

SUMMARY: In the letter below dated 25 July 1582 written to King Philip II, the Spanish ambassador in London, Don Bernardino de Mendoza (d.1604), says that he has given his 'second confidant', Oxford's first cousin Lord Henry Howard (1540-1614), 500 crowns, and has promised him a pension of 1000 crowns a year. For Mendoza's letter of 6 March 1582 in which he expressly identifies Howard as a spy for Spain and advises the King to grant him a substantial pension, see Simancas Leg. 8356, ff. 75-7. In the letter below, Mendoza writes that:

My second correspondent reports that the ambassador Cobham has written to the Queen saying that no minister ever set foot in England who had done greater harm than I, or who gave more minute information of matters here to your Majesty and the Pope.

It is clear from this comment by Sir Henry Cobham (1537-1592) and from the contents of Mendoza's letter itself that Howard was supplying Mendoza with a wealth of detailed confidential information, much of it apparently gleaned from his kinsman, Thomas Radcliffe (1526/7-1583), 3rd Earl of Sussex, who was unaware that his friendship with Howard was being thus abused.

According to *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Mendoza's 'first confidant', who had ceased to supply him with information, was Sir James Croft (c.1518-1590):

[Croft] openly supported a pro-Spanish policy, receiving a pension from Philip II whom he professed himself ready to serve in everything 'he honestly could' (HoP, Commons, 1558-1603, 1.674).

Concerning the date of this letter, it should be noted that on 24 February 1582 a bull of Pope Gregory XIII had ordered the use of a reformed calendar which cut ten days out of the year 1582, so that 15 October followed immediately upon 4 October (see *Handbook of Dates*, p.10). However since no change was to occur until October 1582, England and Spain were still using the same calendar on 25 July 1582 when Mendoza wrote this letter.

The excerpt below in Spanish of the part of Mendoza's letter which deals with Mendoza's 'second confidant', Lord Henry Howard, is taken from *Coleccion de Documentos Ineditos para la Historia de España por El Marques de la Fuensanta del Valle, D. José Sancho Rayon y D. Francisco de Zabalburu*, Tomo XCII (Madrid: M. Ginesta Hermanos, Impresores de la Real Casa, 1888, reprinted Kraus Reprint Ltd., Vadux, 1966), p. 406. The translation of the entire letter below is taken from Hume, Martin, ed., *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs*, Vol. II, 1568-1579, pp. 389-92.

Yo he ido entreteniendo con palabras y esperanzas á mi segundo confidente, aguardando respuesta de V. M. y por habelle instado de nuevo en nombre de la Reina se aprestase para ir á la dieta de Alemania, me ha sido fuerza el prendalle como V. M. me lo manda, si

la necesidad lo pidiese en el despacho de 20 de Mayo, y así le he dado 500 escudos y con nombre de que tendrá 1.000 de pension, usando deste medio para que no vaya á la dieta y prosiga en el servicio de V. M. y en el advertirme, quedando libre para si V. M. no ha de tener aquí Ministro, no continuelle ni perderse suma de importancia en lo hecho á lo estimado grandemente, asegurándome que no sólo con su persona, pero con la de sus deudos y casa espera en Dios de servir á V. M., y segun sus partes y manera que procede, hallo indubitadamente que es de gran fruto su correspondencia, y mi primer confidente le hallo de algunos meses á esta parte casi mudo, por no haberme avisado cosa de momento á causa de habelle descompuesto el de Leicester con la Reina con oficios que ha hecho, y así nó trata de negocios.

I wrote on the 11th that Alencon had sent a gentleman to ask the Queen for money. He again presses the request by letter, saying that he is in such extremities that if she does not give him some money he should be obliged to abandon the war and leave the States, and pending the receipt of her reply he intended to leave Antwerp. Leicester, Hatton and Walsingham, fearing, in view of these letters, that Alencon might run hither from Flushing, and drive them into a corner by his presence as he did before, pressed the Queen to send him £30,000. £20,000 were at once furnished, and the rest has been ordered to be got ready. Cecil, however, was opposed to this, and, after he had discussed the matter with the Queen, she ordered the £20,000 to be kept back. I understand that the Treasurer said that she should consider very deeply before allowing herself to be deprived of the money she had, since she had in her Treasury, or as they call it here 'the Chequer,' not more than £80,000. At the end of September a half of the Parliamentary grant would be received amounting to £70,000, and in addition to this the £400,000 in gold, which she knew of, was deposited under three keys, of which she had one, whilst he, Cecil, and Sir Walter Mildmay held the others. Cecil told her that in his opinion the money in the Chequer and the subsidy should be converted into bullion and ingots of gold and silver, which would prevent them from spending it, and would produce a profit when it was needful to coin it. Notwithstanding this the others are worrying her to send the £30,000, and the Queen is still undecided.

The King of France had hitherto delayed sending a reply to the clauses proposed on behalf of the Queen for the marriage, but he has now agreed to concede everything that the Queen requests as soon as she decides to marry. This, after so much delay, has caused her some suspicion. She consequently verbally told the French ambassador that, although the King was willing to agree to defray the cost of the war if she married, the business was so weighty that she wished the King to bind himself in writing with his own hand, that this crown should not be called upon to contribute to any expenditure, overt or covert, which might be incurred either in the Netherlands or elsewhere in case of a rupture with your Majesty, as she wished to be perfectly clear upon this point to enable her the better finally to resolve. This shows that it is nothing but make-believe.

My second correspondent reports that the ambassador Cobham has written to the Queen saying that no minister ever set foot in England who had done greater harm than I, or who

gave more minute information of matters here to your Majesty and the Pope. He says that the reason why the King of France agreed to so extraordinary a condition as to pledge himself to break with your Majesty, whilst relieving her of all expense caused thereby, was in consequence of the arrival secretly of a Nuncio from the Pope to press him to agree with your Majesty and the rest of the Catholic princes, as this was the only means by which he might tranquillise his kingdom and punish the Huguenots and heretics, whilst preventing his brother from helping the Netherlands rebels. To this the King of France had replied that, if it were possible for his brother to retire with honour, and he was assured that he would not be moved by the Huguenots to stir up civil war in France and assume almost royal power, to the great danger of his (the King's) Crown and the interests of the true religion, he would do all that might tend to the aggrandisement of the Catholic Church and the maintenance of the princes who belonged to it, and, at the same time, would seek means to bring his brother to it, although he was sure that force would be of no use for the purpose. For this reason, he said, he had granted everything that the Queen had requested, in order that his brother's eyes might be opened, and he might understand plainly that she was the person who avoided the marriage.

This is confirmed by a letter which Alencon writes to Sussex in the same tone as before, lamenting the irresolution and tardiness of his brother, who, he says, is jealous of his greatness. He is full of complaints in this letter, particularly of the Queen, who, he says, is the origin and deviser of his ruin. He concludes by saying that, if he decides to alter his course and restore the injury which was befalling him by reason of the vain hopes of the marriage, the Queen would have no reason to complain of anyone but herself, as she had abandoned him so shamefully without considering the guerdon which the risks and dangers he had personally run deserved at her hands. This is in a letter of two sheets of paper, speaking very plainly, and saying that he is in such a position now that, if the Queen do not resolve in his favour, he will have to do so himself by embracing some of the offers made to him.

I understand that, when the Queen heard this letter read, she tried to make a show of tenderness, although she is as far from the idea of marriage as ever, whereas it would appear that Alencon, although he knows that the Queen is trying to marry him to the daughter of the King of Sweden, is not entirely undeceived even yet about his marriage with the Queen. In consequence of the Queen and some of her Councillors having represented to him how very greatly the match, and he personally would profit, if he would consent to restore Simier to favour and send him hither, Alencon has written to Simier saying that if he will come to him he will embrace him and restore him to his former position. Simier has written to the Queen and Sussex, asking them to advise him as to whether he should accept the proposal, which they have advised him to do. I doubt not that this negotiation will have been aided by the King of France, who, as I wrote long ago, had won over Simier, and had covertly sent him hither at the time that Alencon was here. It cannot fail to be advantageous for the King of France, in any case, to have him here for the purpose of his sending news of what is going on so long as his brother is dealing with the Queen.

The Prince of Bearn has written to Alencon saying that the Duke of Savoy continues to

besiege Geneva, in defence of which he says that 30,000 Huguenots would take up arms, and he asks him to inform the King of France of this. They have held a great Council here on the matter, the Queen being present, when the Treasurer said that the plan was a piece of Spanish sagacity, because the fact of the Duke's pressing Geneva would oblige the Huguenots of France to take arms, and this would bridle the King of France, and prevent him, however much he might wish, from breaking with your Majesty in the Netherlands, or assisting his brother effectively, whilst his own house was in flames.

Custodio Leiton has arrived here with letters from Don Antonio to the same effect as before, begging for money, men and ships, and representing the advantages which will accrue to this Queen if she will help him as he requests. She has replied as on former occasions, and Custodio Leiton says he will go to Antwerp, and from there proceed on a mission to the King of Denmark from Don Antonio.

A ship has arrived here from Terceira, which left there on the 15th ultimo. They confirm that Landereau had returned to Terceira much disorganised, and with the loss of some ships. The people of the island are on bad terms with the foreign soldiers.

I have continued, pending your Majesty's reply, to entertain my second confidant with hopes and fair words. The Queen has again pressed him to make ready to go to the German Diet, and it has been necessary for me to pledge him, as your Majesty commands me to do in case of need. I have therefore given him 500 crowns, promising him a pension of 1,000 crowns a year, and have induced him in this way to continue in your Majesty's service, and not to go to the Diet. If your Majesty should have no minister here you will be free to discontinue the payment without the loss of any great sum. He has esteemed the favour very highly, and assures me that, not only he himself, but all his house, hope in God to be able to render service to your Majesty. His parts and behaviour are such, that I doubt not great results will be attained by his cooperation.

My first confidant has been almost dumb with me for some months past, and has told me nothing of importance, in consequence of Leicester's having set the Queen against him, and he therefore avoids business.

The ships which I mentioned in my former letters that the Catholics were fitting out here, have now been reduced to two, which will be taken by Humphrey Gilbert for the purpose of reconnoitring the best place to land next year. These two vessels are already in Southampton water, and are only waiting a fair wind to sail. London, 25th July 1582.