

POPISH PLOT

Daniel de la Place

to Henry Herbert (1654–1709), M.P. for Bewdley (1677–1679)

London, 26 October 1678

Last night I received the basket my Lady was pleased to send to me, and I entreat you that she may find here, with my humble service, my humble and hearty thanks for my good pie. Mrs. Lloyd had her pan this morning, and Mrs. Strong shall have her cheese when she pleases. Sir Henry Lyttelton¹ presents his service to you and to all the ladies, and should be glad to see you here.

This morning I delivered your letter to Lord Newport² who, having read it, told me he would give you an answer by this post. Sooner I could not give it him, though I spent yesterday all the day in waiting for an opportunity. And though I spoke with him at the door of the Lords' House, yet would he not hear me nor take the letter; he was in such haste he would speak with nobody.

Your presence in the Parliament is as necessary as ever it can be. The life of the King, the state of the Kingdom, and our religion lying all at stake. Your friends do wish you here, as Dr. Offley, Captain Herbert, Sir Henry Lyttelton, and others, and do wonder at your absence.

The Parliament seems to take to heart the business of the plot more than the Council did, and act in it more vigorously. They have sat upon the examination of Oates³ most part of this week, and some days till 12 at night. Thursday last the Commons sent for Lord Chief Justice⁴ and told him they had there before them a man who had discovered a plot against the King's person and the state, and who did charge with treason several persons of a high rank, not yet apprehended. He knew his duty, and they wished him to do what did belong to his place on that occasion. Whereupon My Lord Oates in a chamber by and gave him his oath. Upon which, having named several lords, he issued out his warrants for the apprehension of the following lords: Arundell,⁵ Powys,⁶ Belasyse,⁷ Petre,⁸ Stafford,⁹ and Sir George Wakeman.¹⁰

That night the two first and the last were apprehended and carried to the gatehouse. In the morning there was a hot debate in the House of Lords about the privileges of their Members, as if they had been violated in the imprisoning of the said lords in that manner. But it soon appeared that all was done legally. The other lords, I hear, have been apprehended since, and Lord Castlemaine.¹¹ Lord Baltimore¹² is also charged with the plot; but whether he be in England or his government Maryland, I know not.

The City of London keeps very strong guards, but I do not hear that any are kept here. Today the City sent to the King to offer him to raise the trained-bands for the security of his person, but I hear it was not accepted.

Great news from beyond sea. Stralsund is taken, surrendered to the Elector of Brandenburg the 22nd instant. His batteries being finished, he battered the city with bombs and hot bullets, which did set it on fire, which could

¹ Henry (1624–1693), Baronet Lyttelton of Frankley, Member of Parliament for Lichfield (1678–1679)

² Richard (1644–1723), Viscount Newport, Member of Parliament for Shropshire (1670–1685); heir-apparent to the Earl of Bradford

³ Titus Oates (1649–1705), former chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk, spent two years in continental Jesuit seminaries. In August 1678, after his return to England, he accused English Catholics of plotting against King Charles II.

⁴ Sir William Scroggs (c. 1623–1683), Lord Chief Justice of England (1678–1681)

⁵ Henry (1608–1694), Baron Arundell of Wardour

⁶ William Herbert (1626–1696), Earl of Powys

⁷ John (1614–1689), Baron Belasyse, Lord-Lieutenant of the East Riding of Yorkshire (1660–1673)

⁸ William (1626–1684), Baron Petre

⁹ William Howard (1614–1680), Viscount Stafford

¹⁰ Sir George Wakeman (–1688), Royal Physician to Queen Catherine

¹¹ Roger Palmer (1661–1705), Earl of Castlemaine

¹² Charles Calvert (1637–1715), Baron Baltimore and proprietor of the Maryland colony

not be quenched and burnt almost all the city in two days. After the first day the citizens would have surrendered, but it was not in their power. The Swedes had seized their posts when they went to quench the fire. The second day the Swedes surrendered, and are to march off for Sweden, with all the cannon and mortar-pieces belonging to the King of Sweden. The city keeps its ancient privileges.

In haste I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant.

Rebecca Warner, ed. *Epistolary Curiosities, Series the First. Consisting of Unpublished Letters of the Seventeenth Century Illustrative of the Herbert Family* (Bath: Cruttwell, 1818):105–109. *[modernized]*