

# LONDON LIFE

Henry Savile (1641–1687)

to George, Baronet Savile (1633–1695), his brother

London, 4 May 1665

I think it no small complement for me to omit the necessary duty of Hyde Park only to keep my word with you and write this post. I am come newly from Lord Orrery's<sup>1</sup> new play called *The Widow*, whose character you will receive from better hands. I will only say that one part of it is the humour of a man that has great need to go to the close stool, where there are such indecent postures as would never be suffered upon any stage but ours, which has quite turned the stomach of so squeamish a man as I am, that am used to see nothing upon a theatre that might not appear in the ruelle<sup>2</sup> of a fine lady.

Yesterday the Queen Mother<sup>3</sup> did give her last resolutions to the King that she intends within a month to go into France. Her health is the reason given, but we that come from those parts think it her kindness to Madame<sup>4</sup> to instruct her how to carry herself in the great intrigues of that place, where you know the women have always a hand.

I think yet of going on Monday, though Lord Arlington<sup>5</sup> told me today there may be some danger unless I go just when the King sends his express, of which I shall consider. In the meantime, I begin already to be weary of this empty town now you and most of those I care for are out of it.

I suppose you will hear at Rufford<sup>6</sup> from Lord Sunderland<sup>7</sup> himself of the progress he makes in his amours, of which I know very little, his necessary visits having obliged him to be in places where I could not see him but very seldom, and never alone. My father Chicheley's addresses to Lady Carlisle<sup>8</sup> do now begin to make a noise. Mr. Russell's to Mrs. Brookes is thought to be quite ended. Lord Rochester is encouraged by the King to make his to Mrs. Malet.<sup>9</sup>

My equipage for sea will cost me more than you are worth.

Lord Castleton<sup>10</sup> goes this week into the country; Sir Thomas Yarborough and his lady go tomorrow. Yesterday the Duchess kept a fast for the Duke's posterity. The plague is in Southampton buildings.

You care very little for news of so small importance, but the ladies possibly do, to whom and yourself I humbly kiss the fair hands.

William Durrant Cooper, ed. *Savile Correspondence* (Camden Society, 1858):4–5.

---

<sup>1</sup> Roger Boyle (1621–1679), Earl of Orrery

<sup>2</sup> *ruelle* — chamber used as a reception-room

<sup>3</sup> Henrietta Maria (1609–1669), widow of Charles I and mother of Charles II, had returned to England from France on 28 July 1662.

<sup>4</sup> Princess Henrietta (1644–1670), daughter of Charles I and wife of Philippe, Duke d'Orléans, youngest son of Louis XIII

<sup>5</sup> Henry Bennet (1618–1685), Baron Arlington, served as Secretary of State for the Southern Department (1662–1674) and M.P. for Callington (1661–1665)

<sup>6</sup> Rufford, the Nottinghamshire country seat of Sir George Savile

<sup>7</sup> Robert Spencer (1641–1702), Earl of Sunderland, married Anne Digby, the Earl of Bristol's daughter, on 10 June 1665

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Carlisle (–1676), Countess of Carlisle, whose husband had died in 1660

<sup>9</sup> John Wilmot (1647–1680), Earl of Rochester, kidnapped Elizabeth Mallet (1651–1681) on 26 May 1665 after she refused to marry him. She later changed her mind, and they married in 1667.

<sup>10</sup> George Saunderson (1631–1714), Viscount Castleton