

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 18 March 1575 written by Dr Valentine Dale (c.1520–1589), the English ambassador in Paris, to Lord Burghley.

Oxford was in Paris on his continental tour, and had been presented by Dr Dale to the French King and Queen on 5 March. Oxford left Paris on 16 March (see TNA SP 70/133, f. 186). It would appear from the letter below that the issuance of documents for Oxford's travel was facilitated by the fact that la Chastre had been sent on an embassy to England:

Monsieur Cherveny sent me word since the departure of Monsieur la Chastre that he hath had strait commandment from the King diligently to apply the dispatch of the Queen's Majesty's subjects' suits with many fair words, and I had all passports and commissions for post-horses and letters for my Lord of Oxford that I could require, and indeed he was well liked of, and governed himself very honourably while he was here. I got the ambassador of Venice's letters for him, both unto the state and unto the ambassador's particular friends. He did wisely to cumber himself with as little company as he might.

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:

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

Henri de Bourbon (1552-1588), Prince of Conde

Henri de Montmorency-Damville (1534-1614)

Charles IX (155-1574), King of France from 1560 to 1574, brother of King Henri III

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

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

Charles I (1556-1605), Marquis d'Elbeuf, and from 1582, Duke d'Elbeuf

Alfonso II d'Este (1533-1597), Duke of Ferrara

Pope Gregory XIII (1502-1585)

Antonio Maria Salviati, Papal Nuncio in Paris

Charles Du Puy de Montbrun (1530-1575), Huguenot captain in Dauphine

Francois de Mandelot, Governor of Lyons

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

Francois de la Noue (1531-1591)

Philippe Hurault (1528-1599), Comte de Cheverny

Claude de la Chastre

Giovanni Francesco Morosini (1537-1596), Venetian ambassador in France

Armand de Gontaut (1524-1592), Baron de Biron

Jacques II (1531-1597), Sieur de Matignon

Alberto Gondi (1522-1602), Count of Retz

Michel de Castelnau (1520?-1592), Sieur de la Mauvissiere

Francois-Hercules (1555-1584), Duke of Alencon, brother of King Henri III, styled 'Monsieur'

Henri I (1550-1588), 3rd Duke of Guise

Henri IV (1553-1610), King of Navarre from 1572-1610 and King of France from 1589 to 1610

Charlotte de Beaune Semblancay (c.1551-1617), Viscountess of Tours, Baroness de Sauve, Marquise de Noirmoutier

Margaret de Valois (1553-1615), Queen of Navarre and sister of King Henri III

Anne (1531-1607), Duchess of Guise, later Duchess of Nemours (born Anne d'Este)

Catherine de Lorraine (1551-1596), Duchess of Montpensier

John Leslie (1527-1596), Bishop of Ross

Robert Turner (d.1599)

Mary [Mary Stewart] (1542-1587), Queen of Scots

Charles (1524-1574), Cardinal of Lorraine

Claude Nau de la Boisselliere (fl. 1574–1605)

My good Lord, the deputies for treaty of peace are looked for at the end of this month. The King hath sent them more large safe-conducts, and yet he hath had advertisement of very late that the Prince of Conde and Monsieur Damville are resolved to make their peace such as the King will not like of or else to make none at all. In the meantime all ways are devised for money and other preparations of war.

The town of Paris doth make difficulty to give the King 600 thousand francs *idq{ue} quasi sub conditione belli gerendi*, and yet they gave so much to his brother this time 12 month. The mass of money must come of the sale of church lands.

The King hath appointed 200 thousand crowns of the first money to be sent into Polonia (wherewithal the French are angry) to stop their mouths from an election. Mareschal Bellegarde is named to go ambassador thither to send him out of the way for Queen Mother cannot abide him of old. The house of Guise doth hate him; the rest do envy him for his late honour and credit with the King. They do charge him with the dishonour of Livron, and that he favoureth them of the religion, yet he alone advised the King to take another way.

The chief of the embassy is the Marquis d'Elbeuf because he is a Guise and must set forth the cause of the Duke of Ferrara, his kinsman, who is an earnest suitor for that kingdom if the King be constrained to depart from it.

The Pope's nunce calleth upon the King to accept the Pope's offer of 4000 footmen and 200 horsemen *na{m} sibi timet*, for they of the religion were like to have taken another town of the Pope's of late near Viterby in the conte of Avignon, and do wax strong upon all the river of Rhone both above Avignon and beneath. Montbrun hath taken of very late Endeueze, a proper town upon that river.

Monsieur Damville hath taken a council of four of the religion and four politiques. He permitteth liberty of religion and easeth the people of their exactions et *multa alia popularia*, whereby many follow him.

The governor of Lyons hath commanded them of the religion to keep their houses or to put in sureties for their behaviour.

The gentleman which was given hostage to Rochelle by Monsieur Montpensier is named Monsieur Laynauday, and hath made the King great promises, amongst other things to procure Monsieur la Noue to come to the court upon the King's word, which causeth men to think that he may have further intelligence in Rochelle.

Monsieur Cherveny sent me word since the departure of Monsieur la Chastre that he hath had strait commandment from the King diligently to apply the dispatch of the Queen's Majesty's subjects' suits with many fair words, and I had all passports and commissions for post-horses and letters for my Lord of Oxford that I could require, and indeed he was well liked of and governed himself very honourably while he was here. I got the ambassador of Venice's letters for him, both unto the state and unto the ambassador's particular friends. He did wisely to cumber himself with as little company as he might.

It is determined that Monsieur Biron and Matignon shall be made mareschals to counterpoise the greatness of the Mareschal of Retz and Bellegarde, the one in respect of the King, the other in respect of Queen Mother, and yet she liketh not of Monsieur Biron.

Mauvissiere saith he is commanded to make himself ready to come ambassador resident with the Queen's Majesty.

It is reported that the Rochellois have taken Lusson upon the sea-side not far from them, which if it be true is of great consequence.

And thus I beseech Almighty God long to preserve your Lordship in good health. From Paris the 18th of March 1574.

Your Lordship's most humble, Valentyne Dale

I do send your Lordship the copy of certain secret advertisements which I have had and have written at this time in my letters to Mr Secretaries.

The King caused a dispensation to be obtained for his marriage *cu{m} clausula qua{m}vis rem cu{m} ea prius habuisset et alijs ineptissimis clausulis*. When the nunce presented this dispensation the King excused himself that he proceeded to his marriage without his dispensation, and that he wrote for it only to satisfy his mother, who made that scruple without cause because she would not have had him marry that way, whereby we see what secret working there was between the King and the Guises, and how far this is from those words *Elle me fit et me maria*.

Monsieur Montpensier caused the Guises to be summoned and their wives to have his precedence judged by the parliament, and Monsieur joined with him. The Queen was taught to say this was done in spite of her. The King inhibited the parliament [+and] frowned on his brother. Queen Mother *menate est filio om{ni}a extrema nisi [] et ille [] se alituru{m} quovis terraru{m}*. The Duke of Guise soweth dissention between Monsieur and the King of Navarre by a woman with whom they are all three great. The Queen of Navarre is offended for the abusing of her husband. Madame de Nemours is out with her daughter, the Duke of Montpensier's wife, for the matter of precedence, and every side is out of quiet more with these things at home than with the matters abroad. *Regina mater hoc om{ni}a dissimulat seduli*.

William Gerard, son to Sir Thomas Gerard, being here among other Englishmen which are come out of the Low Country, told me that, understanding of the Queen Majesty's gracious favour unto his father, he minded to return into England and to reveal unto your Lordship such things as he understood of a book sent by the Bishop of Ross to Douai for one Turner, late of Cambridge, to be put into English, in which book are contained divers discourses and letters containing the doings of the Scottish Queen and other with her, wherein much mention should be made of your Lordship. And surely this Bishop is always busy, and I fear though he have lost the Cardinal that he doth find other of that house no less affectionate and more of credit and readier to be doing, though not with so good advice. Sure it is the Bishop doth not omit any occasion *siue tempestime(?) siue intempestime(?)*, and is never from them *et istis quidem trahere preserti [] guisici [] segui et ab ei duci solitus sit quod deus perturbet illoru{m} consetia*. I did learn that he which cometh to be secretary to the Scottish Queen is a man that hath been brought up in practices.

Endorsed: (1) To the right honourable my very good Lord, the Lord Treasurer of England; (2) (in Lord Burghley's hand) xvijj Marti {ij} 1575, D{octor} Dale