

SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Sir Dudley Carleton on 17 June 1612, John Chamberlain, amid much other news of court appointments, mentions that Oxford's widow, Elizabeth Trentham, Countess of Oxford, is to entertain King James at her own expense at Havering. Presumably Havering was in the custody of the Countess by reason of the minority of her son, Henry de Vere, 18<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. I, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp.356-61.

My very gentle Lord,

Your two Carmelites are come, and have delivered me your letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> of April. I have since received a later of the 11<sup>th</sup> of May. Touching your friars, it was my chance to be out of town when they came, and they (unwilling to lose any time) found access to the Archbishop in my absence, which came very well to pass, for I should have proved but a bad conductor, having no manner of acquaintance in that house but Master Robert Hatton who is steward, neither can I tell wherein to pleasure them more than in conveying their letter, which I send here enclosed, whereby you shall receive from themselves a full relation of their present estate. They are now lodged at Lambeth in the Bishop's house, where the elder of them is still to remain. The other is to be sent shortly to the Archbishop of York by the King's appointment, though I think he had rather have continued in these parts if he might have been permitted. Their reception could not be so private as it seems you wished, for they were expected long before they came, and the Bishop of Ely could tell me two months since that there were two such upon the way, which it seems was some while before they set forth. He told me likewise this other day of a certain bishop in the Venetian territory (but he had forgot his name) that is writing a work against the Pope's usurping jurisdiction. To tell you freely my opinion as far as I understand this business, though it cannot be denied but you have done a very good and charitable work in reducing these straying sheep, yet I doubt you will repay no great thanks on either side, for I find our bishops here not very fond of such guests, and think they might have enough of them if they could provide them maintenance, so that unless they be very eminent, and men of mark, they shall find little regard after a short time.

The King hath been coming and going to Eltham all the last week. He went thither on Saturday and came back on Monday, and yesternight went thither again, and is this night to lie at Wansted, which house the Master of the Rolls hath taken, and entertains him there with the charge, as is said, of about 700 pound. From thence he goes to Havering which is in the custody of the Countess of Oxford, who entertains him likewise at her own charge.

But for all his pleasure he forgets not business, but hath found the art of frustrating men's expectations and holding them in suspense. On Saturday Sir George Carew was nominated Master of the Wards, and yesterday he made his entrance there with a formal oration. There were three lawyers and three gentlemen in special consideration for the

place. The lawyers were the Attorney, the Solicitor, and Sergeant Nicolls; the other were Sir George More, Sir Charles Cornwallis, and this man, who hath lighted on it by his wife's grace with the Queen, as is thought, or rather, as others say, by the Lord of Rochester. The place is much limited, and hath but £500 a year of certainty, and perhaps as much more by the ordinary fees of judicature, and withal he is but temporary, and hath his commission but till the seventh of the next month, so that it is said his competitors shall come in and succeed one another by turns, but I cannot be of that mind, for methinks when a man is once settled in a place *turpius ejicitur quam non admittitur*.

The Commissioners for the Treasurership were signed yesterday, which are the Lord Privy Seal, the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Worcester, the Lord Zouch, Lord Wotton, and Sir Julius Caesar, whereof Sir J. Caesar is of the quorum, and anything done by him and one or two of the rest is as authentical as if it were done by all. It is thought the Lord Privy Seal shall have the place in the end, but he is willing the state of revenue and treasure and debts should be thoroughly looked into before he meddle withal, and then he to be accountable only for the time forward that he enters upon it.

Sir Walter Cope wishes you should write now and then to Maser Chancellor, for he may stand you in great stead. I inquired of him, both before my going out of town and now since my coming back, whether there had been any meaning to recall you, and for what intent. He told me that my late Lord Treasurer said not long before he died that some about my Lord of Rochester had gone about such a matter, belike to serve their own turn and put in some of their own creatures. How likely this is you may judge, but it doth not sound with me, and so I told him, for Sir Thomas Overbury, for aught that ever I knew, doth not wish you ill, and Sir Robert Killigrew, who is one of his next favourites, is your fast friend, and I heard but yesterday that Master Packer, your old friend, is become his secretary, but the surest card of all, Sir Henry Neville, will never see you wronged where he may help. If he had not been strong oppugned every way, he had been settled before this in the secretaryship, but it is said too much soliciting hath hindered him, and the flocking of Parliament men about him and their meetings and consultations with the Earl of Southampton and the Lord Sheffield at Lord Rochester's chamber (as is informed to the King, but whether truly or no is a question) hath done him nor them no good, for the King says he will not have a secretary imposed upon him by Parliament, and the Earl of Southampton is gone home as he came, without a councillorship, and the Lord Sheffield hath gotten a grant of papists in Yorkshire. In the meantime the King himself supplies the secretary's place, and all the packets are delivered to the Lord Chamberlain, and so to the King, and the answering of French affairs is referred to Sir George Carew, of Low Country business to Levinus, of Spanish to Master Calvert, as likewise those of Italy to him, or, as other say, to Master Edmonds, Clerk of the Council, and Sir Thomas Lake is for matters at home as he was before, though they say he offer largely underhand for the higher place, and his wife, rather than fail, will furnish 5000 to make up 15,000. Kirkham is secretary to the Commissioners for the Treasury, and Norton hath the reversion of Sir Richard Cooke's places in Ireland, both of Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the likeliest now in the world's eye for Secretary of State is Sir Harry Wotton, and it is a general opinion that the place is reserved for his coming home. He hath very great friends, and the late Lord Treasurer recommended him to the King at his going away and

in his last letter, wherein were many other remembrances, and was ready written, but sealed after his death, and his living friends labour much for him. His brother is said to have offered to resign his Comptroller's staff on condition he may be received secretary, but I am not of that opinion, for I know he stood lately upon £5000, which I know is more than he would spare for that purpose. For the King, being given to understand that he is ill served in Parliament by reason of the paucity of councillors and officers of household that were wont to bear great sway in that house, is minded to reduce it to the form it had in the late Queen's days, and so caused the Lord Knollys and him to be dealt with about it, offering each of them £2000 a year during their lives to resign their places. But the Lord Knollys stood upon an earldom, and the Lord Wotton had rather have £5000 in hand, and so stands the case yet. But the Queen and the Prince are earnest in Sir H. Wotton's behalf, and the Lord of Rochester is not willing, after his late reconciliation, to oppose himself or stand in the breach against such assailants, specially having irons in the fire now of his own, and a patent (as I hear) being drawing to create him Earl of Devonshire, and great means made to the Earl of Worcester to resign his Mastership of the Horse to him, and to become Lord Privy Seal when the Earl of Northampton removes to be Treasurer, but these things are not yet done, though much talked of.

It seems that some new matter is abrewing in Savoy for that Infanta for our Prince, that our ambassador is so much made of and presented so richly. His nephew Albertus had 1000 crowns given him by the Duke at his coming away, and during four or five days that he stayed here he spake four times with the Queen, and carried a jewel from her to his uncle, who is willed to make all the haste he can homeward, whereas it was once resolved he should have taken the new Emperor in his way, and instructions were drawn for that purpose to have gone and congratulate his election, but since that course is altered, and those instructions sent to the Lord Roos (who is in the Low Countries) to do that office.

Touching all that I wrote you before of Signor Fabritio, I should not nor could not believe it but that many times unfitness and unlikeliness makes a thing the more likely.

Your town and university of Oxford have had great disputes and much arguing at the council-table about night-walking and such stuff, wherein the town, for all their cost and pains, are like to have a cold suit, but this animosity of theirs is much ascribed to their Recorder, Master Wentworth, as the scholars term him. Our university of Cambridge is likewise in a peck of troubles about choosing their Chancellor after the Lord Treasurer's death, for most voices going with the Earl of Northampton, he accepted it and sent them a letter of thanks, but understanding afterwards that the Duke of York was his concurrent, and propounded in the election, he renounced the place and fell from them again, and the King was much displeased that his son should be put in balance with any of his subjects, but upon a fine letter of submission, and notice that it was done by a few headstrong Fellows (that are since bound over to the council-table), he was pacified again. In the meantime they knew not whither to turn them for a Chancellor, for all the noblemen were resolved to refuse unless the King commanded them to accept it, but I heard this day that, going to a new election, they have chosen the same Chancellor again, and the King hath promised he shall hold it.

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Dr Tomson, Bishop of Gloucester, died on Sunday at Windsor. Sir Thomas Shirley the younger, being at the King's Bench for debt, took the other day a good quantity of poison with intent to make himself away, but being presently perceived, and remedies applied, he was recovered against his will, and is like to escape, though not yet out of danger. The Queen's Secretary, a Scottish man, died much about the time with the Lord Treasurer. He had languished long, and was brought very weak but said ever it were no good manners in him to go before the King's secretary.

And thus having wearied both you and myself, with all due remembrance to my Lady, I commend you to God's holy protection. From London this 17h of June, 1612.

Your Lordship's to command,

John Chamberlain