

SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Sir Dudley Carleton on 21 March 1622 [=1623], John Chamberlain mentions the likelihood that Oxford's son and heir, Henry de Vere, 18<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, is soon to be released from the Tower, and comments that his principal accuser was his steward, one Bembrigge and that a trial had earlier been a real possibility. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. II, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp. 484-6.

My very good Lord, Sir Edward Harwood sent me your letter at his first coming, but I had not the hap to see him till yesterday. Gerretson's sentence and all that belongs to that business we had here in print four or five days before. The conceit of Loyola's verses consists in the blotting out St. Germain out of the calendar to put in the new Saint Ignatius, whereat the French were more offended for that St. Germain is one of their special saints, and that the Louvre is within his parish or jurisdiction.

For want of better matter I send you here certain verses made upon Jack and Tom's journey (for the Prince and Lord Marquis went through Kent under the names of Jack and Tom Smith). They were fathered at first upon the King, but I learn since they were only corrected and amended by him. The other paper is but a toy touching the great loss of the library at Heidelberg. After two or three disappointments, the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month the King went to Cambridge, was there by ten o'clock, had dined before eleven, then went to the hall, which, being darkened, the play began presently (they having had order to abbreviate or contract it from six or seven hours to four or five), which he sat out with good satisfaction, and went back to Newmarket that night. It is said he will be tomorrow at Royston, and upon Wednesday at Theobalds.

The Earl of Oxford is upon his forthcoming, if he will subscribe and acknowledge his offence. The case is well altered, for within these two or three months I know some friends of his that were examined upon points that might touch him *in capite*, and it was generally thought he should come to his trail. I hear that one Bembrigge, his steward (brother to my man Christopher that died in the Palatinate), was his principal accuser, but now it is given out he may chance be general of the fleet that goes to fetch the Prince and the Infanta. But there will be somewhat ado to furnish out that small fleet of ten or twelve ships, as well in regard of other wants as specially of mariners which absent and hide themselves out of the way (whether it be for the bad payment or other ill usage I know not), so that there have been two proclamations of late to call them home from foreign services, and to find them out that lie lurking at home, but in my poor judgment the cause would be first found and removed, for otherwise proclamations and commissions (that are here so frequent upon every occasion) will serve to no great purpose, for *non fuit sic ab initio*, and I knew the time when it was otherwise.

The last news we heard of the Prince came this day sevenight by Walsingham Gresley (that belongs to the Earl of Bristol), who met them the second of this month almost a

day's journey within France. They carried him back to Eiron, the first town in Spain upon the confines, and there stayed him a whole day to rest themselves and make his dispatch. It seems by that he brings and says that the Prince was not expected there, but that it will be as strange news to them as it was to us, and withal that things are not so forward and ripe there as we take them, but what this noble ingenuity and confidence to commit and cast himself into their hands may work is uncertain. In the meantime here be two ships making ready with all possible speed, the one at Portsmouth, the other at Plymouth, to carry away his provisions and servants, whereof the Lord Leppington (or Carey) hath the chief charge to see them carry themselves civilly and religiously, and that they go not to Mass. I hear not of any great number nor bravery more than eight footmen and six pages that are said to be well appointed. The young Lord Compton hath charge of the jewels that are to be sent and presented, which are the choice of all in the Tower, estimated by some at £200,000, but by the more moderate at £80,000. There is continual posting likewise though France, which together with the expense that the other must make from the sea-side to Madrid, will so exhaust our coin (that is so scant already) that it is feared we shall be driven to use black money (as they call it), and is now in a manner altogether current in Spain, and wise men stick not to say that this match one way or other will stand the King and kingdom in as much as she is like to bring, besides whatsoever else may happen. Many of our churchmen are hardly held in, and their tongues itch to be talking, insomuch that Dr. Everard, the preacher at St. Martin in the Fields, is committed for saying somewhat more than he should, and on Sunday last at the parish church next to us, another went so far that the parson of the church caused the clerk to sing him down with a psalm before he had half done. I had forgot that the Lord of Buckingham went extraordinary ambassador, and as prime commissioner with the Lord of Bristol, the ambassador resident, and Sir Francis Cottington in the treaty of the marriage, and that we hear of a patent gone after him whereby he is made Duke of Buckingham. So with the remembrance of my best service to my good lady, I commend you to the protection of the Almighty. From London this 21<sup>st</sup> of March, 1622 [=1623].

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.