

SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Sir Dudley Carleton on 27 April 1622, John Chamberlain mentions that Oxford's son and heir, Henry de Vere (1593–1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, was committed to the Tower on Tuesday, 15 April ('the Tuesday before Easter'), 'for idle and unfit speeches touching the King and his government'. Two of the persons examined in connection with the matter are identified by McClure as Susan (nee Ferrers), Lady Gresley, and Sir Thomas Meautys (c.1590–1649). 'Master Glover' is unidentified, but may have been related to Sir Thomas Glover. The principal witness against the Earl, according to Chamberlain, was Humphrey Davenport (knighted in 1623), formerly a servant of Lord Chancellor Bacon. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. II, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp. 433-5.

My very good Lord, the Tuesday before Easter the Earl of Oxford was committed to the Tower, and his minion Hawley to the Gatehouse, for idle and unfit speeches touching the King and his government. The Lady Gresley (in whose house it happened), Master Meautys, Glover, and others were examined in the business, but the prime accuser is said to be one Davenport, that belonged to the late Lord Chancellor.

Captain Walsingham (that had been a pirate) was sent to the Tower about the same time for being employed in the voyage to Algiers, and ill satisfied for that service, at his coming home he began to prattle of returning to his old occupation, and for that purpose of surprising the Dreadnought, one of the King's ships. Sir Robert Mansell and the rest of that crew are nothing well apaid neither, insomuch that Sir Richard Hawkins, the vice-admiral, finding his reckonings come short of that he expected, of mere grief and discontent sunk down before the Lords, and died the next day.

Master Hales did not preach at court this Lent as was appointed, but desired to be spared, as pretending nothing but to live quietly, and therefore was willing to resign his room to some that had more ambition to show themselves, so that one Dr. Bates supplied the place, who had the fortune to have the King present, which had not been on a weekday all the Lent long.

The tilting that should have been on Monday was by reason of wet weather put off till Thursday, and then deferred till the 18th of the next month, and the second part of the masque till the 20th, for that the King was suddenly taken with the gout or some such infirmity in his knee. The Prince is nothing pleased with these delays (if it could be remedied), the rather for that now twice or thrice he had all in readiness, and (as is said) was desirous to make show of the favour of a feather he had from his Spanish mistress. He was the last week at the Lady of Bedford's about the concluding of a match twixt the Lord Bruce and her niece, Mistress Chichester.

The Marquess Buckingham was churched on Thursday in the King's chamber, where likewise she and the Duchess of Lennox dined, though the King were in bed. The contagion of her disease hath taken hold of Bess Shelton, and the old Countess hath not been well these three or four days, so that they cannot tell what it may prove. The King sent lately a fair chain of diamonds with his picture at it (valued by jewellers at £3600) by the Prince and Lord Marquis to the Duchess of Lennox for her great care and pains in making broths and caudles and suchlike for the Lady Marquess in her sickness, so that the Duchess grows in great respect, and is said to be much courted and respected by the Prince.

Here is one Knight committed for overreaching in a sermon at Oxford so far as to say that if kings grow unruly and tyrannical, they may be corrected and brought into order by their subjects, which doctrine is so extravagant that the King threatens to have the copy of it publicly burnt by the hangman as heretical.

The Emperor's ambassador went away the last week with a present of a chain of diamonds of £2000. The Bishop of Spalato went with him *in mal hora* (as the Italian says), if I be not deceived. Sir Richard Weston went toward Brussels the other day with £1500 imprest, as I hear, and the Lord Chichester is to go the next week with allowance of six pound *per diem*. The barges go down this day to Gravesend to bring up the new Spanish ambassador. We hear the commissioners are arrived in Ireland, and that their first work was to begin with the mayor of Dublin. The Deputy is not within their reach, but comes over presently to clear himself here. James Palmer is sworn of the bedchamber in Master Wray's room, and one Turpin in place of Kit Villiers, who is to be made a viscount, as likewise Sir Thomas Beaumont, who hath no great store of land left, but the King will supply what is wanting to Villiers.

Yesterday I received yours of the 18th of this present, and for the gazettes, I look not greatly after them, seeing they come but once in two or three months. So with the remembrance of my best service to my good lady, I commend you to the protection of the Almighty. From London this 27th of April, 1622.

Your Lordship's most assuredly at command,

John Chamberlain

To the right honourable Sir Dudley Carleton, knight, Lord Ambassador for his Majesty with the States of the United Provinces at the Hague.