

SUMMARY: The excerpt below from a letter written on 23 January 1571 by the French ambassador to England, Bertrand de Salignac Fenelon, seigneur de la Mothe (1523-1589), to King Charles IX of France (1550-1574) reports that the Queen, who had not been in London for two years on account of the plague, had come to the city to open the Royal Exchange and dine at the house of Sir Thomas Gresham (c.1518-1579), after which she would go to Greenwich to pass the rest of the winter, and that preparations were already being made at Greenwich for a tournament to be held there on Shrove Tuesday, at which the defenders were to be Oxford and Charles (1536-1624) Lord Howard of Effingham. This tournament seems to be otherwise unnoticed. In 1571, Shrove Tuesday was on 27 February.

It seems likely from the account in Stow that Oxford was among the members of the nobility who attended the opening of the Royal Exchange on 23 January 1571:

*The Queen's Majesty, attended with her nobility, came from her house in the Strand, called Somerset House, and entered the city by Temple Bar, through Fleet Street, Cheap, and so by the north side of the burse, through Threadneedle Street, to Sir Thomas Gresham's house in Bishopsgate Street, where she dined. After dinner her Majesty returned through Cornhill, entered the burse on the south side, and after that she had viewed every part thereof above the ground, especially the pawn, which was richly furnished with all sorts of the finest wares in the city, she caused the same burse, by a herald and trumpet, to be proclaimed 'The Royal Exchange', and so to be called from thenceforth, and not otherwise.*

The letter is found in *Correspondance Diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac, de la Mothe Fenelon, Ambassadeur de France en Angleterre de 1568 a 1575*, 7 vols (Paris and London, 1838-40) at iii, p. 443.

CLVIe DEPESCHE

du xxiiiie de janvier 1571

(Envoyée exprès jusques à Calais par Jehan Volet.)

Retour d'Elisabeth à Londres après la cessation de la peste. – Affaires d'Ecosse. – Audience. – Plainte de la reine au sujet de la descente d'un parti de Français en Irlande. – Avis donné par elle d'une levée qui se prépare en Allemagne. – Son desir de voir la réunion des églises proposée par le roi. – Négociation des Pays-Bas. – Lettre secrète à la reine-mère. Conférence de l'ambassadeur avec le cardinal de Chatillon sur le projet de mariage du duc d'Anjou. – Avis sur l'entreprise faite en Irlande par des Bretons.

AU ROY.

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Sire, ceulx de ceste ville de Londres ont monstré beaucoup de resjouyssance à la venue de leur Royne, laquelle, pour cause de la peste, n'y avoit esté, il y a deux ans. Elle va aujourduy veoir un bastiment nouveau qu'on y a édifié, fort commode, et de grand ornement, affin de luy donner le nom; qui, jusques à ceste heure, a esté appellé par provision la Bourse. Le festin luy est préparé en la maison de maistre Grassein. L'on dict qu'après demain elle descendra à Grenwich pour y passer le reste d l'yver, où se dresse desjà le lieu pour faire ung tournoy à ce caresme prenant; duquel le comte d'Oxford et sire Charles Havard doivent estre les tenans.

Sire, those of this city of London have shown great rejoicing at the coming of their Queen, who, on account of the plague, has not been there for two years. She goes today to see a new building which has been erected there, very convenient, and greatly ornamented, in order to give it its name, which, up till now, has been called provisionally 'the Burse'. A banquet has been prepared for her in the house of Master Gresham. People say that after tomorrow she will go down to Greenwich to pass the rest of the winter there, where already a place is set up to hold a tourney at this Shrovetide, at which the Earl of Oxford and Sir Charles Howard are to be the defenders.