

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 5 March 1575, with a postscript dated 7 March 1575, written by Dr Valentine Dale (c.1520–1589), the English ambassador in Paris, to Sir Francis Walsingham (c.1532-1590).

Oxford was then in Paris on his continental tour. Dr Dale describes Oxford's conduct as modest and comely, saying he is 'well liked as a goodly gentleman'. Dr Dale mentions that he had not been able to procure Oxford an audience with the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, because of the recent death of her beloved daughter, Claude of Lorraine, but that Oxford had had an audience with the French King, Henri III, and his new bride, Louise of Lorraine, and had taken his leave of them by 5 March.

For further background on the situation at the French court at the time of Oxford's arrival in Paris, see TNA SP 70/133, ff. 135-6.

Persons mentioned in Dr Dale's letter in the order of their appearance include:

Filippo Antonio Cavriana, physician to Queen Catherine de Medici

Louise of Lorraine (1553-1601), Queen consort of France from 1575 to 1589

Elisabeth of Austria (1554-1592), Queen consort of France from 1570 to 1574)

Louis Gonzaga (1539-1595), Duke of Nevers

Catherine de Medici (1519-1589), mother of King Henri III

Sir Arthur Champernowne (c.1524-1578)

Henry III (1551-1589), born Alexandre Edouard de France, King of France from 1574 to 1589

Roger North (1531-1600), 2nd Baron North

Philippe Hurault (1528-1599), Comte de Cheverny

Claude de la Chastre

Charles de Montmorency-Damville (1537-1612), Seigneur de Meru

Claude (1547-1574), Duchess of Lorraine, sister of King Henri III

Roger de Saint-Lary (c.1525-1579), Seigneur de Bellegarde, Marshal of France

Jacques de Crussol (1540-1586), 2nd Duke d' Uzès

Henri de Montmorency-Damville (1534-1614)

Louis de Bourbon (1513 -1582), 2nd Duke of Montpensier

I was glad to perceive by your letter of the 5th of February that you were not in such grief as was reported unto me. I broke the matter to Cavriane if need should have been, who you know loveth you, and now might have the more leisure because he is disappointed of his room about this Queen which he had with the other, wherewithal he is utterly out of patience, as the Duke of Nevers is likewise because he cannot have the government of Normandy. Queen Mother might think it more expedient for her that her friends were in place if she be in that credit that she may do it, whereof men do begin to doubt because of this marriage, which is thought to be wrought without her, and yet she maketh as though she had been the chief doer of it.

All that I have been able to do in Sir Arthur Champernowne's matter is that I have gotten again the books which I delivered to the King at the being of my Lord North here, and now we shall see what answer may be gotten both in that matter and in other for they are committed to Monsieur Cheverny to be examined, but God knoweth what comfort I should give Sir Arthur [~~CROSSED OUT?~~: further that] he shall be sure of the best I can do.

I know not whether this la Chastre which cometh from hence to the Queen's Majesty have charge to require renovation of the treaty. If he so have, I have sent a few notes in this packet to declare that the Queen's Majesty is not bound to it unless she list, namely unless the King will be sworn to it first as the Queen was, and keep the Edict of Pacification which was standing in force at the time of the making of this treaty. You know this la Chastre. He is governor of Bourges in Berry, and had the charge of the siege of Sancerre, where he played but foul play, and therefore he is the more made of here.

The King saith still he will have peace, and yet there are above 40 commissions sealed since his coming to Paris for captains to levy soldiers, and indeed this new taking of Agde upon the Levant Sea not far from Aigues-Mortes, and a town or two more that men do say likewise is taken upon the river of Rhone doth prick the King to do somewhat one way or other. Men do say that the deputies will come for some treaty, but we see none as yet.

It was much bruited that the Queen's Majesty had holpen Meru with money, but we see no effect of it as yet, notwithstanding that is the thing they do chiefly fear here.

The news of the death of the Duchess of Lorraine hath put Queen Mother so out of tune that I could have no access to her for my Lord of Oxford. [-I?] He hath spoken with the King and the Queen, his wife, and hath taken his leave and all(?) with many great words

of compliments of both sides. My Lord used himself very moderately and comely, as [sic] is well liked as a goodly gentleman.

The Mareschal Bellegarde hath left all in Dauphiny, and is come to the court. They are practicing to send him away into Polonia as an ambassador for fear lest he should have overmuch credit about the King. And thus I take my leave of you from Paris the 5th of March.

Your own assured, Valen{tine} Dale

Since the writing of this letter la Chastre came to me ready to take his horse. He uttered unto me that he came to require renovation of the League. He said withal that he carried out with him(?) that the King had sworn to it, which I do hardly believe to be true, and if it were, it is to no purpose *in absentia partis*.

We had news spread for a day or two again that the Duke d'Uzes had given an overthrow to Monsieur Damville, but now the news are rather to the contrary. Somewhat there hath been between them which is not of the best for that you may be sure otherwise it would be blown out loud enough, as you know.

The Frenchman that writeth this letter enclosed to Master Doctor Hin(?) desireth you to get him answer thereof.

I have had privy advertisement that there is a practice in hand against Rochelle, by whom I cannot learn. You know de la Haye is a dangerous person. And here is one come to the court which is much made of which was given hostage into Rochelle by Monsieur Montpensier for Lusignan. And thus I take my leave of you again from Paris the 7th of March 1574.

Your own assured, Valen{tine} Dale

Endorsed: (1) To the right honourable Mr Francis Walsingham, esquire, one of the Queen's Majesty's Principal Secretaries; (2) 1574, March 5, from D{octor} Dale, dated at Paris.