

SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Dudley Carleton on 1 March 1599, John Chamberlain mentions the conclusion of a contract for the marriage of Oxford's daughter, Bridget de Vere, to Francis Norris, later 2nd Baron Norris of Rycote, and Earl of Berkshire. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. I, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp. 69-71.

Good Master Carleton, I received both your letters of the 12th and twentieth of the last, full fraught both with their own store and much other good matter that came in their company. We keep still at a stay, and do neither *movere* nor *promovere*, but drive on with the weather to see what time will bring forth. The Earl of Essex is crazed, but whether more in body or mind is doubtful. Things do not succeed as he would wish them, but new difficulties arise daily about his commission as touching the time of his abode, touching his entertainment, and touching the disposing of places and offices, upon which points and some others he is so little satisfied that many times he makes it a question whether he go or not. Sir George Carey of Cockington (by Plymouth) is named to be Treasurer of Ireland in Sir Henry Wallop's place, but whether he be to my Lord's liking or no, I know not. The rebels of Munster and Connagh are not so united but that they have many jars among themselves, and of late a bickering wherein Patrick Condon (a chief ringleader) is said to be slain or sore hurt. Here was news that Captain Simms and his company was cut a-pieces by the enemy, but as far as I hear since it was but a private quarrel in which Simms miscarried.

On Saturday last Sir William Woodhouse, accompanied with four hacksters, understanding that Sir Robert Drury was to come from Tottenham toward London, waited for him in the way and set upon him as he was coming out of his coach, wounding him in three or four places, and thinking they had dispatched him, left him for dead, but it falls out better with him, for he is like to recover. Marry, his man that offered himself in his master's defence was slain outright in the place. Upon the first alarm at the court there was commandment from the Council for a privy search all over this town to apprehend them, but within two hours later (upon what reason I know not) it was countermanded. Some give out that Sir William Woodhouse should be likewise hurt in the face and in the hand, but I think it is rather given out to move pity than otherwise, for I cannot learn he was near danger, and the match was very uneven of five to two, and they taken on the sudden.

The Lady Drury (Sir Robert's mother) died some ten or twelve days since, and hath left Sir John Scott a fresh widower. I wrote you in one of my letters that Sir W. Woodhouse had married the Lady Southwell, but the matter was mistaken, though it were generally bruited. One Doctor Ledsham, sometimes the Queen's chaplain, but always a giddy-brained fellow, hath lately stabbed and made away himself here in town. The match is made up twixt young Norris and the Lady Bridget, second daughter to the Earl of Oxford. We are still fed with fresh rumours of Don Sebastian that he is *ipsissimus*, and that the

Venetians have sent ambassadors to the King of Spain to signify so much unto him, and that there have been some great men executed of late in Portugal about this business, and many others translated into Spain, but I will lay no wager of all this.

For lack of better matter I send you three or four toys to pass away the time. The letter of Squire's conspiracy is well written, but the other of Dr. Dee is a ridiculous babble of an old imposturing juggler. The *Silkworm* is thought to be Dr. Moffett's, and in mine opinion is no bad piece of poetry. The treatise of Henry the Fourth is reasonably well written. The author is a young man of Cambridge toward the civil law. Here hath been much descanting about it, why such a story should come out at this time, and many exceptions taken, especially to the epistle, which was a short thing in Latin dedicated to the Earl of Essex, and objected to him in good earnest, whereupon there was commandment it should be cut out of the book, yet I have got you a transcript of it that you may pick out the offence if you can. For my part I can find no such bug's-words, but that everything is as it is taken.

I am going the next week (God willing) to Knebworth, in which consideration I am not greatly sorry for your staying at Ostend, for I should have enjoyed but little of your company, which perhaps will come better to pass at some other time. And so wishing you all contentment both here and there, I commit you to God. From London this first of March 1599.

Yours must assuredly,

John Chamberlain

To my very good friend, Master Dudley Carleton, attending on the Lord Governor of Ostend, give these.