

All the letters written by Mary Beatrice in her widowhood are sealed with black. Some bear the impression of her diamond signet,—her regal initials “M. R.,” crowned and interlaced with the cypher of her deceased lord, which now indicated that of her son, “J. R.” being the same initials; but the seal she more frequently used is a size larger, having the royal arms of England, France, Ireland, and Scotland on the dexter side, and her own paternal achievement of Este of Modena and Ferrara on the sinister; viz., on the first and fourth quarters, argent, an eagle displayed, sable, crowned or; the second and third, azure, charged with three fleurs-de-lis, or, within a bordure indented, or and gules. One supporter is the royal lion of England, the other, the crowned eagle of Este. This was her small privy-seal, the miniature of her great seal as queen-consort of England, of which there is an engraving in Williment’s Regal Heraldry.

In the commencement of the year 1718, Mary Beatrice, though fast approaching the termination of her weary pilgrimage, was occupied in corresponding with her old friends in England in behalf of her son. Her pen appears to have been more persuasive, her name more influential, than those of the secretaries of state, either at Avignon or St. Germain. Early in January that year, general Dillon writes to lord Mar, “that Atterbury, whom he figures under the political designation of Mr. Rigg, presses earnestly for Andrew’s [the queen-mother] writing to Hughes [lord Oxford] about the mantle affair, and thinks the most proper time for compassing that matter will be during the next sessions of Percy, [parliament,] whilst friends are together in town.”¹ This mantle affair seems to relate to a subscription loan for the use of the chevalier de St. George. It is further recommended “that her majesty,” signified by the *sobriquet* of Andrew, “should send her instructions to the earl of Oxford, in order to bring him to the point,”—rather a difficult matter with so notable a shuffler, we should think. The queen was also to be requested “to write a letter to Mrs. Pooley, [lady Petre,]

¹ Stuart Papers, in her majesty’s possession; edited by J. H. Glover, esq., vol. i. p. 19.