XXIX. *Two Letters, the one from Henrietta Maria, Queen of England, in 1642, and the other from Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, in 1655, to John Lord Finch of Fordwich : Communicated by NICHOLAS HARRIS NICOLAS, Esq. F.S.A. in a Letter to HENRY ELLIS, Esq. F.R. S. Secretary.*

Read 9th February 1826.

10, Somerset Street, Portman Square, Feb. 9, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

HEREWITH I have the honour to send you Copies of two Letters of considerable interest; and as they have never, I believe, been before noticed, I presume that they will form an acceptable communication to the Society of Antiquaries.

The one is from Henrietta Maria of France, Queen of Charles the First, to John Lord Finch of Fordwich, the Lord Keeper, and was apparently written soon after that nobleman's arrival in the Netherlands, whither he escaped from the fury of the Parliament in January 1642. Her Majesty's letter is chiefly remarkable from its being, as she describes it, the first letter she ever wrote in English. The original, of which the following is a literal copy, is preserved in the Ashmolean Library: the orthography has in many places been corrected, and it was probably revised by one of her attendants. It was sealed with a small seal of the Royal Arms of England, impaling those of France, and surmounted by the crown.

The other letter was from Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia, daughter of James the First, and the immediate ancestor of our present Sovereign. It was also addressed to Lord Finch of Fordwich, and though the only

date to it is "Hague, March 4th," yet from her stating that she was then in mourning for her brother-in-law, her husband's brother Lewis Philip, Duke of Simmerns, who died on the 8th of June 1654, we may consider the 4th March 1655 as the day upon which it was written.

It is almost impossible to peruse this warm-hearted letter without sentiments of attachment being excited towards the amiable writer, for it is throughout highly characteristic of her, who was emphatically called, "the Queen of Hearts." Who the Countess was, of whom she speaks, cannot perhaps be exactly determined; but it was probably Cecily, the widow of Thomas 1st Earl of Winchelsea, and mother of the then existing Earl, to whom her Majesty desires to be remembered.

Lord Finch was twice married; first to his cousin german Eleanor, daughter of George Wyat, of Boxley in Kent, Esquire, and it was the sons of her brother Sir Francis Wyat, whom the Queen describes as his lordship's nephews. This lady having died in 1623, it must of course have been his second wife, Mabella, daughter of Charles Fotherby, Dean of Canterbury, who accompanied him to Holland, to whom the Queen alludes in the postscript. Her Majesty's niece, whom she says she frequently went to Eeling to see, was Mary Princess of Orange, the mother of King William the Third, who was at that time a widow. The Lord and Lady Stanhope spoken of as going to Bourbon, were Charles, second Lord Stanhope, and Dorothy his wife, daughter of Charles Barrett, of Aveley Belhous in Essex, Esquire, and sister of Edward Lord Newburgh.

The original of this letter is also in the Ashmolean Museum. It was sealed with a small black seal, containing an impalement of the arms of the Palatine, with those of England, surmounted by a crown.

I remain, my dear Sir,

very sincerely yours,

NICHOLAS HARRIS NICOLAS.

TO HENRY ELLIS, Esq.
Sec. S. A.

For mi lord finche.

My lord finche. I have received your letter and I am glad to heer you are araived in a place where you have received so much honor ; I doe nat doubt but that in any place where you shall goe your merite will make you receive the same : and for my particular, you may be asured to find me ever the same you have left me, that is, to oblige you in all occations : this is the first letter that I have ever rwyttten in engliche : therefore I will not ventur to say ani more, but that I am

Your affectionnat frend,

HENRIETTE MARIE R.

For the Lord Finch.

My Lord. I asure you your letter was verie welcome to me, being glade to finde you are still heart whole, and that you are in better health and your cough is gone ; as too your apetit, I confess your outlandish meses are not so good as beef and mutton ; I pray remember how ill pickled Herring did use you heere and brought you manie & your 150 feavers. As for the countess I can tell you heavie news of her, for she is turned quaker and preaches everie day in a tubb ; your nephue George can tell you of her quaking, but her tubb preaching is come since he went I beleeve, she I beleeve at last she will prov an Adamite : I wish your nephues both had some of her pepins presserved in their noses, it woulde doe them much good. I did not heare you were deade, wherefore I hope your promise not to die till you let me know it, but you must also stay till I give you leave to dye, which will not be till we meet a shooting somewhere, but where that is, God

knows best. I can tell little other news heere, my cheef exercise being to iaunte betwixt this and Eeiling where my neece hath been all this winter. I ame now in mourning for my brother in law the Duke of Simmerens death: my La Stanhope and her husband are going six weeks hence into France to the waters of Bourbon, which is all I will say now, onelie that I am ever

Your most affectionat frend

ELIZABETH.

Hage March 4th.

I pray remember me
to your ladie and to
my Lo of Winchelsey.