SIX UNPUBLISHED LETTERS
OF QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA

R. A. BEDDARD

In the morass of papers left by that diligent servant of the House of Stuart, Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State to Charles I and Charles II, is a small cache of six letters written by, or at the command of, Queen Henrietta Maria. Five of them are addressed to Nicholas in his official capacity as Secretary. Three of them are informal, being little more than hastily penned notes in the Queen’s own hand. These are undated by her, but two of them have been endorsed by Nicholas with the date on which he received them: 5 September and 1 October 1641. His endorsement locates them in the difficult period of Charles I’s residence in Edinburgh, when his master was seeking to build a party among the Scottish nobles. The third most probably belongs to the same year. All three show that the King was during his absence from England regularly employing his wife in the routine business of despatching, and, on occasion, restraining the time of delivery of his correspondence.

The other two letters addressed to Secretary Nicholas are of greater historical moment. Not only are they more ample in content, they are also more formal in nature. They belong to a much later period in the Queen’s life, when she had taken up residence in her native France following her successful flight from Exeter in July 1644. The two communications are cast in the form of royal warrants, drafted by the clerk attending the Queen at the palace of St Germain-en-Laye, outside Paris, where for a time she occupied grace and favour lodgings given to her by her sister-in-law, Anne of Austria, Queen Regent of France and the widow of Louis XIII. As such, they are signed by Henrietta Maria at the beginning in the customary fashion, and are dated coram regina 9 and 22 June 1648 respectively, according to the New Style of the Gregorian calendar in use in Catholic France: that is, 30 May and 12 June, according to the Old Style of the Julian computation still in use in Protestant England. The purport of the warrants relates directly to the predicament of King Charles I, and expresses the mounting concern felt on his behalf by the Queen and their eldest son, Charles, Prince of Wales.

The date – the early summer of 1648 – places Henrietta Maria’s written commands at an important juncture in the evolution of Royalist counsels both at home and abroad. They shed light on the measures taken by the Queen and the exiled Royalists at the outbreak of the second Civil War of 1648, thereby rounding out the picture given by Clarendon in his History of the Rebellion. By May 1648 the King had been a prisoner at
Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight for more than six months. In January the Commons and Lords of the rebel Long Parliament had resolved not to address the King again, which appeared to cut off the prospect of further negotiation. For some time the Catholic Queen, who was disinclined to favour the Church of England interest, had placed what hopes she had for restoring her husband in the armed intervention of the Scottish Presbyterians. She had accordingly prevailed on Prince Charles to think the same, so that he ‘thought of nothing but being sent for by the Scots’ to head an invasion of the southern kingdom. Since joining the Queen in France in July 1646 he had done very little, save observe events from afar.

With the Scots preparing to invade England, and his English supporters on the point of launching an insurrection in Kent, the King held it necessary for the Prince, his son, to leave France. To that end he wrote to the Queen in May 1648, commanding her to summon certain of his councilors to attend and advise the Prince. They included Secretary Nicholas, Lord Treasurer Cottington, and the elderly Earl of Bristol, all of whom had escaped to France, and Sir Edward Hyde, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, almost alone of the King’s advisers, had stayed behind in Jersey, preferring to remain on British soil. The Queen’s letter of 9 June, directed to Nicholas, and published here, was therefore written in obedience to the King’s command.

In her letter Henrietta Maria referred explicitly to ‘the present revolutions’ taking place back home, as making it ‘no longer fitt’ for the Prince of Wales ‘to sitt idle’ in France at a time when his engaging in military action might ‘contribute much to His Majesty’s re-establishment’: the object of all their endeavours. Earlier news of dissension in South Wales, of Lord Inchiquin’s declaring for the King in Ireland, of the raising of a Scots army, and of the seizure of Berwick and Carlisle by Sir Marmaduke Langdale and Sir Philip Musgrave in the North of England was overtaken by even more encouraging news of disturbances in London, a popular uprising in Kent, and – an unexpected bonus – a revolt in the Parliamentarian navy. The latter event, which involved a detachment of six ships, seemed particularly auspicious, Hyde hailing it as a ‘very extraordinary’ accident, which ‘looked like a call from Heaven’ summoning the exiled Prince to action. No wonder it was now thought opportune for him to remove from Paris to the Channel coast, so as to be in readiness ‘to transport his person’ to whichever part of his father’s dominions should be judged most advantageous for the King’s service.

The decision in favour of the Prince’s ‘speedy remoove’ towards Holland had already been unanimously taken, before 9 June, by the Queen and those ‘Councellors and peeres of His Majesty’s several dominions’ whom she could at short notice assemble outside Paris. Even so, Henrietta Maria felt obliged to inform and consult Secretary Nicholas before sanctioning her son’s ‘actuall departure’. Failing Nicholas’s attendance on her at St Germain-en-Laye, which she clearly recognized might not be feasible in the circumstances in which he at present found himself, she required him to send his advice to her in writing on the proposed course of action. The Secretary’s reply has not come to light, but an almost co-eval reply of his to a letter from Prince Charles, written on
10 June, one day after that of the Queen, and which Nicholas received on the 15th and answered on the 17th, is extant and in print.

In the light of 'the best intelligences' available to him from England, Secretary Nicholas believed that the Prince had 'fixt on the best resolucion', with regard to his honour and the prosperity of the design in hand. He gave it as his 'humble opinion' that there was 'nothing' which would 'put soe much lief and spiritt into the oppressed people in England (who now begin to be very sensible of their want of their soveraigne) as to see your Highnes on the wing reddy for their assistance'. He fully concurred in the decision that the Prince should leave Paris for Holland, and advised expedition, not least because of 'the present great and vigorous appearaunce for his Majestie att this tyme in severall counties in England'.

Ten days after the Prince of Wales's letter had been despatched, the Queen wrote again to Nicholas on 22 June. This time it was to inform him that Calais was judged 'the likelyest place' from which the Prince might take 'such resolutions as may be most
usefull to His Majesty’s affaires’, and that he was going there ‘with all convenient speede’. something which, as it turned out, was sooner said than done, because of the exiled Court’s chronic shortage of money. In the event, Cardinal Mazarin having refused to finance the design, the Queen’s confidant, Lord Jermyn, advanced the money for the Prince’s journey, though this he did only after exacting a promise of repayment ‘with full interest’. Declaring that she was desirous her son should ‘not want the benefitt’ of Nicholas’s advice in the conduct of his business, the Queen commanded the Secretary, along with his neighbour in Caen, the Earl of Bristol, to repair to Rouen. There she promised to let him know of the Prince’s arrival at Calais, that he might join him forthwith. The same notification had, she informed him, been sent to Lord Treasurer Cottington. Sir Edward Hyde had similarly been sent for from Jersey.

Having made his way to Caen, in Normandy, only to find that Nicholas and Bristol had already removed to Rouen, Hyde went on to Rouen, where he found his friends, as well as ‘very many English of quality’ who had been ‘driven out of England...for their fidelity to the King’. The day before his arrival in the city Nicholas and the others had received ‘advertisement...that the Prince, with all his small train, was passed by towards Calicé’. They did not immediately follow, but remained at Rouen, living ‘very decently together’, having been ordered to remain there until they received ‘a very particular direction’ from Prince Charles. Informed that the way between Rouen and Calais was notoriously dangerous, being infested with robbers and cutthroats, Hyde tells us that they were at first glad of the order not to stir from the city.

When, ‘within [a] few days’, advice finally came from Calais, it was to tell them that Prince Charles had, on reaching the port, embarked on an English frigate bound for Holland, ‘from whence they were to hear from him how they should dispose of themselves’. They straightway resolved to travel to Dieppe, where they might take ship for Holland, for the presence in the field of the French and Spanish armies made an overland journey through Northern France and Flanders extremely hazardous. Just before setting out for the coast Nicholas received an express from Caen intimating that his wife was ‘at the point of death’, whereupon he turned back, leaving Cottington, Bristol, and Hyde to go on without him. Their failure to join the Prince before his departure for Holland prompted later suspicions among the Church of England men, that the Queen and her entourage had all along intended that they should not reach Prince Charles in time to join his expedition, they not wanting to put an obstacle in the way of negotiation with the Presbyterian Scots by strengthening the episcopalian contingent among his advisers.

On reaching Calais Charles had lost no time before embarking, being given to understand that his younger brother, James, Duke of York, had left The Hague, gone to Helvoetsluys, and ‘put himself on board the fleet there’. He made all the more haste, ‘lest his brother should be in action before him’. As a young headstrong prince and the heir to the throne of three kingdoms, he had every intention of covering himself in glory by attempting to rescue his father. After taking charge of the revolted English ships, Charles boldly sailed into the mouth of the Thames, in order to encourage the Royalist
uprising, and foment divisions in London; but, apart from the capture of a well-laden, homeward-bound merchantman, he accomplished very little before retiring to Holland in the lingering hope (itself so soon to be dashed) of getting himself transported ‘into the northern parts’ to link up with the projected invading Scottish army under Argyll.26

The Queen’s sixth and final letter takes us some distance further along the tortuous road of Stuart attempts to regain the British kingdoms. Her letter, written in French from Paris, and almost certainly from the Louvre (to which she had moved for safety amid the menaces of civil unrest taking place about the French capital), is addressed not to Secretary Nicholas, but to the second of her three surviving sons, James, Duke of York.27 It is not an original, but a contemporary copy, which somehow or other has found its way into Nicholas’s papers – perhaps forwarded by the Duke himself. Dated 10 February 1651 stylo novo (31 January 1650/1 stylo vetere), it belongs to the fraught period of Charles II’s absence in Scotland, when, yet again, he was hoping to gain a foothold on the British mainland with the help of the Scots Covenanters. This time he was acting for himself, not on behalf of his father, who had been barbarously executed in 1649.

The triumph of the hated ‘Louvre Counsels’, signalled by Charles II’s much criticized capitulation to the exorbitant terms of the Presbyterian Scots, had completely eclipsed the Church of England interest: the interest which Charles I had to the best of his abilities always supported, and to which the most devoted of his and his son’s adherents, Ormonde, Hyde, and Nicholas, remained strongly committed.28 In May 1650 the King had sailed to Scotland, where he was abominably used by ‘the Kirkmen’, who, against his better judgment, forced him to take the Covenant before proceeding to crown him King on New Year’s Day 1651.29 From start to finish the Scottish expedition was, from the King’s point of view, an unmitigated disaster, involving him in humiliation, disappointment, and eventually military defeat.

Prior to leaving France Charles had met the Queen at Beauvais,30 and had given orders for James to stay behind, thinking it unnecessary to risk both their lives in one and the same military venture. In committing him to the care of the Queen, their mother, he had virtually repeated word for word their father’s injunction to himself.31 He directed the Duke to ‘conform himself entirely to the will and pleasure of the Queen his mother, matters of religion only excepted’.32 Like Charles I, he refused point-blank to allow his mother, a Catholic dévote, to meddle with his brother’s religion, knowing full well that so long as he and his brothers remained loyal to the Protestant faith there was at least a chance that they might be restored to their father’s throne.

To begin with, the sixteen-year old James, who was eager to see action, had been acutely disappointed at Charles’s decision to go to Scotland without him, but had dutifully submitted to his brother’s command to stay with the Queen. However, Henrietta Maria’s overbearing conduct towards him at the Louvre and seeming preference for Lord Jermyn and her favourites, both of which were magnified by faction inside the Duke’s household, combined with the apparent indifference of the French Court, made him extremely unhappy and resentful. The Cavalier Anglican Lord Hatton, then a fugitive
living in Paris, thought that the Queen would try to keep the Duke with her ‘till she sees what will become of the King in Scotland’, and that she did so ‘out of pollicy not affection, for’, he informed Nicholas, ‘she omits noe opportunity to expres her undervalue of him’. With the King gone, the Secretary voiced his own concern for James’s Protestantism, hoping ‘that the Queen will permit him...the exercise of his Devotion’ while he was in her charge. It was well known, and deeply resented in Church of England circles, that she was already bringing up the Duke’s younger sister, Princess Henriette-Anne, in the Catholic faith.

James’s restlessness was deliberately exploited by two of his more unscrupulous attendants, Sir Edward Herbert, Charles I’s erstwhile Attorney General, and Sir George Ratcliffe, Strafford’s former secretary, though neither of them belonged to his household. Hoping to make the most of their hold over the young Prince, they had filled his head with nonsensical ideas of emulating the condottiere Duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, who in his volatile career had converted political humiliation at the hands of France into outstanding military success in the service of Spain. It mattered little to them in their self-serving schemes that the circumstances of the two princes were vastly different. The upshot was that James announced his intention of paying a visit to Duke Charles at Brussels in the Spanish Netherlands. Much as the Queen disapproved of her son’s resolve, she was powerless to prevent his going. He left Paris on 23 September, albeit accompanied, at the Queen’s insistence, by Lord Byron and Sir Henry Bennet, his secretary.

Once in Brussels, where he was joined by Herbert and Ratcliffe, the excitement of James’s newfound independence soon wore off. His poverty, which the Queen and those about her refused to relieve, reduced him and his companions to ‘great necessity’. Evidently, ‘the Louvre design’, in which the ‘cursed Cardinal’ Mazarin was held to govern all, was ‘to constrain him to return to Paris’ by starving him of funds. Even the desperate ploy of visiting his sister Mary, the recently widowed Princess of Orange, in December was initially foiled by her refusing to receive him on instructions from the Queen. Hearing that James was already on his way towards her the Princess sent the Marquis de Vieuville to intercept him, which he did at Dordrecht, so that the Duke was forced to go instead to Rhenen, a house belonging to his aunt, Elizabeth of Bohemia, on the Rhine below Arnheim. Though Mary eventually relented, and invited him to join her at The Hague, his presence in the Dutch Republic rapidly became a matter of intense embarrassment to himself, the Princess, and the States General. The death of his brother-in-law, William II, in the previous November had brought the fortunes of the House of Orange to its lowest ebb – to the extent that the States party treated its Stuart relatives with disdain, as it moved towards a new understanding with the rebel English Commonwealth early in 1651.

Meanwhile the Queen had been busy. She had informed Charles of James’s departure from her. It was a piece of information which ‘very much troubled’ the King, who had difficulties enough of his own to contend with in Scotland, surrounded, as he was, by the Covenanters with ‘their mad principles’ and villainous behaviour. At Perth, on 20/30
December, he secretly instructed his servant, ‘honest’ Harry Seymour, who had long experience of undertaking delicate errands for him, to seek out James in Brussels, or wherever he was currently residing, and endeavour to persuade him to return to the Queen as the only way and means which can satisfy us and the world, and indeed the place where we think he may be with most honour and safety for himself and with best conveniency for our affaires, both in relation to England and to any other motions which may be made of advantage for our service and putting him into action, which we very much desire. Charles also deemed it necessary to encourage Ormonde and others of his Privy Council to attend and advise his brother, and took what steps he could to supply him with money.

At the same time Seymour was given additional instructions. Presumably on foresight of the Queen’s permitting the Princess of Orange to receive her brother at The Hague, as soon as it suited her and the King that she should do so, Charles instructed Seymour to entreat his sister to use her best endeavours to persuade his returne into Fraunce’. He made little doubt of the Duke’s obedience, but, in case Seymour found those about him ‘disaffected to our service’, he was to warn them of the King’s displeasure and of his intention to punish any contempt of his orders concerning his brother. Furthermore, having sorely felt the inconveniences of the Louvre counsels since joining the Scottish Covenanters, he desired the Queen and James to invite Secretary Nicholas to be always neere and about him, knowing that the Secretary ‘wilbe well trusted by our freinds in England’, meaning the Cavalier Anglicans, and would be ‘very acceptable’ to the Marquess of Ormonde, to whom he had already written to attend James in France.

Charles’s time in Presbyterian Scotland had convinced him of the need to stick to the Church of England men. Though James had been received at The Hague ‘with the greatest kindness’ by his sister Mary, it was believed that he would obey the King by returning to Paris, though, as Nicholas correctly conjectured, ‘perhaps not suddenly’. In the interval the carriage of the Dutch ‘Boores’ was becoming increasingly hostile towards the Stuarts. The remnants of the Royal Family and their adherents were even denied the use of the Hoof church on 30 January, the anniversary of Charles I’s execution. As a result, James and the Queen of Bohemia were forced to have the commemorative sermon and service in the Duke’s private apartment. A month later the coming over of the ambassadors of the English rebels was daily expected, making James’s position decidedly uneasy. Anxious to avoid meeting them, he made up his mind to remove to Breda, a town in which the interest of the House of Orange was paramount, as soon as he could afford to go. His financial difficulties were so severe that his departure had to wait until 27 March, one week after the arrival ‘in great pomp’ of the rebels’ ambassadors at Rotterdam, by which time it was confidently reported that ‘His highness did hope to have been in France’.

The attractions, such as they had been, of James’s coveted independence had long since palled. Weary of having to fend for himself with almost no money and scant credit, he was by the beginning of February 1651 more than willing to obey the King’s instructions by rejoining his mother. Even Secretary Nicholas, despite his dislike of the
Catholic Louvre, with its pernicious ‘ways and counsels’ and its opportunistic political backing of the Presbyterian Scots, confessed that it would have been ‘much better’ for the Duke to have returned to Paris sooner, if only to avoid the humiliation of witnessing the reception of Walter Strickland and Oliver St John, the regicides’ representatives. Given that Nicholas had privately sympathized with the causes of the Duke’s fleeing the Louvre, this volte-face denoted a remarkable change of heart on his part.

After all the fuss over the urgent need for James to return to his mother, and in the light of the Duke’s having more recently ‘much pressed’ his being sent for by the Queen, the expected summons was bafflingly slow in coming to him. As the Queen’s letter of 10 February 1651 now makes abundantly clear, the eruption of France’s own ‘période de troubles’ in the successive revolts of the Fronde made the Duke’s removal to Paris highly problematical. The embroilment of the Bourbon monarchy in the complicated faction struggles of the princes of the blood, nobles, and parlementaires had rendered the authority of the central government weak and uncertain, and sent the unpopular Cardinal Mazarin into temporary exile. Only the day before Henrietta Maria wrote her letter, Jean-Francois Paul de Gondi, Coadjutor to the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, had surrounded the Palais-Royal with his troops, making the Queen Regent and the young Louis XIV virtually his prisoners and exposing them to the gaze of the common people. Henrietta Maria’s personal affairs, including her straitened finances, which depended wholly on the payment of a pension from the French crown, had been thrown into utter confusion by the savage turn of events. Barely recovered from the shock of Charles I’s execution, she began gloomily to contemplate the end of the Bourbon monarchy.

While her letter referred both to the King’s instructions from Scotland and to the receipt of a letter from James, impatient for his recall from the Low Countries, she was at present unable either to comply with the King’s wishes or gratify James’s desires. In the parlous state in which she and her household eeked out their daily lives, and caught, as she was, in the turmoil of French domestic politics, it was impossible for her to send for him with decency and safety. Almost a month later Ormonde, writing to Nicholas from Caen, had received no letters from Paris on account of the military blockade and disruption of the postal system as the warlike factions confronted one another. Without reliable information he was unable, he told Nicholas, ‘to judge whether the French state hath recovered such settlement as that it hath bin held fit to propose any thing touching the Duke of Yorkes coming and reception’. There was vague talk of the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, providing her nephew James with a pension of 4,000 pistoles, but the more realistic of the impoverished English onlookers in the troubled French capital believed that she was ‘noe more able to sett it upon a good fond’ than they themselves could, ‘unless shee will give it out of her purse’, which they thought doubtful. Needless to say, there was considerable speculation among the English Royalists in Paris who dwelt outside the orbit of the Louvre’s influence, as to what Henrietta Maria’s motives might be in not immediately recalling the Duke, now that he was solicitous to come to her. Yet much of the tittle-tattle that was traded in their letters and conversation
was hopelessly wide of the mark. At the end of May their malevolent surmises were abruptly cut short, when the Queen invited her son to join her. It was a chastened and grateful Prince James who in early June received her letter. He had just been paying what he hoped would be a flying farewell visit to his sister Mary at The Hague, and had been prevailed on to make a longer stay with her. Heartened by stories of how the boys of the town had greeted the regicides’ ambassadors with cries of ‘Connick-Stickers’, James and his sister took much pleasure in openly riding past the official residence allotted to Cromwell’s representatives. Their attendants took equal delight in teaching the willing youngsters to shout ‘Cromwell’s bastards’ after them whenever they appeared in public. Such was the widespread hostility they encountered on the streets, that St John and Strickland were at times reluctant to venture out of their lodgings.

The Queen’s invitation was conveyed to James by Sir Edward Hyde, that pillar of Cavalier Anglican orthodoxy, who had but recently returned from a fruitless begging embassy to Philip IV of Spain. Punctilious in paying his devoirs to the Queen at the Louvre, Hyde was required by Henrietta Maria, ‘as soon as he should come into Flanders’ (for his wife and sons were currently billeted at Antwerp under the watchful eye of Dr George Morley), to ‘make a journey to the Hague, and prevail with the duke (to whom she writ to the same purpose) to return again to Paris’. It was a commission which, Hyde tells us, he ‘heartily’ undertook. Solicitous as he always was for the welfare of the Stuart cause, he was ‘exceedingly troubled at the general discourse’ to which ‘that sally’ of the Duke’s had given rise, ‘as if there were a schism in the royal family, in a season when so much unity was requisite’. He found him at Breda, to which town he had again retired on notification of the States General’s disapproval of his being at The Hague. Avid to be gone from Holland, James closed with the invitation, which he rightly chose to construe as an olive branch from the Queen his mother, and made all the haste he could back to Paris and life at the Louvre. Perhaps aware of her folly in having driven her son from her in the first place, Henrietta Maria received him ‘without those expostulations and reprehensions which’, in Hyde’s view, the Duke ‘might reasonably have expected’. Instead, she wisely reserved her displeasure for those of his suite who, in aiding and abetting his ill-considered escapade, had openly defied her authority. Whatever else James’s action had shown it had brought home to his mother, the Queen, and to his brother, the King, that he was now of an age and disposition to think for himself, and that his automatic acquiescence in their plans could no longer be taken for granted.
Fig. 2. Autograph letter of Queen Henrietta Maria to Sir Edward Nicholas, Sept. 1641. BL, Evelyn Papers

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1. The Queen to Secretary Nicholas, [September] 1641 (holograph; fig. 2)

Maistre Nicholas,

I have receaved a letter from the King to lett you know, that it is his pleasur that the letter that he ded writt to Milord Keeper\(^69\) should not be iet seene tell you here from me againe. So I rest

Your assured frand,
Henriette Marie R.

[Nicholas’s endorsement] Received 5\(^0\) Septembris 1641. The Queene’s letter to me.

2. The Queen to Secretary Nicholas, [September/October] 1641 (holograph)

Maistre Nicholas,

I send you this letter for the King. Pray despache a post. It is nessesarie for the King[‘s] service, and soone as you can. Mongo Murray\(^70\) is arived just when I vas closeing of me lettres: but I have not spokend to him, and so I have no more to say, but that I am

Your asured frend,
Henriette Marie R.

For yourselfe.

[Nicholas’s endorsement] Received 1\(^0\) Octobris 1641. The Queene’s letter to me.

3. The Queen to Secretary Nicholas, no date (holograph)

Maistre Secretaire,

The King commanded me to send you this letter, that you may send it inst[antlye] to Milord Seamor.\(^71\) It requieres hast. [Having] no more to say, I rest

Your asured frend,
Henriette Marie R.

For Maistre Secretary Nicholas.

[It has four small seals, with the arms of Great Britain impaling those of France (though in an unusual form, possibly because of the small size of the seal), and the remains of violet silk ties]

4. The Queen to Secretary Nicholas, St Germain-en-Laye, 30 May/9 June 1648 (signed only)

Henriette Marie R.

Right trusty and welbeloved wee greete you well. The present revolutions in all His Majesty’s dominions giveing us, and our most deare sonne, the Prince of Wales, occasion to judge that, in duty to His Majesty’s service, and what he owes to his owne interests, it is no longer fitt for him to sitt idle here at a time when probably a proper and seasonable applying himselfe to action may contribute much to His Majesty’s re-
establishment, wee have thought it very necessary to enter into consideration of his
remoove from hence unto some other place that might be aptest for his takeing the
opportunity to transport his person to that part of His Majesty's dominions, where it
should be judged most advantageous: which conceiving he may best doe from Holland,
wee have by the unanimous advice of all, both Councellors and peeres of His Majesty's
several dominions, whome wee could here assemble at the present, resolved upon his
speedy remoove thither. Notwithstanding how pressing and necessary soever it appeare
unto us, so as not to admitt of a delay in the preparations for it, whilst wee might receave
your advice also, yet so greate consideration have wee, both of your condition as His
Majesty's sworne Councellour, of your judgement and integrity in His Majestie's service,
and of that part which you may justly expect to have in deliberations of this moment,
that wee would not proceed unto his actuall departure without receiveing your opinion
and advice therein. But in case any just impediments on your part should oblige us to
excuse your attendance on us at St. Germain, wee shall then expect to receive from you
in writing such advices as you shall thinke fitt to give us upon the subject. Wherein not
doubting of your carefull complyance, wee bid you hartily farewell. From our Court at
St. Germain, this 9th of June 1648.
Secretary Nicholas.
To our right trusty and welbeloved Sir Edward Nicholas, Knight, Principall Secretary
of State.
[Nicholas's endorsement] g^ Junii, Stylo Novo., 1648. Received [blank]. The Queene to
me for my advice concerninge the Prince's resolution to goe speedily for Holland.
[It has a red wax seal with the arms of Great Britain impaling those of France]

5. The Queen to Secretary Nicholas, St Germain-en-Laye, 12/22 June 1648
(signed only)
Henriette Marie R.
Trusty and right welbeloved wee greete you well. Forasmuch as it hath been resolved
that, Calais being the likelyest place from whence our dearest sonne, the Prince of Wales,
may take such resolutions as may be most usefull to His Majesty's affaires, he should
repaire with all convenient speede thither; thereupon, desireing he should not want the
benefitt of your councell and [advice?] for the conduct of his busines in so pressing a
[conjuncture?], wee have thought fit hereby to give you notice of [it, commandeing] you
to repaire, with the Earle of Bristoll,\(^2\) speedily [to] Rouen, whither wee shall send you
advertizement of the time when our said dearest sonne will be arived at Calais. In the
meane time wee shall recommend unto you to putt yourselves into a posture of readines,
that, upon receipt of such notice, there may be no delay of your setting forwards to attend
him, in which you will be accompanied by the Lord Threasorer,\(^3\) to whome wee have
likewise writt to that effect. And this being all wee have to impart unto you at present,
wee bid you hartily farewell. From our Court at St. Germain, this 22 of June 1648.
To our trusty and right welbeloved Sir Edward Nicholas, Knight, Principall Secretary
of State.
Nicholas’s endorsement] 22\(^{\circ}\) Junii, Stylo Novo, 1648. Received 15/25 \(\text{J[u]}\)nii. The Queene’s comand to me to repaire to Rouen, and to prepare to goe thence to Callais to the Prince.

[It has a wax seal displaying under a crown the arms of Great Britain impaling those of France. The manuscript is badly damp stained and frayed with small losses of text, which have been conjecturally supplied in square brackets]

6. The Queen to James, Duke of York, Paris, 31 January 1650/10 February 1651 (transcript)

Paris, ce 10 Fevrier 1651.

Mon fils, Ayant receu par Seimer des lettres du Roy vostre frere par ou il me fait scavoir ce qu’il vous a commandé, et aussi la vostre sur le mesme subject, tout ce que j’ay à vous dire la dessus est que les affaires icy s’estant rencontrées si brouillees qu’il est impossible pour le present que je vous puisse dire autre chose si non que aussitost que je voiray jour de ce qui se peut faire je travaillay aux ordres que j’ay receu du Roy pour vostre retour icy: pour scavoir en quelle condition vous y pouvez estre receu selon que vous me le mandés me remettant a Henry Seymer a vous entretenir plus particulierement sur ce sujet come aussi a vous asseurer que je suis, mon fils,

Vostre bien bonne et affectionée mere,

Henriette Marie R.

A mon fils le Duc d’Yorke.

1 The papers printed from BL, Egerton MSS. 2533—2562 in G. F. Warner (ed.), The Nicholas Papers. Correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State, Camden Society, new series, xl, l, lvii (1886—97) represent only a fraction of his working papers.

2 Charles I appointed Nicholas Principal Secretary of State on 26 Nov. 1641 in succession to Sir Francis Windebank, who had fled to France. D. Nicholas, Mr. Secretary Nicholas 1593—1669 (London, 1955), pp. 147—9. Charles II promised the renewal of the secretaryship to Nicholas at Castle Elizabeth, Jersey, on 14/24 Feb. 1649/50.

3 Appendix, nos. 1—3. W. Bray (ed.), Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn, 4 vols., revd edn (London, 1801), vol. iv, pp. 49—53, 58, 63, 70, 75 et seqq. Cited below as Bray, Correspondence. The text of the letters, which originally formed part of Secretary Nicholas’s papers, has been transcribed from miscellaneous, unfoliated manuscripts that were temporarily deposited in the muniment room of Christ Church, Oxford. They belong to the Evelyn Collection which was once kept at Wotton, in Surrey. A small number of other letters written by the Queen, the writing of which is very badly faded, are to be found among Nicholas’s correspondence. The collection was purchased by the British Library in 1995. A full catalogue of the Evelyn papers is in preparation, but the manuscripts have yet to be assigned British Library Additional Manuscript numbers. The dates on which the letters were received are entered in the Old Style.


33 Nicholas Papers, vol. i, p. 196.

34 Ibid., vol. i, p. 198: Nicholas to [Hatton], 24 Sept. [1650], N.S.


43 Nicholas Papers, vol. i, pp. 209–10 prints Secretary Nicholas’s autograph copy of the instructions.

44 Ibid., vol. i, pp. 211–12: Nicholas’s similar
autograph copy. For relations between James and Nicholas, and the latter’s excusing himself to the King for not immediately attending the Duke, see Bray, Correspondence, vol. iv, pp. 200–1.

45 Nicholas Papers, vol. i, p. 214: Nicholas to [Hatton], 8/18 Jan. [1651].

46 Ibid., vol. i, p. 220. The States General had already let it be known that Henrietta Maria ‘would not be welcome...if she should come to the Princess Royal’s lying in’ following the death of William II. Ibid., p. 213.


Nicholas Papers, vol. i, p. 214: Nicholas to [Hatton], 8/18 Jan. [1651].

48 Ibid., vol. i, p. 218: Nicholas to [Hatton], The Hague, 1 Feb. 1651, N.S.


51 ‘I perceive the K. hath been very much misinformed and incensed against the D. of York, and those who counsell’d him at Paris’, he wrote to Christopher, Lord Hatton, 8/18 Jan. [1651].


56 Appendix, no. 6.

57 Nicholas Papers, vol. i, p. 223.

58 Ibid., vol. i, pp. 246–8: According to Sir Richard Browne, in August 1651 James lived on an ‘allowance of one thousand crowns a month pay’d him from this state’. Bray, Correspondence, vol. iv, p. 352: Hatton to Nicholas, received 15/25 May [1651].


60 Ibid., vol. i, p. 254: Nicholas to [Hatton], 7 June [1651], N.S.


63 The cat calls were not difficult for the ambassadors to understand: ‘Cromwels-Bastards, Konings-Moorders, Engelsche-Beuls’. Aitzema, Saken van Stael en Oorlogh, vol. iii, p. 638. Geyl, Orange and Stuart 1641–72, pp. 84–5.

64 Nicholas Papers, vol. i, p. 218.


67 Ibid., vol. v, pp. 169, 166.

68 In editing the text I have supplied modern capitalization, punctuation, and, to some extent, layout; standard contractions have been extended and Latin words italicized. The original spelling has been retained, save where ‘u’ has been used for ‘v’.

69 Edward Lyttelton, cr. Baron Lyttelton of Mounslow (18 Feb. 1641), Lord Keeper in succession to Finch. For a letter of Charles I to the Lord Keeper, dated Edinburgh, 17 Aug. 1641, which the Queen ‘tooke...into her owne custody’, believing ‘that there is now noe occasion’ for delivering it: see Bray, Correspondence, vol. iv, pp. 50–1.

70 Mungo Murray, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles I. Ibid., vol. iv, pp. 88–9 and note.


72 John Digby, Earl of Bristol (cr. 15 Sept. 1622), Privy Councillor to Charles I.

73 Francis Cottington, Baron Cottington of Hanworth (cr. 10 July 1631), Lord Treasurer to Charles I.