

SUMMARY: In this letter written from The Hague to John Chamberlain on 16/26 November 1624, Dudley Carleton mentions the illness of Lady Diana, wife of Oxford's son and heir Henry de Vere, 18<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, then at the 'leaguer at Waalwijk' while her husband was involved in the siege of Breda, during which he received a fatal wound and died in early June, 1625. The transcript below is taken from Lee, Maurice, *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 1603-1624; Jacobean Letters*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1972) pp. 316-18.

Good Mr Chamberlain, I was soon put out of the way of my late resolution to double my diligence in writing by a long and sharp fit of the stone, followed with more weakness than usual, but now being come to myself again, I return to you, rendering you many thanks for your often letters, which come to my hands very seasonably when from none of my private friends I can have a word, my nephew Dudley being as silent as others, or else he hath ill luck with his letters, for since his leaving London to go to Royston I have not heard from him.

I know not who it is you hear named to the Secretary's place, but if it be one I guess at, you need not much doubt him, for he is no suitor for it, and such places require that diligence and more. True it is that he lent a willing ear when he was called upon by a friend (as you know), and was putting himself forward, but had soon his *quietus est*, and so rests. And anything you since hear is but the sound of that bell which then rung louder than I could have wished.

I am exceeding glad of my Lady Smith's good fortune, and so will my wife be when she knows it, who loves her so dearly that she was passionately affected and troubled at a voice was here spread that she should marry her cousin Tom Carew. She is now in Zeeland at an *incanto* of Italian and Spanish goods taken by a freebooter of that province from a viceroy of Naples as they were transporting into Galicia (where it seems his habitation is) by the Cape St. Vincent, and having seen the list of them, I more commiserate his family than himself, whose gains of the whole time of their service in clothes and trinkets are lost in that one prize, wherein is much waiting-gentlewomen's ware, but withal store of hangings and good household stuff, Spanish and Italian books (which are my merchandise), and pictures of the best hands, about which my wife hath chiefly undertaken this journey to do service to our chief persons at home, who look after them. And it is well if she can purchase thanks answerable to her pains, for she hath had an ill passage thither, being four days and three nights on shipboard in tempestuous weather, and there the air is grown ill and contagious, as may appear by the directors of this East Indian company there lately assembled in full college, of the 17 of which the most part returned sick, 4 or 5 are since dead, of which two of mean beginnings have raised in short time and left to their heirs, the one 7, the other 8 ton of gold, which raiseth a general clamour against the rapine of them and the rest of their colleagues. I cannot yet get out of the thorny business betwixt them and our company, but it is now brought to this pass, that unless they will yield to reason for our men's satisfaction, the States will

leave them to themselves, and so have plainly told them, wherewith they are much troubled, as with a great change and alteration of their affairs, which heretofore, right or wrong, were ever supported by the state, to which their will and decree served as a law.

Our camps and the enemies', with the besieged town, are at a vie which can suffer most, there being sickness and incommodities on all sides, and so many fugitives from one to the other that a Spaniard told one of our trumpets the two generals would be left before long alone to try the quarrel by single combat. The Prince of Orange, having failed of a second attempt upon the citadel of Antwerp (wherein English and French were employed, to stop their mouths from reproaching the Dutch for the former), is come hither to seek health, being so much afflicted with cold and pain and weakness of his loins that he goeth for the most part about his chamber on crutches, and taketh not above an hour's or two hours' rest in a whole night. But his doctors make his disease rather dolorous than dangerous.

You will have heard of the death of my Lord of Southampton and my Lord Wriothesley, the son first at Roosendaal, and the father four days after at Bergen, both of the same disease, fevers with convulsions. They are both much lamented here of strangers, and we should think we had a great loss of such eminent persons, but I doubt we are not so kind-hearted as we were wont. My Lord Mountjoy and Sir John Borlase stand for the vacant regiment, which I have moved the Prince of Orange, being a prime place, to bestow with advice from his Majesty, who payeth the troops, and till that be known, to suspend it. But Sir John Borlase is a diligent solicitor here, as he hath reason, my Lord Mountjoy being gone into England, and I do not stir nor stand much in it, though *ex officio* I could not but do as I have done, to have his Majesty acknowledged, but this Sir John takes somewhat unkindly.

My Lady of Oxford is fallen dangerously sick at the leaguer at Waalwijk, a very unfit place for a fair lady. Count Ernest commands in his Excellency's absence at Roosendaal, sick and crazy and not like to last long. This general mortality hath carried away a great part of our few learned men in these parts, as Arpenius, a famous linguist, Vorstius, a chief physician, and Colonius, all professors at Leyden and all dead of the plague (as is Scultetus at Emden), which rageth still in that town and Amsterdam, but ceaseth, when it was hottest, at Delft, where hitherto God hath preserved all our English merchants, both masters and servants. It hath been much scattered in this town, and is now within three houses of mine, but custom makes none start at it, and therefore I stir not. Thus I wish you health with all happiness and rest.

Yours most assured,

[Dudley Carleton]