denounced certain great personages in the kingdom, who had offered to aid him with their property and persons; but had shewed their letters to the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise, for which he did not deserve as much praise as he did for acknowledging his errors. Moreover, for the further relief of his soul, he had denounced a person from Geneva, who, after the arrest of Condé was known, had been sent to him by the people of that city to offer him all their help and support on the occasion. This person being actually present, amongst others, in the King's Chamber, it being the custom to allow anyone to enter it, was made prisoner. This was the man whom SURIANO, in his despatch of the tenth, had mentioned as having been arrested for a spy of the King of Navarre. This affair might induce those whose only object it was to excite Princes to contaminate the (Catholic) religion, to be more cautious.

The Spanish Ambassador had informed SURIANO that His Most Christian Majesty had recently observed to him that he would shed his blood to enable Condé to prove his innocence, and that the Cardinal de Tournon had said the same to the Cardinal de Bourbon, who was the Prince's brother, and who was speaking in his favor, adding that he would never dare to take the life of a Prince of the blood of the Most Christian King, who had deserved so well of the Holy (Catholic) religion; but if the Prince had attempted to corrupt it, as he appeared to have done if the charges imputed to him were true, it was to the interest of the Holy Roman See and of the King, his brother, that he should be severely punished.

Such was the state of the Prince's affair. Hitherto it was not known, with certainty, what would happen; but the general opinion was that he would not under any circumstances be condemned to death, and that the worst that could befall him would be imprisonment in the fortress of Loches, where the Duke Lodovico Moro died, and that he would be detained there until the Most Christian King was of age, and able to come to a decision of himself in the matter. The Prince would now feel increased hatred of the House of Guise, which had the entire government (of the Kingdom) in its hands.

From Orleans, Dec. 3, 1560.

To the DOGE,

The King was getting worse, and there was no hope of his life. If he were to die, which might be considered, humanly speaking, certain, it would be at a time when all the States were assembled in this city (Orleans) in consequence of an order already issued, as well as all the nearest in blood (to the King), and all the principal men of the Kingdom. It was to be hoped that this was by God's will; in order that the rule of the new King might be established by universal consent and without an appeal to arms. This was, however, very doubtful, in consequence of the jealousies among the great, and the bad spirit among the people on account of the religious question, and of their dislike of the existing Government. From what would follow, judgment might be formed as to the good or evil which was to befall the Kingdom. As yet the general opinion was that the House of Guise would do all in its power to unite with the King of Navarre. It was already said that the Prince of Condé would be released, that Madame Marguerite, the Most Christian King's sister, would be married to the son of the King of Navarre, and that one of the latter's daughters would be given in marriage to a son of the Duke of Guise.

The whole Court was in constant prayer, and there were processions to all the Churches in

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the City, in which the brothers and the sister of His Most Christian Majesty, the King of Navarre, and many others, were taking part.

SURIANO had at that moment been informed that news had arrived that there was a great rising of the people of Bordeaux, the insurgents being twelve thousand in number. It was believed that it was on account of the arrest of Condé. The Spanish Ambassador had been summoned to the Court, in order that he might write on the subject to His Catholic Majesty to obtain his assistance in suppressing this and other disturbances that might occur in those parts in the event of the King's death.

From Orleans, Dec 6, 1560.

To the DOGE,

The King had died a little before midnight. He would be succeeded by his brother Charles, the Duke of Orleans, a boy ten years of age, of goodly and agreeable appearance, and, as far as one could judge, of a great and noble disposition. He had been hitherto under the care of M. de Cipierre, a Knight of the Order, whose profession was that of arms and who had instructed the youth in that career. The new King would remain under tutelage to his fourteenth year, and during that period the Kingdom would be governed by others. It was believed that the Queen-mother would retain her authority—who the others would be to have the principal share in the government was not yet positively known, as a similar state of things was either very rare or had never before occurred in the Kingdom, and there was no actual precedent respecting it. But it was generally thought that the King of Navarre, the Constable, the Cardinals of Tournon and Lorraine, the Duke of Guise, the Chancellor, and two Marshals, Brissac and St. André, would be associated with the Queen-mother. Amongst the principal men there were many old and recent quarrels—especially between the King of Navarre and the House of Guise, and the Constable. Moreover the Constable was of a temper not to permit anyone to be his equal, whilst the Cardinal of Lorraine would not allow anyone to be his superior.

It was believed that the Queen-mother would favor as much as she could the House of Guise, as she was indebted to it for the whole, or the greater part, of the reputation she had hitherto enjoyed. But although the Duke of Guise was popular in the Kingdom, especially with the Nobles, the Cardinal of Lorraine was so hated by all, that if the matter was to be settled in accordance with the general wish, not only would he not be allowed any share in the government, but probably he would not remain alive. It was even said that he had already sent his most valuable property into Lorraine for security, and that he was about, in any case, to return to that country, and to resign those offices, in retaining which he would be associated either with equals or with men of greater authority than himself, and would consequently have much to lose and nothing to gain. The King of Navarre was of an easy and gentle disposition, and much beloved by the nation on this account, and perhaps because he inclined to the new religion, which appeared to be in very general favor with the people. He had hitherto been well disposed to the Huguenots, of which his brother Condé was reported to be the chief. As Condé was of a bold and resolute character he would exercise very great authority if the King of Navarre were at the head of the government, and would make him agree to many things which might create those divisions in the (Roman Catholic) church, which the Cardinal de Tournon had told SURIANO were to be feared. The Papal Nuncio had frequently made the warmest representations to the Queen-mother in order to confirm Her Majesty in those good intentions which she had always shewn in the religious question. These representations were very agreeable to the Cardinal de Tournon, and were very favorable to the Cardinal of Lorraine. The Spanish Ambassador had done the same, although the King of Spain would only see with pleasure in the French Government, the Constable, whom he much esteemed.

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To the DOGE,

It had been resolved in the Council on the previous day, that the States should, in any case, be assembled at the appointed time, and they were to meet in that week. This determination had probably been come to on account of the religious question, so that time should not be given to those who wished to cause disturbances, and to intrigues in the cities and the provinces, to have disreputable persons sent, which they could easily have done, if, as it was anticipated, the meeting (of the States) had been deferred. It was evident that those who had been already elected were not men to propose any novelties (in matters of religion), as they had been chosen in the life-time of the late King, who of his own judgment, and by the advice of his government, had always shewn himself most resolute in religious matters. It was, therefore, to be hoped, that affairs would take a good direction, to the advantage of France, of Christendom, and especially of Italy.

The Queen-mother had hitherto been considered the head and superintendent of every department, and she would continue to conduct all public business, both in order that she might exercise full authority and to avoid naming a President of the Council, so as to prevent the occurrence of rivalries. Already orders had been given to the Ambassadors, and to others who wished for audiences, that they should address themselves to Her Majesty, through the Secretaries named for that purpose. This appeared to SURIANO a very good arrangement, as there was a Secretary for each department—one for Italy, one for Spain, one for Flanders, one for Germany, and one for other countries, and each one had to attend to his own business. Every question would thus be speedily settled, and without the least confusion, and it would no longer be necessary to communicate first upon affairs either with the Cardinal of Lorraine, or with the Constable, or with others, as had previously been the case. The first communication would be made direct to the Queen-mother, who would submit it to the Council if necessary, and would herself give the answer resolved upon. If it were needful to make a communication of a special character, the Ambassador, or the person appointed to treat of it, would be introduced into the Council, where he would be heard and would receive his answer.

Associated with the Queen-mother in the government would be the King of Navarre, the Constable, the Duke of Guise, the Cardinals of Tournon and Lorraine, Marshals Brissac and St. André and the Chancellor. As they would all be on an equal footing, they might be perfectly satisfied and their only ambition would be to show who was the first in wisdom and devotion to duty. Greater honour would be done to the King of Navarre than to the others, as he was a Sovereign, the nearest to the blood (royal), and in great popular favour; but in the deliberations (of the Council), he would not have more authority (than his colleagues). The Queen-mother would be respected both by the King of Navarre and by the rest, as she held her high position through her abilities and her industry, and on the advice of the House of Guise. She was further supported by the Papal Nuncio and the Spanish Ambassador, who had made various representations in her favour, alleging that they had done so as they were well acquainted with the views of their Masters.

The new King had confirmed in his service all those gentlemen and courtiers who were in that of his deceased brother, and had, that morning, been publicly invested with the order of St' Michael, as had also his brother, the Duke of Angoulême. Thus, by degrees, every one would forget the death of the late King, except the little Queen his widow, who was as noble in character, as she was beautiful and graceful in person. As she was left a widow so young, and had lost a husband who was so mighty a sovereign, and one whom she greatly loved, and as she had been deprived of one kingdom, that of France, and had little hope of recovering that of Scotland—which was her only patrimony and dower, it was not surprising that she refused to be consoled, but constantly recalled now one, now another of these her great misfortunes, with incessant tears and lamentations, full of affection and grief. She was consequently much pitied by every one.

The body of the King had been opened, and the brain was found to be entirely decomposed, so that no skill on the part of the physicians could have restored him to health.

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Excerpt

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MICHELE SURIANO.

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From Orleans, Dec. 18, 1560.

To the DOGE,

SURIANO had been to see the new King and the Queen-mother. He had found them together, which, he thought, had been purposely contrived out of consideration for him, and to avoid the necessity of his being alone with His Most Christian Majesty, who from his tender age could not know how to fittingly receive or reply to an Ambassador, and also in order to spare him (SURIANO) fatigue, the Queen-mother knowing that he was suffering from a slight attack of gout.

He had also been to the Constable with the DOGE's letter, and had been received with all the favour and honour that could possibly be expected. Although that nobleman was already old, having passed, it was said, his seventieth year, he was so healthy and robust, and so full of vigour, that he might be envied by all those in the Government who were younger than himself. It was believed that it was he who had placed in the Council, besides the eight persons already mentioned, three others of the blood (royal)—the Cardinal de Bourbon (the brother of the King of Navarre), the Duke of Montpensier, and the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yonne; who, the more they were united with the King of Navarre, the more they were opposed to the House of Guise. It was also intended to add the Admiral—the nephew of the Constable; but there were difficulties in the way. It was true that he was much favoured by the Spanish Ambassador, who, in speaking with SURIANO, had shewn himself a strong partizan of the Constable, and much opposed to the Guises. The Nuncio, although he was not openly against anyone, favoured the House of Guise as much as he was able, and thus made himself very agreeable to the Queen, who, although she pretended to be neutral, could not really bear the Constable on account of her ancient hatred of him. SURIANO did not mix himself in these matters, as he felt no particular interest either in one side or the other.

From Orleans, Dec. 20, 1560.

To the DOGE,

It was doubtful whether the States were to assemble at once, or whether their meeting was to be postponed. SURIANO describes the constitution of the "Trois États." He states that attempts were being made to bring the three bodies together, and that the people and the clergy were almost in agreement, but not the nobles, as those of Guienne, Brittany, Normandy, and Champagne would not treat with the new Government without fresh commissions from those whom they represented—maintaining that their commissions were to King Francis—and that as he was dead, they were not authorised to treat with the Council. It was believed that this difficulty had been devised by those who were dissatisfied with the new Government, and with the full powers given to the Queen. They pretended that, in consequence of certain privileges anciently enjoyed by these Provinces, they each had the right to furnish a member of the Government. In consequence of this fresh disagreement, and there being great difficulty in coming to an arrangement, the Queen had sent for the President of La Rochelle, who was one of the principal persons concerned in the matter, and had told him to furnish her with a list, in his own handwriting, of all those who refused compliance, together with their family names and their surnames. For this purpose they had all been assembled in a church, where they had a violent altercation, not one of them being daring enough to be the first to make this list. It was consequently hoped that the affair would ultimately be satisfactorily settled. If this should be the case, it would be of great importance, as if these States were to treat with the Government, they would practically acknowledge its legality, although in its election the regulations which had hitherto been followed in similar cases, had not been observed. In any way it was evident that there was, neither in the Council nor in the Government, that union which was necessary to the welfare of the Kingdom. But there were some who were so much taken up with their own particular interests, that they did not care whether those of the public were in peril or not, so long as they could satisfy their own desires. Every one would know who these persons were without their being named. The disturbances in

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Gascony, and Bordeaux, and in Navarre, had all, it was said, ceased after the death of the King was known. However, the reasons assigned for this fact varied. Some attributed it to the Spanish troops having advanced to the frontiers, with the design of attacking Navarre, which justified the agents of the King of Navarre in collecting a force together to repel them. Others, on the other hand, accused the people of Navarre of having, by their rebellion, furnished an excuse to the Spaniards for moving. Notwithstanding these various reports, the King of Navarre gained daily in reputation and favour. The faction of the Constable and that of the Guises, honoured and extolled him, as both wished to gain him over to their side. His brother Condé, had been released on his security, and it was generally believed that the Prince would be set at liberty, if he could be induced to make peace with the Guises, against whom alone he felt resentment, as he considered them to have been the cause of all his troubles. The Vidame of Chartres had also been released; but after leaving the Bastia (Bastille) where he had been confined, he had been taken very ill and was in danger of his life.

SURIANO was forwarding his despatch by a courier sent on that day to Rome on the affair of the King of Navarre, to request the Pope to receive in public consistory the person whom His Majesty had sent some months before as a Royal Ambassador, to declare his obedience to His Holiness. The Holy Father had hitherto refused to do so to avoid giving offence to the King of Spain, who had the title of King of Navarre bestowed upon him by Pope Julius II., when the Duke d'Albert, formerly King of Navarre, was excommunicated, and deprived of his Kingdom, for having recognised and favoured the Council convoked, at that time, against His Holiness.

*From Orleans, Jan. 7, 1550 (1561).**

To the DOGE,

SURIANO had demanded an audience to present the DOGE's letter to the King and the Queen-mother. He was first received by His Most Christian Majesty, and afterwards, approaching the Queen-mother, he delivered the letters to her. Perceiving that the first part of his communication† recalled her grief, and greatly moved her, he had passed at once to the second part, and congratulated her, in the DOGE's name, on the accession of the new King.

He then turned to the religious question, as instructed by the DOGE, having first conferred with the Pope's Nuncio as much as was necessary, according to the orders which he had received. He said to her Majesty that as the most excellent Republic (Venice) had ever earnestly desired the good of the Holy (Catholic) religion, out of respect for the Almighty—who ought to be esteemed above all things—and because it was the evident source of the prosperity of Nations, and of the peace and unity of peoples, and of the power and greatness of Princes, so he hoped that her Majesty would ever have it at heart. Her goodness and prudence had confirmed him in the conviction that she would. He had learnt the way in which the (religious) troubles had been settled since Her Majesty had exercised the supreme authority she so deservedly possessed in the Kingdom, which, together with all Christendom, was ready to recognise the great benefits it had received from her. What she had done would gain glory for her in this world and grace with the Almighty.

Her Majesty replied that she was deeply grateful to God for His many great mercies, and that she could never abandon her most earnest desire to maintain and increase the Holy (Catholic) Religion. She had ever aimed, she observed, at this, and would do so in future, being convinced that what SURIANO had said to her was most true—that changes in religion bring about changes in nations, and disorder in governments, and destroy the obedience due to them. Although from her language great good to the Kingdom might be hoped for, certain things which SURIANO had heard from the Nuncio, from the Cardinal de Tournon, and from the Cardinal of Lorraine, whom he had recently visited, made him fear the contrary. For, in the first place, it had been resolved in the Council that, in the event of the General

* The Venetian year commenced on the 1st March.
† i.e. Condolences on the death of the late King.