

SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Sir Dudley Carleton on 4 December 1624, John Chamberlain mentions the death of Oxford's sister, Mary (de Vere) Bertie, Lady Willoughby d'Eresby. At the time of her death, Mary was the wife of Sir Eustace Hart (d.1634). The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. II, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp. 588-91.

My very good Lord, the next day after I wrote last we had here great triumph and rejoicing for the good forwardness of the French match, by public commandment. The organs in Paul's played two hours on their loudest pipes, and so began to the bells, the bells to the bonfires, the bonfires to a great peal of ordinance at the Tower. God grant it may prove worth all this noise. It was solemnized at court the Friday before, where it was the more welcome because the news came on the Prince's birthday. Tom Carey, a privado of the Prince's bedchamber, was dispatched two days since into France with a love-letter and some rich and rare jewel to the sposa. We expect her here about the end of January, the Duke of Buckingham preparing to fetch and conduct her accompanied with six Earls: Dorset, Montgomery, Salisbury, Warwick, Denbigh and Clare, besides a world of viscounts, barons, with other grands and gallants. Yesterday arrived here Ville-aux-Clercs, the secretary, as extraordinary ambassador to see the articles signed and sworn, which (as they be given out) are hard enough on our side in point of religion, and every way as heavy at least as the Infanta's. He lodgeth at Northampton or Suffolk House with the other ambassador, where their allowance is £100 a day in cates, besides wine, fuel, lights and such other necessaries, which is a larger proportion than Queen Elizabeth gave to the greatest ambassage that I have known or heard of, consisting of a Prince of the blood, an ancient Marshal of France, four prime councillors, with Lansac and the premier president Briseon, besides the Duke of Bouillon, the Count La Marche, and a multitude of other monsieurs. We say this secretary is to have audience at Cambridge where the scholars must find out new flattery, or feed him with *crambe bis cocta* that was served to the Spaniards there not long since upon like occasion. These continual entertainments, with ambassages, masques, marriages and Mansfeld are like to keep us bare enough, yet if the conclusion prove well, we cannot think much of the cost.

Count Mansfeld went hence on Monday, having two days before a present from the city by the hands of the Lord Mayor of two purses with £500 in so many pieces. He was at the French church the Sunday before to wipe away the imputation that he was popish, or of no religion. There was somewhat ado to accommodate his captains, who refused such conditions as were first propounded. The rendezvous is now at Dover the 24th of this month, and if his troops from Denmark, Hamburg and those parts arrive in the meantime, they are not to land but 200 at once, and that only to refresh themselves and then give place to others. I am not willing to shoot my bolt, but I am sorry to see we should follow them and fight with them at their own weapon when God hath given us so many advantages by a shorter, safer and less chargeable course.

You may think I am as sullen or melancholic as he whom Paulus Jovius mentions, that when Charles the Fifth came to Rome and passed by his window would not vouchsafe to look out because he had not decimated his solders that sacked the town, so all the world here running after Mansfeld and wondering at him like an owl, I could not be drawn to make one step to see him, but was satisfied with the report of divers friends and acquaintance that describe him to be as like your brother Carleton as a man may be.

We begin to doubt of some *remuement* in Ireland, whereupon Florence MacCarthy is again clapped up in the Tower, the Earl of Ormonde not suffered to go thither, and the Baron of Lixnaw or Kerry (that was general of the horse to Tyrone at the battle of Kinsale) sent for back from Bristol, having lien here a good time close and unknown.

Our long term is ended, and left us little news, only one Harris, a baronet of Shropshire, was by the Lord of Arundel in a marshal's court declared and pronounced no gentleman, but though he have ungentled him he could not undub him, his authority not stretching to take away his patent under the Great Seal of England.

We have had here a very warm, wet and tempestuous winter hitherto. The last week a house was blown down in Holborn, and the steeple of Clerkenwell church overthrown, bells and all. There was a fire two days since in St Katherine's that burnt down Demetrius the brewer's house, with two or three more. The season hath been very sickly likewise, and taken away many, as the Lord Willoughby's mother, the young Lady Yelverton that brought her husband better than a thousand pound land a year and died in childbed, leaving a son, the Lady Garrard of Dorney, Sir Noel Caron, who died this week of a palsy and they say hath made the Prince his heir, Sir Richard Spenser, and Sir William Clarke is either gone or at the last cast. Secretary Conway hath gotten the government of the Isle of Wight, and the Lord Chamberlain the command of the New Forest, during the nonage of the young Earl of Southampton. His father's Garter, together with that of the Duke of Holst and Duke of Richmond, are designed to the Earls of Salisbury, Carlisle and Holderness. So with the remembrance of my best service to my good lady, I commend you to the protection of the Almighty. From London this 4th of December 1624.

Your Lordship's most assuredly at command,

John Chamberlain [signature blotted out]