

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)

Newcastle, 8 July 1646 /OS/

Upon Friday last I had letters from the Queen,¹ Digby,² and Jermyn³ (by the way of Amsterdam), all dated 8 June, and the next day I had yours of 6 July by the ordinary, in both which all your advice, whether negative or affirmative, is fully to my sense. And albeit that (since I grant all) I need not answer any particulars, yet I cannot but speak of the Covenant, because it is much mentioned to me; the which I hope you have named rather to confirm than for any fear of me, and by this the Queen may see her former error in pressing me to give way for Presbyterian government, for then, of necessity, I must have done this (which the Queen rightly judges to be my ruin, if I do it), or the doing of that would have done me no good, for it is daily plainly told me that nothing can content Scotland but my commanding all my subjects to take the Covenant (which I esteem all one as doing it myself), without which all other things are nothing.

I have not written to you concerning the yielding of Oxford,⁴ not having been fully (as now I am) informed thereof; but now I must make my observations to you upon it. In a word, all that had any directing power (except the Governor,⁵ Secretary Nicholas,⁶ Dorchester,⁷ and Lord Hatton⁸) did look only upon themselves, without regard to my honour or interest. But this mean failing in friendship looks so scurvily that it rather animates than discourages me in being firm to all who will not forsake themselves, of which there was, I assure you, many in Oxford.

It is the confident opinion of all men here (according to our best and latest intelligence) that any delaying answer from me to the London propositions will be taken for a denial, in which case the rebels will go to all extremities, and that upon no condition the Scots will break with the English rebel Parliament. Wherefore I both earnestly desire you to be confident that I will never yield to these base propositions, and also that the Queen would sadly and speedily consider how to counsel me in this case to dispose of myself, for in England I cannot stay, and I would sooner choose the farthest part of the world than go into Scotland, where I can never expect to see you and which I shall abhor until they do evidently and heartily repent of their perfidious rebellion. And, for God's sake, do not flatter yourself to think that my condition is anything better than what is now told you by him who is eternally yours.

John Bruce, ed. *Charles I in 1646: Letters of King Charles the First to Queen Henrietta Maria* (London: Camden Society, 1856):52–54. [modernized]

¹ Anne of Austria (1601–1666), Queen regent of France for her son, Louis XIV

² George Digby (1612–1677), eldest son of the Earl of Bristol and Royalist Secretary of State (1643–1645)

³ Henry Jermyn (c. 1604–1684), Baron Jermyn of Saint Edmundsbury and Secretary to Queen Henrietta Maria

⁴ On 10 June 1646, Charles I ordered the garrisons at those towns still held in his name to surrender their towns to Parliament's control.

⁵ Royalist Governor of Oxford

⁶ Nicholas, Secretary

⁷ Henry Pierpont, Marques of Dorchester and Earl of Kingston

⁸ Christopher Hatton, son of Sir Christopher Hatton, Queen Elizabeth's Chancellor