

# BLUNDEL the Jesuit's Letter of

Intelligence, to his Friends the Jesuites at *Cambray* in *Flanders*, taken about him when he was Apprehended at *Lambeth*, on *Munday* the 23<sup>th</sup>. of *June* 1679.

To *Madam Katharine Hall* in *Cambray*.

My *De. C. IIII. A. Maria.*

On the Thirteenth of *June* being *Fryday*, *Mr. Whitebread*, *Mr. Harcourt*, *Mr. Turner*, *Fenwick* and *Gaven* of the Society, and *Mr. Corker* were brought to the Barr in the *Old Bayly*, *Mr. Corker* moved the Court for a longer time being only warned the night before, whereas the other Prisoners had eight days warning to prepare themselves, whereupon he was remanded to Prison till the next day then was the Indictment, read against the five above named Jesuits, for conspiring the Kings death, Subversion of Government and Protestant Religion then *Mr. Oates* swore that on the 24<sup>th</sup>. of *April* there was a consult held in *London*, where the death of the King was conspired, and that he carried this Resolve from the one to the other, for their subscribing, and swore particular circumstances against each: to corroborate this Testimony, other Witnesses *Bedlow*, *Prance*, *Dugdale* and *Cherwin* came in with overtures to the Matter sworn by *Oates*, then did the Prisoners (after a most solemn and Religious profection of their Innocence and ignorance of any conspiracy against his Majesty) desire that their witness might be heard, which could demonstrate that *Mr. Oates* was actually at *St. Omers* all the whole time, but the Judge *Scroggs* askt each witness as he did appear, of what Religion he was, and upon answer that he was a *Roman Catholick*, the whole Court gave a shout of laughter, then the Judge would say to them, well, what have you been taught to say, and by many scoffing questions (which moved the Court to frequent laughter) he did endeavour to take off the credibility of the witnesses; then the *Butler*, *Taylor*, and *Gardiner* of *St. Omers*, offered to swear that they saw *Mr. Oates* all the time at *St. Omers*, when he swore he was at *London*, after that the Prisoners at the Barr produced sixteen witnesses more that proved *Mr. Oates* forsworn in *Mr. Irelands* Tryal, because he was in *Shropshire*, when he attested he was in *London*, then did *Gaven* one of the Prisoners with a great deal of clearness and eloquence and with a cheerful countenance draw up their justification, shewing the face of their Evidence, and how fully their witness had proved *Mr. Oates* perjured. Then he did lay open the improbability of such a Plott, and how unlikely *Mr. Oates* should be intrusted in delivering Commissions to persons of Honour, and Estates, whom he never (as he acknowledged) had seen before or since, this was delivered by *Mr. Gaven* with a countenance wholly unconcerned, and in a voice very audible, and largely and pertinently expressed; the Judge was incensed at this speech which he often interrupted him, but *Gaven* still urg'd my Lord, I plead now for my Life, and for that which is dearer to me then life, the honour of my Religion, therefore I beseech you have a little patience with me.

After this Plea of *Mr. Gavens* the Judge made his Arrayne to the Jury telling them that what the Prisoners had brought was only the bare assertions of boyes, who were taught it as a point of their Religion, to lye for the honour of their Religion, whereas *Mr. Oates*, *Mr. Bedlow* and others were upon their Oathes, and if Oathes were not to be taken no Courts could subsist. Then *Mr. Oates* brought in four Witnesses which he had kept in reserve, an old Parson in his Canonical Gown, an old *Dominican* Priest, *Proh dolor & pudor!* and two women that swore they saw *Mr. Oates* in the beginning of *May* 1678. at this the whole Court gave a shout of laughter and hallow, that for almost a quarter the Cryers could not still them; never was Bear-baiting more rude and boisterous then this Tryal: Upon this the Judge dismissed the Jury, to consider and bring in their Verdicts, who after half an hours absence brought in the five Prisoners at the Barr all Guilty of High Treason; thereupon the whole Court clapt their hands and gave a great hallow, it being now eight at night, the Court adjourned till next day at seven a Clock which was *Saturday*, I was present from five in the morning till the Court broke up, the Prisoners comported themselves most Apostolically at the Barr, not the least passion or alteration appeared in them, at the invectives of the Judge, or at the clamours of the people, but made a clear and candid defence, with a cheerful and unconcerned countenance, (as a stander by said) if they had been a Jury of Turks they had been quitted, I was with them both before and after their Tryal, and had the Honour to be in my Function serviceable to them, which I look upon as that God favoured me in, I hope for my future good: Next day *Mr. Langhorn* a Lawyer, *Sir George Wakeman*, *Mr. Cooker*, *Mr. Marsh*, *Mr. Rumbly*, the three last *Benedictines*, were brought to the Barr, where the Indictment being read against them for conspiring the King's Death &c. they pleaded all not guilty, then was *Langhorn* first tryed, whose Tryal held so long, that they had no time to Try the other four, and the Commission by which they sat, expiring that day, the Judge adjourned the Tryal of the other 4 till the 14<sup>th</sup> of *July*, and then the Judge commanded the Keeper to bring the five Jesuits, whom with *Langhorn* were Sentenced to be Hang'd, Drawn and Quartered, *Mr. Corker* and *Mr. Marsh* are close Prisoners, and have been so this eight months, with whom I have been, God has fitted and is still fitting them as sacrifices for himself, they are very well disposed and resigned to God's holy will, *Mr. Rumbly* hath the Liberty of the Prison, with whom is *Mr. Heskett*, all-cheerful and expect the good hour; On *Thursday* the day before the five Jesuits were Executed, my Lord *Shaftsbury* was with *Turner* and *Gaven*, promising the Kings Pardon if they would acknowledge the Conspiracy, *Mr. Gaven* answered he would not murder his Soul to save his Body, for he must acknowledge what he knew not, and what he did believe was not.

On *Friday* the 20<sup>th</sup>. of *June* *Mr. Whitebread* upon one Sledge with *Mr. Harcourt*, *Mr. Turner* and *Mr. Gaven* upon another Sledge, *Mr. Fenwick* upon a Sledge by himself, were drawn from *Newgate* to *Tiburn*, *Mr. Langhorn* is for a time Reprieved and promised Pardon, if he will (as tis Reported) discover the Estates of the Jesuites, he was their Lawyer tis certain, my Lord *Shaftsbury* has been often with him.

In the way they comported themselves seriously and cheerfully, *Mr. Gaven* had smug'd himself up as if he had been going to a Wedding; when they arrived at *Tiburn* they each made a Speech, first, all averring their ignorance of any Plott against His Majesty, secondly, pardoning their Accusers, thirdly, hartly praying for them.

But *Mr. Gaven* in his Speech made an Act of Contrition which was much liked by all, for he was an excellent Preacher: then they all betook themselves to Meditation, for more then a good quarter, the multitude was great, yet there was a profound silence, and their most Religious comportment was wonderfully allayed the fury of the People; when they had ended their Prayers, and the Ropes were about their necks there came an Horseman in full speed from *White Hall*, crying as he Rode, a Pardon, a Pardon, so with difficulty he made through the Press to the Sheriff, who was under the Gallows to see Execution performed; then was the Pardon read, which expressed, How the King most graciously and out of his inclination to Clemency had granted them their lives, which by Treason they had forfeited, upon condition they would acknowledge the Conspiracy and lay open what they know thereof. But they all thanked his Majesty for his inclination of mercy to wards them, but as to any Conspiracy they knew of none much less are guilty of any, so they could not accept of any Pardon upon those conditions, after a little Recollection the Cart was driven away, after they were dead they were

Quartered, but their Quarters were given to their friends, *Sanguis Martyrum sit semen Ecclesia.*  
I sent to you an account of *Mr. Pickering's* death, and will tell you what may happen, but I know not if they come to you, you may cover your Letter to me, for *Mrs. Bedlow* at my Lady *Drummonds* in *Queen Street*, *London*.

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