

POPISH PLOT

Daniel de la Place

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

London, Tuesday, 29 October 1678 /OS/

This is to convey unto you the enclosed. I thought I should have had one or two proclamations more to send you about the fast and the banishing of Papists out of London, but they are not yet come out.

The King did not go today to the Lord Mayor's¹ feast, as he had promised when he was first invited. He seems to fear a little more the plot than at first, whether it be by reason of greater discoveries or out of compliance with the Parliament, for Saint James' Park is not accessible as formerly, and the doors the courtiers had in it are stopped. Besides, when the King goes out, he goes better guarded. This day also he accepted the trained bands, but how far I know not, for the Commons, in their address to him, had demanded them for the guard of Whitehall and of the Parliament during this session.

Oates² and Tonge³ have been examined by the Commons, and then by the Lords, and five lords have been sent to examine Coleman.⁴ The papers of examination of Oates and Tonge about the plot and the fire of London, at the desire of the Commons, have been sent to them. Because the papers of Langhorne⁵ (of whom I spoke formerly) are many, a committee is appointed to examine them.

Yesterday, the Duchess of Mazarin⁶ was examined before the King and Council, but what was the result I know not.

The King having understood that two friars charged with the plot are very sick, their seizure is forborne.

Yesterday a house in Spitalfields was afire, but soon quenched, after which a match was found in the room. Some took notice of a suspicious fellow who had been seen lurking thereabouts some days before. Upon search, he was apprehended and about him was found £70 in gold, and £10 in silver, though he was in very poor and pitiful clothes. He had taken a very poor lodging hard by, and in it they found a naked sword under his pillow and a dagger. At first he pretended not to understand English, French, or Latin; but at last, finding himself in danger, he wrote a letter in Latin to Mr. Hill, formerly a minister in Holland and whom I suppose you know. Who, being come to him, knew him for a Jesuit or friar whom he had seen in Flanders or Holland. Whether guilty of anything or not, I know not yet. This story is true.

The bill for excluding the Papists from sitting in either House of Parliament has passed the Commons.

The letters from Holland say that the ambassadors of the Emperor and of the Duke of Loraine at Nijmegen had accepted of the peace upon the terms proposed by the French last winter.

This is all at present from, Sir, your most humble and 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):109–112. [modernized]

¹ Sir James Edwards, Lord Mayor of London

² 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.

³ Israel Tonge (1621–1680), English clergyman who encouraged and aided Oates.

⁴ Edward Coleman (–1678), Secretary to James, Duke of York

⁵ Richard Langhorne (c. 1624–1679), barrister who provided legal advice to Jesuits in England

⁶ Hortense Mancini (1646–1699), Duchesse Mazarin, niece of Cardinal Mazarin (Chief Minister of France, 1642–1661) and mistress of Charles II