

REPORT FROM THE NETHERLANDS

Sir Walter Strickland (c. 1598–1671), English Ambassador to the Netherlands (1642–1651)

to William Lenthall (1591–1662), Speaker of the House of Commons (1640–1655, 1659–1660)

The Hague, 26 October 1648 /OS/

The Prince of Wales¹ has the smallpox, but, as we hear, is very well, and out of all danger. Prince Rupert² will leave no element un-attempted in which he may hope to work the Parliament mischief. He is now made commander-in-chief of the revolted ships and intends, with all speed, to go to sea, if he can get out; for he must pass by my Lord of Warwick,³ whom I have given timely and full notice of his design by a servant of my own who is returned to me again with my lord's resolution to keep him in.

Mr. Bence writes to me they fear not his strength. My man tells me the mariners told him they would take both the Prince and his dog, if he came out; and, sir, I found the common mariners very honest when I was aboard. Mr. Crofts came lately out of France, from the Queen of England,⁴ to the Hague; presently after whose coming, this resolution was taken of sending Prince Rupert to sea, general and admiral, as I hear, so as it is most probable the design is laid in France.

What it is, is uncertain; but what may be collected by conjectures is something to be done at the Isle of Wight. Others say his rendezvous is Ireland. Great and irreconcilable enmity is betwixt him and my Lord Colepeper,⁵ as they here style him; insomuch as one of the Prince's great creatures, Sir Robert Walsh, a papist, struck my Lord Colepeper; which men think was by Prince Rupert's instigation. Divers of the merchants whose ships were taken in the Downs have compounded for them, which money does in a great measure make to the getting out of this fleet of Prince Rupert's, though those goods were forbidden to be sold here, by an order of the States. But power and favor made the order not so well observed.

I shall not fail to inform my Lord of Warwick of what concerns him in respect of their proceedings here. Were it not that letters tell us of a treaty of peace, I could not think of any such thing by what I hear and see from the cavaliers here. Their thoughts I know not, but their words and actions are as much as ever for war, and speak of nothing but revenge; and certainly their minds are not for peace. It may be their hands are weak, not their hearts.

It is said that Batten⁶ and Jordan⁷ go not with Prince Rupert. But Allin,⁸ an old pirate, and many others of that kind, are entertained to ruin our merchants; many of which seem to love them more that rob them than those that endeavor to serve them. The friends of the revolted ships endeavor to get the States' ships to favor their going out. But the States' ships have order to be neutral, as they say. How they will keep it, I know not. I hear the Prince shall go out with eight ships, and no more. The Duke of York⁹ is gone to Mr. Henflet's house at Tyluring, in respect of the nature of the Prince's sickness.

¹ Charles (1630–1685), Prince of Wales

² Rupert (1619–1682), Count Palatine of the Rhine, Duke of Bavaria, nephew of King Charles I

³ Richard Rich (1587–1658), Earl of Warwick, Lord High Admiral (1642–1658), and commander of the English fleet blockading royalist ships in the Netherlands.

⁴ Henrietta Maria (1609–1669), Queen of England, lived in exile in France from 1644.

⁵ John (c. 1600–1660), Baron Colepeper of Thoresway, had brought the Prince of Wales to France in 1646. A bitter rival of Prince Rupert, he challenged the Prince to a duel in 1648.

⁶ Sir William Batten (c. 1600–1667), Parliamentary admiral until 1648, when the Independents removed him from command. In May 1648, he joined the royalist fleet in the Netherlands.

⁷ Sir Joseph Jordan (c. 1603–1689), Parliamentary naval commander

⁸ Sir Thomas Allin (1612–1685), royalist naval captain (1642–1660)

⁹ James (1633–1701), Duke of York

A peace is concluded in Germany, very prejudicial to the Prince Elector.¹⁰

Poyntz,¹¹ who had the honor to serve the Parliament in a very great command, was so unworthy as to be in the Downs with the revolted ships; and yet, as I hear, is now as little esteemed by them as by us. Which I am glad to hear, that those whose consciences make their swords cut both ways may know their wages in the scorn of both.

I hope time will discover all that walk one way and look another.

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:43–45.

¹⁰ Charles I Louis (1617–1680), Prince-Elector Palatine, nephew of the English King but a supporter of Parliament, he resided in London (1644–1649). The 1648 Peace of Westphalia restored to him the Lower Palatinate, but ceded the Upper Palatinate to the Prince-Elector of Bavaria and lowered Charles in the Imperial order of precedence.

¹¹ Sydenham Poyntz (1607–), Parliamentary commander until 1647, when he opposed Cromwell's New Model Army and fled England.