

POPISH PLOT

Daniel de la Place

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

London, 5 November 1678

I know you expect not only the *Gazette*, but other small papers also which may inform you, and therefore I do send you these enclosed, with a few of my own collections.

What I told you in my last concerning my Lord Arundell¹ is true, that the Commons voted to proceed against him by way of impeachment.

What has been done towards the dis-arming of Papists does not satisfy the Commons, and therefore in one of their addresses to the King they desire the Papists may be dis-armed.

In another address they desire that the King would issue out a proclamation for the discovering and apprehending these three conspirators—viz., Bedingfield, the Duke's confessor, Simons, and Cateway, priests or Jesuits. They desire also that the King would set a guard upon Whitbread, provincial of the Jesuits, now sick in the house of the Spanish ambassador, and on another.

The roof of the House of Commons is in danger to fall, and therefore they are thinking to remove themselves where the King shall appoint.

Something having been said in the House of Lords against the Popish regiment, though it was not said which, the Duke of Monmouth² took it for his and said he would consent to the disbanding of his regiment.

The King has at length consented to the desire of the Parliament for raising the trained bands, and accordingly some regiments were up today in those parts. Besides which, several troops of horse and companies of foot of the King's forces were also in arms and moving about Whitehall, Saint James, and other places thereabouts. A company of the armed bands keeps a guard tonight in our fields, where there are two bonfires.

In the House of Lords much has been said against the Duke of York in his presence. My Lord Shaftesbury³ began, and was backed by Lords Halifax,⁴ Essex,⁵ one more, and the Bishop of London.⁶ In the House of Commons they moved for an address to the King for removing the said Duke of York out of his presence and counsels; the further debate whereof was adjourned till Friday after 7 November, perhaps, upon the words of Secretary Williamson, who told the House that they had no need to trouble themselves about that, for the said Duke was resolved to withdraw according to the proclamation.

The Commons having desired the King to give them Coleman⁷ as to life and death. To life if he would make a further and satisfactory discovery of the plot, and to death, without reprieve or pardon, if he would not. It was granted by the King, under his hand. Which the Commons having, they sent three or four of their Members to examine the said Coleman, to show him the address of the House and the King's grant or warrant accordingly, putting before him life or death, as aforesaid. To which he answered that he had discovered all that he knew. Some say that he would have retracted what he had said concerning his master. But he acknowledged that he

¹ On 25 October 1678 Parliament committed Henry, Baron Arundell of Wardour, to the Tower of London and on 1 November resolved to impeach Arundell and four other Catholic lords (the Earl of Powys, Viscount Stafford, Baron Belasyse, and Baron Petre) for conspiring to assassinate the King and restore Catholicism to England.

² James Scott (1649–1685), Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate son of Charles II

³ Anthony Ashley Cooper (1621–1683), Earl of Shaftesbury

⁴ George Savile (1633–1695), Viscount Halifax

⁵ Arthur Capell (1631–1663), Earl of Essex

⁶ Henry Compton (1632–1713), Bishop of London (1675–1713)

⁷ Edward Coleman (–1678), Secretary to James, Duke of York

had received moneys of France and Spain to carry on the Catholic religion's interest, and added that he was so unhappy to have discovered so much as would hang him, but could not save his life. A committee having been appointed to examine Coleman's servants, one of them confessed his master had more papers which his mistress had burnt, and that he had helped her to do it.

But perhaps I take pains in vain by telling you several of the votes of the House, which maybe are sent to you more perfectly by some other hand, or some member of your house may inform you better. But, however, till you bid me hold my hand, I shall endeavour to inform you as well I can.

As for foreign news, I shall only tell you that Maastricht was surrendered to the Dutch by the French the 5th instant. The ratification of the peace with Spain is not yet come.

With this I end at present, and subscribe myself, Sir, your most humble, old, 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):113–117. [modernized]