

SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Sir Dudley Carleton on 19 April 1623, John Chamberlain mentions the ongoing imprisonment of Oxford's son and heir, Henry de Vere, 18th Earl of Oxford, in the Tower, and his marriage contract with Lady Diana Cecil, the daughter of William Cecil, 2nd Earl of Exeter. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. II, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp. 489-92.

My very good Lord, the King came hither the fifth of this present, and the next day (being Palm Sunday) the Lord Archbishop preached at court in the open preaching place where there had been no sermons all this Lent, nor the King present at any till then in the chapel when the Lord Keeper preached on Good Friday, as likewise we had a very proper man, one Holdsworth, that day at Paul's Cross, and on Easter Monday the Master of the Savoy, Balcanquhall, at the Spital, and Dr. Rawlinson and one Smith, both Oxford men, the two days following, who all performed their art exceeding well, and if he that is to make the rehearsal sermon tomorrow follow the same steps, I have seldom known those places better furnished. The King removed on Wednesday to Hampton Court, on Thursday to Windsor where he makes account to remain ten or eleven days.

The provost of Eton outlived nine days, which is counted the fatal time for those that be cut of the stone, but died two days after, when the canvass for the place began afresh, and Sir Robert Naunton laid in hard for it, offering to quit all pensions, promises and pretensions whatsoever, but the King reserves that and all other matters of grace or favour till the Lord of Buckingham's return, yet he hath renewed his promise to Sir William Beecher and sent letters to the college not to proceed to any election till they know his further pleasure. But I hear underhand he is like to have a hard condition annexed, to marry the widow, or provide for her and her chickens.

But for the more grace to the Lord of Buckingham in his absence, his brother Kit Villiers is presently to be made Baron of Daintry and Earl of Anglesey, with the endowment of £100 land, old rent, and the gift of a forest that is to be sold or enclosed, so that his lady and cousin is like to be a worthy countess. Sir William St. John and Sir Henry Marvin (that had the command last summer of two of the King's ships to conduct Monsieur Soubise to Rochelle) have lost their places, and are committed for winking or giving way to his surprising of a rich ship of Dunkirk that brought treasure out of Spain.

Greames, gentleman of the horse to the Lord Marquis, came thence about Sunday was sevenight with welcome news of the Prince's health and welfare, and that matters are so forward there that the Prince desires his Majesty to hasten the sending of the fleet, for he hopes to be with his Lady Infanta at the sea-side before it arrive, yet in the meantime the sending for his arms and tilting horse make men doubt all cannot be well done so soon. They are shipped here already, but the wind that should carry them away keeps them in the river, and most men think they are like to serve to little use after so long lying on shipboard, and so long a journey by land from the sea-side to Madrid, together with so

great change of air and diet and the heat of the year coming on, whereby it will be nothing fit neither for his Highness to use so violent an exercise. But that which makes men suspect most of all that matters are not so current is that we hear the Marquis of Inojosa, your old acquaintance, is coming hither ambassador, and is to set out thence the first of their May, or rather (as the Spanish ambassador here gives out) the tenth. The dispensation is not come neither, but they say the Duke of Pastrana is sent to Rome to hasten it, but goes in a litter, as is given out. The Lord Kensington, Sir George Goring, young Montagu, and I know not how many more are gone for Spain in several troops, and I heard the Lord had £6000 to bear his charges, as likewise that Greames is dispatched thither again with a £1000 for his pains and expense, and a pension of £500 for his life, or as some say, the customs of Carlisle. Sir Francis Steward is going for Spain with one of the King's ships, and a pinnace to bring home the Lord Marquis presently. Sir John Wentworth is gone with him in company, who is lately become a Romish Catholic, forsooth, as likewise the Lord Vaughan, the Prince's controller, who never discovered himself till now, and it is like at the Infanta's coming we shall have many more fall away as fast as withered leaves in autumn, but we hear the Prince hath given order that he and all his regiment or retinue below the stairs (as they call it) upon their arrival in Spain shall return back because they should not pester the court nor country where provisions are scant enough for those that be there already, insomuch that it is said the chaplains and furniture for the chapel shall either return or tarry at sea-side. Some whispering here is that the coming of the ambassador is about a treaty or meeting at Brussels for the compounding of the business of the Palatinate and all other differences now on foot in Christendom, which meeting should have been here but for favouring the King's purse, that he might have seen their real proceeding, but if the marriage be not perfected till that business be ended, God knows when we may expect the Prince, unless he grow impatient of so long delay. And the fleet may be ready all in good time, though it should stay a month or two longer. The Earl of Rutland is declared admiral of it, the Lord Windsor vice-admiral, and the Lord Morley rear-admiral, all of the same stamp. But let men think and talk what they will, the King knows more than we all, who is very confident of the success, and joys much to talk of the Prince's journey and all the accidents by the way, whereof he was fully informed by Greames, and how many falls they had, the Lord Marquis seven, Sir Francis Cottington twelve, and so of the rest, only the Prince had never a one. I spake with one lately that on Tuesday heard the King relate the whole story *ab ovo* from point to point with great contentment and of the honours done him in Spain, but by that relation I gather pregnant arguments to mine own judgment that he went not unknown in the court of France, but that they dissembled their knowledge. We look daily for fresh news from them, and the King thinks every day ten till it come.

On Good Friday Sir Thomas Lowe was prayed for at Paul's Cross, and died that evening. He was buried privately on Tuesday night, though there were a great deal of company, and Sir John Bennet with much ado got leave to be there. The Lord of Bridgewater's only son died yesterday, but there is hope left seeing his lady is with child and ready to lie down. On Tuesday there was a foul barbarous murder committed in Lombard Street by a prentice upon two of his mistress's children of six or seven years old by cutting their throats and then hanged himself. The reason is said to be some devilish revenge for ill usage.

The Earl of Oxford lies still by it, and so is like to do till either the Lord of Buckingham come or send. There is a marriage treating (or rather a contract of a year old or more, as some say) twixt him and the Lady Diana Cecil, with whom he is to have £4000 in money and £500 land presently, and £500 land a year more after her father's decease.

There is a great faction fallen out in the Virginia Company. The heads of the one side are the Earl of Southampton, the Lord Cavendish, Sir Edward Sackville, Sir John Ogle, Sir Edward Sandys, with divers other of meaner quality. On the other side are the Earl of Warwick, Sir Thomas Smith, Sir Nathaniel Rich, Sir Henry Mildmay, Alderman Johnson, and many more. On Monday they were before the King with their accusations and allegations, where Sir Edward Sackville carried himself so malapertly and insolently that the King was fain to take him down soundly and roundly, but I hear that by means of the Lord Treasurer he made his peace the next day.

The provostship of Eton seems not to be so assured to Sir William Beecher but that there is still some nibbling at it, and Sir Robert Ayton, a Scot, is in as fair possibility as any of the rest, as I have learned very lately. So with the remembrance of my best service to my good lady, I commend you to the protection of the Almighty. From London this 19th of April, 1623.

Your Lordship's most assuredly at command,

John Chamberlain