

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 24 October 1605 from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton mentioning the serious illness of Oxford's son-in-law, Francis Norris (1579-1622), 2nd Baron Norris of Rycote, in Paris. Norris had married Oxford's daughter, Bridget Vere (1584-1631), in 1599.

In March 1605, both Norris and Dudley Carleton were in the retinue of Charles Howard, 1st Earl of Nottingham, when he travelled to Spain in connection with the ratification of the Treaty of London which had ended hostilities between England and Spain in 1604:

. . . in March 1605 [Nottingham] was sent to Spain as ambassador extraordinary, to interchange ratifications and oaths. His embassy was of almost regal splendour. He had the title of excellency, and a money allowance of £15,000. All the gentlemen of his staff wore black velvet cloaks, and his retainers numbered five hundred.

See the *ODNB* entry for Charles Howard (1536-1624), 1st Earl of Nottingham; Lee, Maurice, ed., *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 1603-1624; Jacobean Letters*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1972), p. 8; and Winwood, Ralph, *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I*, (London: T. Ward, 1725), Vol. II, pp. 39, 52 at:

<https://archive.org/details/memorialsaffai02winw/page/38/mode/2up>

On their return to England, Norris fell dangerously ill in Paris, and Carleton remained with him until his recovery. The opening lines of Chamberlain's letter suggest that he had thought that the unopened letter he had just received from Carleton had brought news of Norris' death.

For Lord Norris' illness see also TNA SP 14/19/12, TNA SP 14/19/39, TNA SP 78/52, f. 336, TNA SP 78/52, ff. 342-3 and CP 112/147.

The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. I, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939), pp. 210-2.

Sir, I assure you the sight of your letter was never less welcome, fearing it had brought the confirmation of that which was generally bruted, for howsoever you wished the matter should be carried close, yet (I know not how) it had found vent and was current over all the town, and I met with it almost in every corner, so that your letter lay by me an hour or twain unlooked on, and longer perhaps had it lien had not your brother sent to me to learn more particulars (having presently sent his own to the Lady Norris), and to know how he might write to you. I see it is good to have a strong faith, and sometimes to hope even without hope, for though there were many more reasons of distrust both in your first letter, your man's relations, and the general voice, yet my heart would never yield to so

untimely a loss. I was with Sir Walter Cope to learn what construction was made of your provident care herein. He says all is very well taken, neither can it be otherwise. I inquired further what good offices he had done in your behalf. He saith he still shows your letters (which find good approbation) as the best means to make way to a good opinion. This is all I could get of him, which methinks is but a poor scantling, and small encouragement,

Since my last, the Attorney of the Court of Wards is dead. The King hath sent to my Lord of Salisbury that he shall have both the nomination and confirmation of whom he will in that place. Most voices run with Sergeant Hobart, or Foster. I think I forgot to write you the death of Judge Anderson, and that Justice Gawdy succeeds him. The Earl of Cumberland lies very weak, and in great danger. He hath settled all things, and left the Earl of Salisbury and the Lord Wotton his executors. We hear that the Spaniards have met with Sir Edward Michelborne at sea, and massacred him and all his company. We hear likewise that they have converted or perverted Sir Charles Cornwallis' chaplain, a fellow that preached at Paul's Cross this twelvemonth, and hath a benefice and a wife here in England. I know not whether you have heard that your old acquaintance Master Colt, and one Dr. Pope, a physician, have been called in question for coining, but how they speed or how they can shift it off, I cannot yet learn. Yesterday a goldsmith in Cheapside was fined in the Star-Chamber for arresting the Countess of Rutland upon an execution, and it was thoroughly argued how far noblemen and women are privileged in their persons from arrests. The week before there was a purveyor censured, for misdemeanour in his place, to ride with his face to the horse-tail, wherein one of his judges dissented from the rest, and would rather have it upon an ass, and that for two reasons: first, it would be more wonderment and gather more boys about him, and secondly, the slow pace of the ass would prolong his punishment.

In August last the lioness in the Tower brought forth two whelps, which live and thrive, for she nurses them herself. The Earl of Essex and the young Lord Cranborne shall marry two of the Lord Chamberlain's daughters at court very shortly. The only stay is for the King's coming, who is looked for the next week. He cannot well stay longer, for the parliament is to begin the fifth of the next month, when I hope we shall have your company. The sickness keeps still much at a stay. There died this week 160 in all, whereof 22 of the plague. The King finds such variety of sports that he cannot easily leave Royston and those quarters. He is now fallen into a great humour of catching larks, and takes as much delight in it or more than in hunting.

I received your money of Master Oldsworth, who was willing to continue it upon consideration for half a year or a year longer, but looking for your coming so soon, I knew not what occasion you might have to use it, and therefore thought best to keep it by me. I pray you remember the satin I wrote for in my last, and if you light upon any other trinkets not costly that may serve for New-year's gifts, you may do me a great pleasure to let me have part, and so wishing you all health and a good return, I commit you to God. From London this 24th of October, 1605.

Yours most assuredly,

John Chamberlain

To my assured good friend, Master Dudley Carleton, give these at Paris.