

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, Thursday, 8 January 1645/6

I find by Montereul¹ that his chief errand here is to try if he can obtain more from me than Sir Robert Moray² could from you, for he rigidly insists upon my consent for the settling of the Presbyterian government here (indeed he says it will be but temporary, for which likewise he can show me no probability), alleging that less will not be accepted. And when I show him that it is against my conscience, and besides that, though it were not, yet it could not be effected, the Independent being as great an enemy to the Presbyterian as Episcopal government, and even all the English Presbyterians will never admit of the Scots' way, his answer is still that the Scots will go no less.

For all this, I mean not thus to let this treaty break if I can possibly go on with it, which I find to be very difficult. Wherefore I have proposed the business of Ireland to stay their stomachs instead of the church's patrimony, which I am confident is their great case of conscience on which they so much insist, whatever they pretend. And to stop their mouths for point of security—their great argument for my abolishing episcopacy here being that there is no other way to secure their government at home—I have offered to seek the security of the Queen of France³, which I desire you to obtain for me, which I believe will not be difficult, Montereul making no doubt of it that she would answer for me that I should not invade the church government.

This is the result of divers long discourses that have passed in this business, not knowing what effect it will have, for, though Montereul refuses not to carry what I propose, I find him very doubtful of the event. But he has most willingly undertaken the facilitating of packet intelligence between you and me, as also the safe delivery to you of Prince Charles' and the Duke of York's pictures, and the George and Garter for the young Prince of Orange.⁴

There is yet no return of my last message from London, which makes me much more doubtful of the event than I was, they being more troubled to answer me than I expected. I have no more to say but desire you to hasten the Queen of France's answer for her security between me and the Scots, that I may know betimes what to trust to. So, farewell, sweetheart.

I had almost forgot to tell you that I propose the business of Ireland, but only in case there be no other way to save the Crown of England (for which at all times it must be sacrificed), Montereul assuring me that France, rather than fail will assist me in satisfying the Scots for their arrears. And for Montrose,⁵ I have absolutely declared that he and I must come hand in hand in open daylight, without tricks or devices, which I find will not be much stuck at, though Montereul tried what he could gain upon me likewise in that.

It grieves me much to find that my intended journey to London gives you so much trouble, but I believe the rebels at this time will satisfy your fears in not suffering me to do it. Howsoever, I desire you to believe that that resolution was not so weakly grounded as your love to me makes you apprehend, for although the security which I have demanded is not to be despised, yet I esteem my safety to

¹ Jean de Montereul (c. 1613–1651), French envoy at the court of Charles I

² Sir Robert Moray (1609–1673), a Scottish veteran of the French *Garde Écossaise* regiment and the Scots army in the Second Bishops' War, he served as an agent of Charles I in both France and England.

³ Anne of Austria (1601–1666), Queen regent of France for her son, Louis XIV

⁴ William II of Nassau (1626–1650), Prince of Orange, husband of Charles' daughter Mary (1631–1660)

⁵ James Graham (1612–1650), Marquess of Montrose, commander of Charles I's army in Scotland

consist in the absence of Prince Charles and the Duke of York, and in the unquestionable garinosity between the Presbyterians and Independents. So that, dear heart, be confident that there is nothing that I can undertake of so little personal danger, or can be of so great hopes to give a speedy great turn to the good of my affairs as my personal treating in London.

As for the sending of a French ambassador to meet at London, I like it extremely well, and that the Count de Tilliers should be the man; and for William Murray's coming over I like that well too, so that I may have a pass to send him or somebody else to Montrose, whereby he and I may know the state of one another's condition; and this I believe may be easily obtained to procure William Murray to be a negotiator in the Scotch treaty.

John Bruce, ed. *Charles I in 1646: Letters of King Charles the First to Queen Henrietta Maria* (London: Camden Society, 1856):3-6. [modernized]