
SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Dudley Carleton on 11 February 1607 [=1608], John Chamberlain mentions that Oxford's widow, Elizabeth Trentham, Countess of Oxford, dined in state at court at the marriage on 9 February of John Ramsay, Viscount Haddington, and Elizabeth Radcliffe, daughter of Robert Radcliffe, 5th Earl of Sussex, and that Ben Jonson's masque *The Hue and Cry after Cupid* was performed on that occasion. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. I, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp. 254-57.

Sir, your cousin Lytton being in town, and by reason of his craziness keeping home, is some hindrance to me at this present, that I can neither write at that ease nor leisure that otherwise I would. There be letters come from the youths at Rouen, but we know not the contents because they missed him upon the way. He tells me he hath discarded Phillips, his son Webb's preceptor. I imagine it was upon some *querelle d'Allemand*.

Your friend Toby Matthew was called before the council-table on Sunday in the afternoon, and after some schooling the Earl of Salisbury told him that he was not privy to his imprisonment, which he did no ways approve, as foreseeing that so light a punishment would make him rather more proud and perverse, but in conclusion they allotted him six weeks' space to set his affairs in order and depart the realm, and in the meantime willed him to make choice of some friend of good account, and well affected, where he might remain. He named Master Jones, who was accepted, and is not a little proud of his prisoner. He was no sooner gone nor his nest scant cold when Harry Constable was committed in his room, and nestles in the same lodging. One Richard Carey is likewise clapped up, accused to be the dispenser and distributor of the papists' benevolence, and that for great sums.

I can send you no perfect relation of the marriage nor masque on Tuesday, only they say all, but specially the motions, were well performed, as Venus with her chariot drawn by swans coming in a cloud to seek her son, who with his companions Lusus, Risus and Jocus and four or five wags more were dancing a mattachina, and acted it very anticly, before the twelve signs (who were the master-masquers) descended from the zodiac, and played their parts more gravely, being very gracefully attired. The bride dined in state accompanied by the Prince, the young Duke, the Lady Elizabeth, the Countess of Oxford, the Dukes of Saxony and other states to furnish the table. In the midst of the dinner, the King drank a carouse in a cup of gold, which he sent to the bride together with a basin and ewer, two livery pots and three standing cups, all very fair and massy, of silver and gilt, and withal a patent for a pension of £600 a year out of the Exchequer to the longer-liver of them, with this message, that he wished them as much joy and comfort all their life as he received that day he delivered him from the danger of Gowrie. Many other great presents there were of plate sent from all sides, but Dunbar's went beyond all, being valued between four and five hundred pound.

The treaty of peace goes on apace in the Low Countries. Spinola at their first meeting made a long speech in commendation of peace and touching the discommodities of war, persuading them to embrace this fair offer now made them by the King of Spain, who had descended so far as to treat with them as free States, though he hoped they would not take such hold of it, not forget him, themselves, nor the ancient benefits they had received from the house of Burgundy so far as to renounce all dependence, and that he had brought with him power to perform and security to maintain what should be agreed upon. But, for all these fair words, the States stood firm to have the point of sovereignty cleared before they would proceed any further, which (we hear) was condescended to at the next session, and that in so free and ample manner as that the King of Spain nor Archduke shall not so much as bear the arms of those provinces. The next article is about the trading into the East Indies (whence there is late news come that the Hollanders have taken Malacca, a place of great importance in those parts), and this point is thought will not be soon ended. The second proposal is about the exchange of towns and confines, which is thought will be a matter of much difficulty because Linghen, Grolle and those other small places in Gelderland will not answer or countervail Sluys, Bergen op Zoom and Breda demanded by the other side. But the hardest of all will be the free exercise of popish religion in the United Provinces, which it is said will be resolutely stood on *pro et contra* on both sides. The negotiators sit at a board by themselves, and the ambassadors and commissioners of France, England, Denmark and other princes sit looking on, and as it were giving aim, at another table. Many libels run up and down in this business, and the Archduke's people are nothing pleased with their actors, as you may see by this babble in the margent. They talk of divers prodigies, as well in those parts as in Holland, but specially that Aerssen the Greffier's bell in his house doth often ring out two or three hours together when nobody is near it and when it is expressly watched, and the grates and bars of his windows are continually hammered and battered as if there were a smith's forge, which hath almost put him out of his wits.

We hear out of Italy that the Pope hath expressly commanded Sir Robert Dudley to forsake his mistress, who they say hath been with child and miscarried five times within the year. It is said likewise that Montpensier is dead in France, and left but one daughter. I think it is no news to you that this cold weather hath carried away Doctor Bond, and that Dr. Harding or Dr. Tinley are like to succeed him in Magdalen's, and Dr. Howson in his parsonage of Brightwell.

I am sorry that country air works no better effect upon your lady's cold, but I am persuaded that as they say young married folks use to make and mar, so this is a new cold taken there and not carried hence, and therefore it behoves you to play the physician and bring her again safe and sound, or else it shall not serve your turn to slander this good town. I should have written to Bockmer, but if you have so much leisure as to make a step thither, or to send him anything here enclosed, it would be an honest excuse for me.

And so, wishing all health to you and your good lady, I commit you to God. From London this 11 of February 1607 [=1608].

Yours most assuredly,

John Chamberlain

[Written in margin:

Un Genevois ambitieux

Un Cordelier crotté

Un Espagnoll glorieux

Un Bourguignon sallé

Et un Flammand ignorant

Vont nostre paix traictant.]