

# LETTER

von Winkler to Eberhard von Danckelmann (1643–1722)

Stockholm, 15 June 1692

They endeavour here to conceal what is passing in Livonia. A Diet has been held, with the King's permission, at Wenden, a little town in that country, on the subject of the estates which the Court of Sweden claims to re-annex to the Royal Domains—estates not only alienated by its own predecessors, but even by Poland, and such as in old times belonged to the Grand Masters and the Teutonic Order, which will plunder the Livonian nobility of a great deal of property. Four of the principal gentlemen have represented there that this will be the total ruin of the nobles, and that the measure is totally contrary to the privileges and conditions on which Livonia submitted to Sweden; it is even whispered that the nobility are taking, in secret, measures for their own defence. However they will shortly send deputies here, to try the way of conciliation, before giving themselves up to an act of despair. The King of Sweden, being informed of these matters, has ordered the officers who are here to rejoin their regiments in Livonia; they will also exchange the Livonian officers who are in the troops in that province, to put Swedes in their places. It is suspected that the nobility have some secret support, from the high tone they take. Nothing is feared from the side of Muscovy and Poland, but much from the Elector of Brandenburg. They say that in old times the nobility was disposed to submit to Brandenburg, and would not be disinclined to do so even at the present day; but that they dare not trust our Court, on account of what took place in Rose's case in the time of his late E. H. But it seems that the Muscovites have some understanding with them; some people say that the Czar Peter is making a tour in the country *incognito*; perhaps they think also of the Duke of Courland, who might find assistance. There are only eight thousand men in the province at the outside; but, in spite of all this, they do not seem inclined here to humour the province, and there are people here who push on the King to show that he is master there as well as in Sweden. The city of Riga has also been ill-treated for some time past: they have taken away from the magistracy the public estates of the city, the income of which amounted to twenty thousand crowns, and now they have taken from them the administration of the Common Exchange of the city, which used to be in the hands of the burgesses. Now they are attacking the privilege of their Consistory, which has been for five hundred years without appeal, although all the Kings, and even the last one, had specially confirmed it. They even claim to take from them the direction of this Consistory, and consequently the *jus episcopale*; after which they fear that the King will lay his hands upon the houses of the citizens, which in old times were the property of the churches, but which they have themselves rebuilt after two great fires. They have also established here an order of rank for Livonia; and in place of a Burgomaster of Riga not giving precedence to a colonel, he is now put on the same footing with a captain, according to seniority.

John M. Kemble, *State Papers and Correspondence Illustrative of the Social and Political State of Europe* (1857):91–92.