

SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Sir Dudley Carleton on 8 January 1619 [=1620], John Chamberlain, amid other news, makes mention of Oxford's illegitimate son by Anne Vavasour, Sir Edward Vere and of Oxford's son Henry's participation with other nobleman in a 'running masque'. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. II, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp.280-2.

My very good Lord, I wrote you this day sevenight of my Lord of Doncaster's arrival, who the next day had long audience of his Majesty, as likewise had the ambassador come from Bohemia in the bedchamber very privately, who mistrusting (belike) his entertainment, came with no more train nor show than that he may easily lodge with Abraham Williams, who married Devick's widow and succeeded Walgrave in the place of agent to those princes.

We have no alteration at court but only Sir Lionel Cranfield, Master of Wards, was on Tuesday sworn of the Council. I pray God to send him well to do in the place, but he is so pragmatical the world misdoubts he may prove an instrument of much mischief. Besides his own abilities, this advancement is thought to proceed by reason of a match to be made with somebody's kinswoman, whereto otherwise he had no great fancy. My Lord of Doncaster is by the common voice sometime named Lord Chamberlain, sometime Master of the Horse, but it is said the Earl of Pembroke is loath to remove unless his brother Montgomery may succeed him. Sir Thomas Wynn told me yesterday that within these 3 or 4 days the Lord Lisle should say openly at dinner in the presence of Sir Edward Vere that you were to be called home and Sir Edward Barrett to go in your place, but I told him again he was in a fair way to make a shorter cut to what he pretended than to seek a bridge so far about, for it is given out he is like to be Controller by the resignation of his brother-in-law, who aims at a higher dignity, as to be a viscount, and a suit of good consequence withal. By reason of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's age, it is said Sir Richard Weston is to be joined with him as an assistant, and be made Under-Treasurer. And somewhat likewise must be thought upon and found out for Sir Harry Spiller. Now if all this or the like fall out, we may truly say *unusquisque est faber fortunae suae*.

The Earl of Suffolk is hardly pursued for his fine, and process gone out to make seizure of his lands, but it is said of late he hath made such conveyance of them (or most of them) to the Lord William Howard and Sir Arthur Ingram that ordinary process can take no hold of them, whereupon they have seized upon the goods in Northampton House where they find not the value of £400, and now lastly have sent to Audley End where in all likelihood they will find the like riddance, and his sons in the same sort seem to *faire lettres restifs*, and will not relinquish the right they pretend to their places, and Sir Thomas very lately cause his patent to be enrolled, which courses (God knows) can serve them to little purpose, but rather to incense his Majesty the more, and cause him to cut these knots of fraud and cunning if they will not be untied.

All this week hath been spent in masquerades. On Monday the Marquesses Buckingham and Hamilton, the Earls of Oxford and Montgomery, the Viscount Purbeck and Lord Hunsdon, Sir Henry Rich, Sir George Goring, Sir Thomas Badger, young Maynard, Achmouty, and Abercrombie went in a masque to the French ambassador's, where they found store of ladies and beauties the greatest and best about this town, but besides dancing till after 2 o'clock there passed nothing extraordinary nor worth the remembrance but that their greatest bravery consisted in copper lace, which in my opinion was very poor for such personages, and the great porter at court being dressed like a giant came in bearing the Earl of Montgomery's page like a hawk on his fist. The young French lady (Saint Luc's daughter) got great commendation by her sober and modest behaviour. The next night the same masque went to the Lady Hatton's where the King and Prince was present, and on Wednesday to the Earl of Exeter's with little or no alteration in themselves and not much in the company, which methinks should be very tedious, and even tire out the stomachs of the French with the surfeit of this *crambe bis ter cocta*. Yesternight (they say) they were in the same sort at the Earl of Warwick's, and this night are to be at the Lord of Doncaster's, and on Monday (but that the King goes away toward Royston) they made account to have visited Denmark House, which manner of running masque they pretend to borrow from the French (though for my part I remember no such thing in my time), but no doubt but in all other fantastical fashions, so in this we strive to exceed and outstrip them. The Prince's masque was at Whitehall on Twelfth Night, but how things passed there I have neither heard nor enquired.

So with the remembrance of my best service to my good lady, I commend you to the protection of the Almighty. From London the 8th of January 1619.

Yours most assuredly at command,

John Chamberlain