

LETTER

Charles I (1600–1649), King of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1625–1649)

to Henrietta Maria (1609–1669), Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1625–1649)

Oxford, 4 January 1645/6

Dear Heart,

I desired you to take notice that with the year I begin to new number my letters, hoping to begin a year's course of good luck. I have heard of but seen no letters from you since Christmas Day. The reason is evident, for our intelligence with the Portugal's agent¹ is obstructed so that I am not so confident as I was that any of my letters will come safe to you. But, methinks, if Cardinal Mazarin² were but half so kind to us as he professes to be, it would be no great difficulty for him to secure our weekly intelligence. And in earnest I desire you to put him to it, for besides that if the effects of it succeed it will be of great consequence to me, I shall very much judge of the reality of his intentions according to his answer in this.

If Ashburnham³ complains to you of my willfulness, I am sure it is that way which at least you will excuse, if not justify me in; but, if you had seen a former paper (to which being but accessory, I must not blame his judgment), you would have commended my choleric rejection of it, the aversion to which it is possible (though I will not confess it until you say so) might have made me too nice in this, of which I will say no more; but consider well that which I sent in the place of it, and then judge.

My great affairs are so much in expectation that for the present I can give you but little account of them, albeit yet in conjecture (as I believe) that the rebels will not admit of my personal treaty at London, and I hope well of having 2.000 foot and horse out of my smaller garrisons. As for the Scots, we yet hear no news of them, neither concerning this treaty, nor of that which I have begun with David Lesley. And, lastly, that the Duke of York's journey is absolutely broken,⁴ both in respect of the loss of Hereford⁵ as that the relief of Chester is yet but very doubtful.

But upon this design, having commanded Sir George Ratcliff to wait upon him, I desire your approbation that he may be sworn Gentleman of his Bedchamber, for which, though he be very fit and I assure you that he is far from being a Puritan, and that it will be much for my son's good to have him settled about him, yet I would not have him sworn without your consent. So God bless you, sweetheart.

Even now Montereul⁶ is come hither concerning the treaty. The Queen cannot have a particular account of it till my next.

John Bruce, ed. *Charles I in 1646: Letters of King Charles the First to Queen Henrietta Maria* (London: Camden Society, 1856):1–3.

¹ Antonio de Souza, Portuguese ambassador in London (1642–). De Souza passed letters between Charles and Henrietta.

² Jules, Cardinal Mazarin (1602–1661), chief minister of Louis XIII and Louis XIV (1642–1661)

³ Jack Ashburnham (1603–1671), Groom of the Bed-Chamber to Charles I

⁴ James (1633–1701), Duke of York, had intended to travel to Ireland.

⁵ The city of Hereford fell to Parliament's forces on 18 December 1645.

⁶ Jean de Montereul (c. 1613–1651), French envoy at the court of Charles I