

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 209 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=209>)

From: Sir Charles Cavendish;

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: [1587]

Summary: Charles Cavendish writes a long letter to his mother, Bess (countess of Shrewsbury), with news of their suit at court regarding familial discord with Bess's husband, George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury. His niece (Bess's grand-daughter) Arbella Stuart has received a positive reception at court. Just last week there was a rumour being circulated that gout had finally killed Bess's husband (untrue). Charles also sends news about events in the Low Countries, Scotland and France.

Archive: Chatsworth House, Devonshire MSS, H/143/16 (HL/2)

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: Seal intact - no. Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - unsecured

Hands: Sir Charles Cavendish | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 209: Sir Charles Cavendish

Charles Cavendish (1553-1617), knighted in 1582, was Bess's third and youngest son from her second marriage to Sir William Cavendish (d.1557). He was educated at Clare College, Cambridge, after which nothing is known of him until 1582, when he asked Mary Queen of Scots to write a letter on his behalf, although she refused the request (see ID 147). In 1582 he married Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Kitson of Hengrave, Suffolk, but she died the same year. Later, in 1592, he married Catherine, daughter of Cuthbert, Baron Ogle, of Ogle Castle, Northumberland. He was a life-long close friend and supporter of his step-brother and brother-in-law Gilbert Talbot (son of Bess's forth husband, George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, who succeeded his father as seventh earl in 1590). Until 1590 he spent a great deal of time at court, from where he wrote regular letters with news to his mother. He became MP for Nottinghamshire in 1593, sponsored by Gilbert Talbot (he stood in the election against Sir Thomas Stanhope, with whom Gilbert was engaged in a fierce feud). Gilbert had transferred Welbeck Abbey to Charles soon after the 1593 election to ensure he met the property qualification and, with his landed status in the county, Charles stood as MP again in 1601. Charles had some interest in the arts: he was patron of madrigalist George Wilbye and shared his mother's passion for architecture. In 1599 his building works at Kirkby were partly financed by Bess. In 1608 he acquired Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire, from Gilbert Talbot, which, with Robert Smythson, he re-built as a miniature medieval castle. With his second wife Catherine, Charles had three children: the first died in infancy, but the second and third, both sons, survived to adulthood. His heir William Cavendish, who continued his building project at Bolsover Castle, became first duke of Newcastle (bap. 1593, d. 1676).

Other letters associated with Sir Charles Cavendish:

July 1582 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=147>)

6 November [c. 1585?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=5>)

[c. 1600] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=7>)

18 June [c. 1600?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=6>)

1 October 1607 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=208>)

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People Associated with Letter 209: Bess of Hardwick

Born Elizabeth Hardwick (in c.1521/2, d. 13 February 1608), the woman known to posterity as Bess of Hardwick married four times during her life, as a result of which her name changed from Hardwick to Barlow (or Barley), Cavendish, St Loe and then finally (when she was countess of Shrewsbury and then dowager countess) Talbot. As one of the five children of John Hardwick (1495-1528) of Hardwick, Derbyshire, and his first wife, Elizabeth (née Leake), Bess had three sisters (Mary, Jane and Alice) and one brother (James). The Hardwicks were established Derbyshire gentry who had inherited a modest manor house and c.400 acres in and around Hardwick. But when John died in 1528, and their lands were seized by the crown, Bess faced hardship. Bess's mother quickly remarried but her new husband, Ralph Leche of Chatsworth, Derbyshire, brought little land or money to the marriage, and three more daughters were born (Bess's half-sisters Elizabeth, Jane and Margaret). Little else is known of Bess's childhood but, while still young, she was married for the first time, to Robert Barlow (or Barley) of Barlow, Derbyshire, sometime in or before 1543. Barlow died in 1544 and Bess received a small inheritance. In 1547 she married the twice-widowed Sir William Cavendish, treasurer of the king's chamber. Bess and Cavendish had eight children, six of whom survived: Frances (1548), Henry (1550), William (1551, from whom the dukes of Devonshire are descended), Charles (1553, from whom the dukes of Newcastle and Portland are descended), Elizabeth (1554) and Mary (1556). Probably due to a mixture of affection and shared social ambition, Bess's second marriage was happy and fortuitous. She was now moving in courtly circles and experiencing (for the first time) considerable wealth. In 1549 Cavendish and Bess bought the estate of Chatsworth, which was held jointly in both their names and which he and then Bess, following Cavendish's death in 1557, ambitiously rebuilt. Soon after her second husband's death, and sometime before Elizabeth I's accession (in 1558), Bess married Sir William St Loe, a wealthy widower of ancient noble pedigree. St Loe was captain of the guard to the young queen and in addition to further improving Bess's finances, he also brought her into the queen's inner circle and she served briefly as a gentlewoman of the queen's privy chamber (in 1559). The marriage seems to have not been without affection; however, the two would have spent most of it apart - he serving the queen in London and Bess mostly at Chatsworth. Upon St Loe's death (probably in 1565), Bess inherited most of the estate. In 1567 Bess married for a final time, to George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, one of the richest and most powerful men in England. To consolidate the union of their fortunes, the couple had Bess's eldest son, Henry, marry Shrewsbury's daughter (from his previous marriage), and Shrewsbury's eldest son, Gilbert (later the seventh earl), marry Bess's daughter, Mary. Also around this time, Shrewsbury was appointed to be the keeper of Mary Queen of Scots (from 1568-84). At first, relations between Bess and the Catholic Scottish queen seem to have been amicable; however, relations deteriorated all around as Bess's marriage to Shrewsbury broke down in the 1580s. An infamously nasty and highly public legal battle over estates ensued and finally the courts resolved that Shrewsbury provide Bess with a sizeable income from 1587 onwards (Shrewsbury died in 1590). In 1582, Bess took charge of the upbringing of her orphaned granddaughter, Arbella Stuart (1575-1615), claimant to the English

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and Scottish crowns. In 1587, Bess undertook her remarkable building works at Hardwick: the house now known as Hardwick Old Hall was complete by 1591; next to it, the extraordinary building now known as Hardwick New Hall was complete by 1599 and is one of the greatest architectural ventures of Elizabethan England. It was at Hardwick that Bess spent most of the remainder of her life, much of it devoted to caring for and managing Arbella, who came to loathe her existence in Derbyshire and devised several bizarre plans for her escape (to Bess's great distress). Bess also quarrelled with her eldest son, Henry, and disinherited both him and Arbella in her will. She left most of her estate to her beloved and faithful son, William Cavendish, who continued her great dynasty into the seventeenth century.

Normalised view of Letter 209

In most humble wyse./ I am in hope always knowinge the iniuries suffered the service donne and vpryghtnes of our cause to hope day after day that our cause shall be hard, yett we are too well acquainted with th' infinitt delays this place giues to all sutors: my Lord Treasurer sayth he is very willinge and desiers to end it. Master Secritory lykwyse, but they alleadg my Lord of Shrewsbury hath authorised noe man to follow his cause and semeth not to be acquainted with any such thinges; which me thinkes is strange speach to delay us, when the order he hath and that we show the order to them both wherin the haue full authority to determin with the Consentes of both parties, and thes be all the answers I can procuer hauvinge spoken divers tymes both to my Lord Treasurer and Master Secritory since his comminge to Tibaldes: so that the first tyme my sister went to Tibaldes hir magesty vsinge hir excedyng gratusly she talked much about your ladyship and promised thes thinges shuld be finisshed and she woold speake to the Lordes hir self, as my sister will more at Large sygnify to your Ladyship notwithstandinge a letter shalbe drawn both to my Lord Treasurer and Master Secritory to waken ther memories what the promised notwithstandinge the sem as though the would be Comanded by the Queen I see litell effect of Master wolleys promis but he sayth he hath spoken to the Queen and she sayth she remembereth it well enough. he sayth he will continew to perswade hir to the perfitynge of all trobles so lykwyse all or most of the wemen promis to doe./ The Lordes haue bin and yett be at London about the subseyde so that yett my Lord Chamberlain's letters to the Deane of Lychfyld stays till his retorne, I causes my brother william to gett on draw because I would not mistake the case, and now at thes Lords beinge at London I vnderstand the haue Commission to examin my Lord of Buckhurst about his negotiation in the Low Countries who is Comanded not to come to the Court, for discontentyng my Lord of Lecester wich is thought strange, beinge equall with him in Councell and beinge hir magesties Imbassodor befor he deliver what he had don ther: Sir Ihon norrice is also Comanded to his fathers house ther to abyd till further of hir magesties pleasure be know, and Master wilkes committed to the Fleett and all to please my Lord of Lecester as is sayd And for the Releaf of sluce ther be brutes that my lord of Lecester thinke it an vnpossible thinge which will as som suppose harme my lord's creditt the towne in respect of the haven beinge of great consequence the Duek of Parma hath woon a fort neare the Towne wherin weare ij of my very good frendes Captayn ver and Captayn Baskervill the most sayth the are putt to the sword, but by som I am putt in comfort that the be taken, within the towne be also ij good frendes of myn which if the be not releved be also cast away Sir Roger williams and Captayn Huntley./ The Royters which be viij thousand xij thousand swirfes and iiij thousand Lanskeygrites be entered france to the ayd of the kynge of navare who of latt hath receved agreat overthrow not in respectt of the number but of the great parsonages lost, the french kyng also hath noe great cause of trivmpe./ Scotland I heare maketh great showes of an intention to marry with spayn insomuch as a scottysch man Comminge latly out of spayn, the picture of the Kynges daughter was taken from him which he was carringe to the Kynge, so that Denmark now lyeth deed, besydes ther is a parlament to be kept in Scotland in which parliment is intended to be prepounded liberty of Conciencie and that noe man shalbe punisshed for his

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religion though ther shalbe noe publicke exercise of any but the protestantes ther be taken heare but for Inventions without meninge ether of marriage with spayn or alteration of Religion but t' increse fieare heare to the end motions may be mad to hir magesty concerninge divers thinges./

For our Court ther is non in that Heyght as my Lord of Essex and suerly he is myghtely grown and can hardly be wantynge half a day he strenkneth my Lord of Lecester marvelously Sir walter Rauley is in wonderfull declenation yett labores t'vnderprope him self by my Lord Treasurer and his frendes; I see he is curtuously vsed by my Lord and his frendes but I doubt th' end considerynge how he hath handeled him self in his former pryde, and suerly now groweth so humble towards every on as consideringe his former insolency he committeth over great Basness, and is thought he will never vpress agayn./ Master Blutt Henry nowell and all be out of Conceall and meane presently to seake som other fortune./ Heare was Roland Eayre with my Lord of Commerland and Master Clyfford, and in wonderfull earnest sort intreated that he myght buy the land in the land in the Peake and that he was vndon if your ladyship bought it, that he had redy mony desiered a price to be mad of it he would pay heare presently at London that he vnderstood my lord and which was great and therfor doubted that your Ladyship shuld haue, they both answered him that they had alrede passed ther wordes and that your ladyship shuld haue it befor any and that about iij weakes hence Master Clyfford meneth to be at Buxstones and will ther speake with whom you please to appoynt and after will waytt of your ladyship to acquaint you with his price and that part wich is sould wich is iiij poynd ayeare your ladyship was acquainted with it befor els they would not haue sould it./ I heare nothing from Ihon Holme about kyrkby, but if he will be deligence I would thinke he myght make mony of the wood of Stooke presently./ My lady Arbell hath bin once at Court hir magesty spake ij to hir but not longe and examined hir nothing touchinge hir booke she dined in the presence, but my lord Treasurer bad hir to supper, and at dinier I dinyng with hir and sittyng over agaynst him he asked me whether I cam with my nece or no I sayd I cam with hir then he spake openly and direccted his speech to Sir water Rawley greatly in hir Commendation as that she had the french th' Italion playd of Instrmentes dansed wrough and writt very fayre wished she weare xv years ould and with that rouned Master Rawly in the eayre who answered it would be a happy thinge, At supper he mad excedynge much of hir so did he the after noun in his great Chamber publickly and of Mall and Bess George and sence he hath asked when she shall come agayne to Court My lord Treasurer hath buyld afayre gallery to his latt great chamber very fayre I take it to be a hundred and xxvj foot longe, xxj foot brood; a xvj foot hy, it hath of on syd bay windoes iij differynge all in bignes and forme on end lyght and thorowlyghtes more then half the gallery. the rouf with a frend lyke the low gallery at Chattesworth his great chamber I take to be lx foott long xxij brood and xxj hy wherin he hath mad at the nether end a fayre rock with duckes fesantes with divers other birdes which serves for a cubbord, the ould trees be ther still, he hath a cloth of estatt mad of thin horne of divers colers lykes the bestes and flowers be of Nature, hath in the Rouff a sunne goinge which truly poynteth the hower and goeth the lent of the chamber, by nyght the mounne and through the rouff which be bordes paynted sky holes mad lyghtes sett ther so the appeare stares In this chamber my Lord feasted the Queen who was nobly intertayned

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and all lordes and ladyes satt at the bord and at the Conclusion of dinner hir magesty hartely prayed that god would lend hir his Lyfe for xxj years for she desiered not to live longer then she had him. wich prayer was soe kyndly expressed that the good ould lord could not retorne thankes nor other speach for teares./ My sister I thanke god is better but not clean ryd of the Iandes, but can eatt well and walke indifferrent well, my lady Arbell and the rest doe very well, and it is wonderful how she profiteth in hir booke, besydes she will dance with an excedyng good grace, and can behaue hir self with great preportion to every on in ther degres; but Alatheia is often wysshed with your ladyship she is so mery and talketive and as prety a chyld as any is./ My brother william hath bin sick and kept his bed a day or ij of the kreck in his neck, but now is well agayne./ My Cosin Slater I haue putt to Sir Robert Sydney appareled him and gaue him in his purse for he sayd he was spoyled of his close and mony as he was at Northampton./ Master Dyer and I lye in on chamber we haue ij bedes sett vpe and but he had hasty busines to the Court he would him self haue recommended his duty in writyng./ Heare was a weake agoe a very great brutt of my Lord of Shrewsbury's death and that his payn of the goutt tooke him a Breevly./ My eldest brother would haue intertayned Haukworth when he was heare, mad Master Blackwall ameane to Haukworth and Master Blackwall sayth my brother spake great wordes concerning blackwall./ Since Mistress Shakerley is so vnresonable it weare good Master Hackers device proceded touching that cause./ So with my bounden and dayly prayer humbly beceching your ladyship's dayly blesinge I humbly cease this tuesday./

your ladyship's most humble and obedient sonne./

Cha: Cavendysshe

This messinger is in such hast as I haue not tyme to reed over my letter./

Diplomatic view of Letter 209

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

Letter from Charles Cavendish

Esq^r to his Mother the

Countess of Shrewsbury [Later editorial note (left-hand margin), hand: archivist]

In most humble wyse./ I am in hope always knowinge the iniuries suffered an the service donne and vpryghtnes of our cause to hope day after day that our cause shall be hard, yett we are too well acquainted with th' infinitt delays this place giues to all sutors: my Lo: Tre: sayth he is very willinge and desiers to end it. M^r Secritory lykwyse, but they alleadg my Lo. of Shr: hath authorised noe man to follow his cause and semeth not to be acquainted with any such thinges; w^{ch} me thinkes is strange seap speech to delay us, when the order he hath and that we show the order to them both wherin the haue full authority to determin w^t the Consentes of both parties, and thes be all the answers I can procuer hauvinge spoken divers tymes both to my Lo: Tre: and M^r Secritary since his comminge to Tibaldes: so that the first tyme my sister went to Tibaldes hir mag^{ty} vsinge hir excedyng gratusly she talked much about your lap: and promised thes thinges shuld be finisshed and she woold speake to the Lordes hir self, as my sister will more at Large sygnify to your Lap: notw^t standyng a letter shalbe drawn both to my Lo: Tre: and M^r Secritory to waken ther memories what the promised notw^t standyng the sem as though the woold be Commanded by the Q. I see litell effect of M^r wolleys promis but he sayth he hath spoken to the Q. and she sayth she remembereth it well enough. he sayth he will continew to perswade hir to the perfitynge of all trobles so lykwyse all or most of the wemen promis to doe./ The Lordes haue bin and yett be at London about the subseyde so that yett my Lo: Cham: letters to the Deane of Lychfyld stays till his retorne, I causes my brother william to gett on draw because I woold not mistake the case, and now at thes Lo: beinge at London I vnderstand the haue Commission to examin my Lo. of Buckhurst about his negotiation in the Low Countries who is Commanded not to come to the Court, for discontentyng my Lo. of Lec: wich is thought strange, beinge equall w^t him in Councell and beinge hir mag^{ties} Imbassodor befor he deliver what he had don ther: S.^r Ihon norrice is also Commanded to his fathers house

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ther to abyd till further of hir mag^{ties} pleasure be know, and M^r wilkes committed to the Fleett and all to please my Lo.d of Lec: as is sayd And for the Releaf of sluce ther be brutes that my lo. of Lec: thinke it an vnpossible thinge w^{ch} will as som suppose harme my lo: credit

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the towne in respect of the haven beinge of great consequence the Duek of Parma hath woon a fort neare the Towne wherin weare ij of my very good frendes Captayn ver and Captayn Baskervill the most sayth the are putt to the sword, but by som I am putt in comfort that the be taken, w^t in the towne be also ij good frendes of myn w^{ch} if the be not releved be also cast away ^{S:r} ^ Roger williams and Captayn Huntley./ The Royters w^{ch} be viij thousand xij thousand swirfes and iiij thousand Lanskeygrites be entered france to the ayd of the kyng of navare who of latt hath receved agreat overthrow not in the respectt of the number but of the great ~~paus pars=~~ parsonages lost, the french kyng also hath noe great cause of trivmpe./ Scotland I heare maketh great showes of ^{an} ^ intention wth to marry w^t spayn insomuch as a scottysh man Comminge latly out of spayn, the picture of the Kynges daughter was taken from him w^{ch} he was carringe to the Kyng, so that Denmark now lyeth deed, besydes ther is a parlament to be kept in Scotland in w^{ch} parliment is intended to be prepounded liberty of Concience and that noe man shalbe punisshed for his religion though ther shalbe noe publicke exercise of any but the protestantes ther be taken heare but for Inventions w^t out meninge ether of marriage w^t spayn or alteration of Religion but t' increse fieare heare to the end motions may be mad to hir mag^{ty} concerninge divers thinges./

For our Court ther is non in that Heyght as my Lo. of Essex and suerly he is myghtely grown and can hardly be wantynge half a day he strenkneth my Lo: of Lec: marvelously S^r walter Rauley is in wonderfull declenation yett labores t'vnderprope him self by my Lo: Tre: and his frendes; I see he is curtuously vsed by my Lo. and his frendes but I doubt th' end considerynge w^h how he hath handeled him self in ^{his} ^ former pryd, and suerly now groweth so humble towardes every on as consideringe his former insolvency he committeth over great Basness, and is thought he will never vpress

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agayn./ M^r Blutt Henry nowell and all be out of Conceall and
meane presently to seake som other fortune./ Heare was Roland
Eayre w^t my Lo: of Commerland and M^r Clyfford, and in wonderfull
ernest sort intreated that he myght buy the land in the

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land in the Peake and that he was vndon if your lap:
bought it, that he had redy mony desiered a price to be mad of
it he would pay heare presently at London that he vnderstood
my lo: and w^{ch} was great and therfor doubted that your La:
shuld haue, they both answered him that they had alrede
passed ther wordes and that your lap: shuld haue it befor
any and that about iij weakes hence M^r Clyfford meneth to
be at Buxstones and will ther speake with whom you
please to appoynt and after will waytt of your lap: to acquaint
you with his price and that part wich is sould to wich is
iiij poynd ayeare your lap: was acquainted w^t it befor els they
would not haue sould it./ I heare nothing from Ihon Holme about
kyrkby, but if he will be deligence I would thinke he myght make
mony of the wood of Stooke presently./ My lady Arbell hath bin
once at Court hir mag^{ty} spake ij to hir but not longe and examined
hir nothing touchinge hir booke she dined in the presence, but
my lo: Tre: bad hir to supper, and at dinier I dinyng w^t hir and
sittyng over agaynst him he asked me whether I cam w^t my
nece e or no e I sayd I cam w^t hir then he spake openly and
direccted his speech to S^r: water Rawley greatly in hir
Commendation as that she had the french th' Italion playd of
Instrmentes danded wrough and writt very fayre wished she
weare xv: years ould and w^t that rouned my-lo: M^r Rawly
in the eayre who answered it would be a happy thinge, At
supper he mad excedyng much of hir so did he the after noun
in his great Chamber publicly and of Mall and Bess George
and sence he hath asked when she shall come agayne to Court
My lo: Tre: hath buyld afayre gallery to his latt great chamber
very fayre I take it to be a hundred and xxvj foot longe, xxj foot
brood; a xvj foot hy, it hath of on syd bay windoes iij differynge all in
bignes and forme on end lyght and thorowlyghtes more then half
the gallery. the rouf w^t a frend lyke the low gallery at Chattesworth
his great chamber I take to be lx foott long xxij brood and xxj hy

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wherin he hath mad at the nether end a fayre rock w^t duckes fesantes
w^t divers other birdes w^{ch} serves for a cubbord, the ould trees be ther
still, he hath a cloth of estatt mad of thin horne of divers colers lykes

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the bestes and flowers be of Nature, hath in the Rouff a sunne
goinge w^{ch} truly poynteth the hower and go^c th the lent of the
chamber, by nyght the mounne and through the rouff w^{ch} be bordes
paynted sky holes mad lyghtes sett ther so the appeare stares
In this chamber my Lo. feasted the Q. who was nobly intertayned
and all lordes and ladyes satt at the bord and at the Conclution
of dinner hir mag^{ty} hartely prayed that god would lend hir his
Lyfe for xxj years for she desiered not to live longer then
she had him. wich prayer was soe kyndly expressed that the
good ould lord could not retorne thanks nor other speach
for teares./ My sister I thanke god is better but not clean
ryd of the Iandes, but can eatt well and walke indifferrent
well, my lady Arbell and the rest doe very well, and it is wonderful
how she profiteth in hir booke, by besydes she will dance w^t an excedyng
good grace, and can be^la behaue hir self w^t great preporion
to every on in ther degres; but Alatheia is often wysshed with
your lap: she is so mery and talketive and as prety a chyld as any
is./ My brother william hath bin sick and keapt his bed a day or ij
of the kreck in his neck, but now is well agayne./ My Cosin Slater
I haue putt to S^r Robert Sydney appareled him and gaue him in
his purse for he sayd he was spoyled of his close and mony as
he was at Northamton./ M^r Dyer and I lye in on chamber
we haue ij bedes sett vpe and but he had hasty busines to the
Court he would him self haue recommended his duty in writyng./
Heare was a weake agoe a very great brutt of my Lo of Shr:
death and that his payn of the goutt tooke him a Breevly./
My eldest brother would haue intertayned Haukworth when he was
heare, mad M^r Blackwall ameane to Haukw a^{ll} orth and M^r
Blackwall spake sayth my E^o brother spake great wordes
concerning blackwall./ Since M^{is} Shakerley is so vnresonable
it weare good M^r Hackers desi device proceded touching that
cause./ So w^t my bounden and dayly prayer humbly beceching
your lap: dayly blesinge I humbly cease this tuesday./

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your lap: most humble and
obedient sonne./

Cha: Cavendysshe

This messenger is
in such hast as I haue
not tyme to reed over
my letter./

Version: 1.0