

**From** *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, vol. 8: January- July 1535*, edited by James Gairdner. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1885, pp. 246-47.

[2 or 3 May 1535]  
Arundel MS., 152, f. 294.  
B. M.  
More's works, p.1451.

**659. SIR THOS. MORE TO HIS DAUGHTER MARGARET.**

Supposes, by the councillors resorting hither, that these fathers of the Charterhouse and Mr. Reynolds, of Syon, are adjudged to death for treason. Does not know their matters. As she is perhaps in trouble and fear of mind about him, especially as it is not unlikely that she has heard that he was brought before the Council, wishes to tell her the very truth. On Friday afternoon, the last of April, Mr. Lieutenant told him that Mr. Secretary would speak with him. Shifted his gown, and went to him in the gallery with Mr. Lieutenant. Met many persons on the way— some known, and some unknown. On coming into the chamber where Mr. Secretary was with Mr. Attorney, Mr. Solicitor, Mr. Bedyll, and Dr. Tregonwell, was offered to sit; which he refused. Mr. Secretary said he doubted not that More had seen, by means of his friends who had resorted to him, the new statutes made at the last sitting of the Parliament. Answered that he had: but as, being here, he had no conversation with any people, he thought there was little need to bestow much time upon them, and so returned the book shortly, and never marked nor studied to put in remembrance the effect of the statutes. He then asked if More had not read the first statute about the King being Head of the Church, which he said he had. Mr. Secretary then declared that since it was now ordained by Act of Parliament that the King and his heirs are, have been, and should be Supreme Head of the Church of England under Christ, the King desired them to demand his opinion. Replied that he had trusted that the King would never have commanded such a question to be asked of him, considering that from the beginning he had truly declared his mind to his Highness, and since that time to Mr. Secretary also; that he had discharged his mind of all such matters, and neither would dispute Kings' titles nor Popes', but is and will be the King's true faithful subject, and will pray for him and his, his Council, and all the realm; otherwise than this he would not meddle. Mr. Secretary said he thought this answer would not satisfy the King; that the King was a prince, not of rigour but of mercy and pity: and though he found his subjects obstinate at one time, he would show mercy if he found them conformable at another time; as to More, the King would be glad to see him take such conformable ways that he might be abroad in the world again. Replied that he would never meddle in the world again to have the world given him, and that he had fully determined neither to study nor to meddle with any matter of this world, but his whole study should be the Passion of [247] Christ, and his own passage out of this world. Upon this, was commanded to go forth for a while. When he was called in again Mr. Secretary said that though he was a prisoner condemned to perpetual prison, he was not discharged of his obedience and allegiance to the King. He asked More if he thought the King might not exact of him what is contained in the statutes, and on like pains as he might upon other men. Replied that he would not say the contrary. To this he said that as the King would be gracious to those whom he found conformable, so he would follow the course of his laws to those whom he found obstinate, and that perhaps More's demeanor made others as stiff therein as they are. Answered that he gave no man occasion to hold any point, one or other, nor gave any man any advice or counsel therein, and could go no further, whatever pain came thereof. Said he was the King's true faithful subject and bedesman, and prayed for him and his, and all the realm; he did no one any harm, said no harm, thought no harm, but wished everyone good; if this was not enough to keep a man alive, longed not to live; was dying already; and since he came here has divers times been in such case that he thought to die within the hour, but was never sorry for it, but rather sorry when he saw the pang past; and therefore his poor body was at the King's pleasure, and he wished his death could do him good.

After this Mr. Secretary asked him, as he found no fault in that statute, whether he

found any in any of the statutes after. Answered that whatever seemed to him otherwise than good in any of the other statutes, or in that statute either, he would not declare what fault he found, or speak thereof. Finally, Mr. Secretary said, full gently, that of anything More had spoken “there should none advantage be taken; and whether he said further that there was none to be taken,” does not well remember, but he said report should be made to the King, and his pleasure known.

Was delivered again to the Lieutenant, and brought to his chamber, and is in such case as he was, —neither better nor worse. What shall follow lies in the hand of God, whom he prays to put in the King’s mind what may be to his pleasure; and in More’s mind, to mind only his soul; with little regard of his body. Prays for his family, and desires them to pray for him, and take no thought whatever may happen; for he trusts that though it seems never so evil to this world, it shall in another world be for the best.

*Hol., pp. 3. Mutilated. The printed copy is headed as follows:—*A letter written and sent by Sir Thos. More to his daughter, Mistress Rooper, written the second or third day of May 1535, 27 Hen. VIII.