

LETTER FROM MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS,
TO QUEEN ELIZABETH

BELIEVE, Madame (and the doctors whom you sent to me this last summer can have formed an opinion), that I am not likely long to be in a condition which can justify jealousy or distrust. And this notwithstanding, exact from me such assurances, and just and reasonable conditions as you wish. Superior force is always on your side to make me keep them, even though for any reason whatever I should wish to break them. You have had from observation enough experience of my bare promises, sometimes even to my own damage, as I showed you on this subject two years ago. Remember, if you please, what I then wrote you, and that in no way could you so much win over my heart to yourself as by kindness, although you have confined forever my poor body to languish between four walls; those of my rank and disposition not permitting themselves to be gained over or forced by any amount of harshness.

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In conclusion, I have to request two things especially; the one that as I am about to leave this world I may have by me for my consolation some honourable churchman, in order that I may daily examine the road that I have to traverse and be instructed how to complete it according to my religion, in which I am firmly resolved to live and die. This is a last duty which cannot be denied to the most wretched and miserable person alive; it is a liberty which you give to all foreign ambassadors, just as all other Catholic kings allow yours the practice of their religion. And as for myself, have I ever forced my own subjects to do anything against their religion even when I had all power and authority over them? And you can-