

SUMMARY: The letter below dated 6 March 1582 was written by Don Bernardino de Mendoza (d.1604) to King Philip II. In the letter Mendoza mentions his 'second confidant', whom historians have identified as Oxford's first cousin, Lord Henry Howard (1540-1614), and relays to the King information which Howard had obtained from his kinsman Thomas Radcliffe (1526/7-1583), 3rd Earl of Sussex. Sussex and Lord Henry Howard were related to each other, and to Oxford. Sussex' mother, Elizabeth Howard (d.1534), was the daughter of Thomas Howard (1443-1524), 2nd Duke of Norfolk, by his first wife. Her sister, Anne Howard, married John de Vere, 14th Earl of Oxford. Lord Henry Howard was the great-grandson of Thomas Howard (1443-1524), 2nd Duke of Norfolk, by his second wife. Lord Henry Howard's mother was Frances Vere, the sister of Oxford's father, John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford. Mendoza states in his letter that Lord Henry Howard had discussed confidential matters with Sussex, and had passed the information on to Mendoza. In a letter to King Philip II written on 25 December 1581, Mendoza emphasizes the closeness of the relationship between Lord Henry Howard and Sussex:

Milord Harry, in gratitude for the goodwill with which I received him, and with a care which I can hardly describe, has informed and informs me of everything he hears which is of service to your Majesty, and recognizes my favour, no little novelty for an Englishman to do. He has very good qualities and intelligence, and much friendship with the ladies of the privy chamber, who inform him exactly what passes indoors. He is also as intimate with the Earl of Sussex as nail with quick. To touch of the greatness of the affection with which he occupies himself in the service of your Majesty (which is his constant desire) -- I may here say that in no wise would I wish him even to [extend] his arm to help me more.

It is clear that Lord Henry Howard took advantage of his friendship and kinship with Sussex to obtain information which he could then pass on to Mendoza. For the roles played by Charles Arundel and Lord Henry Howard in events involving Oxford in 1580/1 see TNA SP 15/27A/46, ff. 81-2 and other documents on this website, in particular the letters of the Spanish ambassador to England, Don Bernardino de Mendoza (d.1604).

The excerpt in Spanish below of the paragraph mentioning Mendoza's 'second confidant' 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), pp. 308-10. It is followed by a translation of the entire letter taken from Hume, Martin, ed., *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs*, Vol. II, 1568-1579, pp. 310-12,

Refiriendo esto mi segundo confidente al de Sussex, le preguntò si lo parecia que la Reina estaba inclinada à procurar amistad con V.M., le respondiò que aunque daba muchas muestras dello temia ser fineza para ver si yo la abrazaba y descubrir el ànimo de

sus Consejeros, porque si bien el Tesorero le persuadia en secreto, entretuviese la amistad de V.M. en los Consejos, hablaba tibiamente en la materia, por lo qual vernian à la fin à poder màs con la Reina los de la parte contraria, que cran los que la gobernaban.

On the 1st I wrote five letters in duplicate to your Majesty, and have learnt that the first despatch was thrown into the sea as the boat was attacked by pirates. I have triplicated it, and have since received the despatch of the 8th January with the first bill for the 3,000 crowns.

Leicester says that he left Alencon like an old hulk run ashore, high and dry without wind and tide, unable to get off the sandbank. He says the oath of allegiance of the rebel States was nothing but a joke and a hollow mockery. Marchaumont heard of this, and went to the Queen, complaining of Leicester's words, and that the rebels should have treated Alencon in such a way, making him the laughing stock of everybody. She swore that no such ceremony had been performed, and that the States would not think of doing such a thing until they had informed her, but that is all nonsense.

In consequence of the news she had from Cobham, the Queen had ordered a despatch to be sent to Alencon, and she afterwards summoned the Treasurer. He was ill of fever in London, but she sent word that he was to come to her in any case. She told him that as the King of France would not assist his brother, and the friendship of the latter could not much be depended upon, seeing his lightness of behaviour, she thought it would be best to make friends with your Majesty and the House of Burgundy. He replied that nothing would suit her better, especially if peace could be brought about in the Netherlands by liberty of conscience being conceded to the Protestants, for which they had suffered for so many years. She afterwards spoke to Sussex upon the subject. who replied that it was the best thing for the tranquillity of her realm, and that she must now choose speedily between two courses, either to become reconciled to your Majesty or marry Alencon, as it would be very dangerous to procrastinate much longer. After these conversations Stafford, who had translated the letter for Alencon from English to French, asked Walsingham when it would be sent. He replied that it would not go now, as the Queen had altered her mind, and was inclined to renew the treaties with your Majesty, whilst procuring the total ruin of those who, incited by her, had forwarded the war. He said that he hoped the humour would not last long, as otherwise it would turn out entirely to her disadvantage, as the Prince of Orange would immediately have all the fortresses placed in the hands of the French, which would cause greater harm to England than could be done by all your Majesty's treasure.

When my second confidant was talking over this with Sussex, he asked him whether he thought that the Queen inclined to seek your Majesty's friendship, to which Sussex replied that, although she exhibited many signs of it, he was afraid it was only a trick to see whether I should rise to it, and to discover the disposition of her Councillors. Because, he said, although the Treasurer persuaded her secretly to be friendly with your Majesty, he spoke very coolly about it in the Council, the result of which would be that

the opposite side, who are now paramount, would have more influence over the Queen.

Marchaumont has seen the Queen in private audience, solely for the purpose of begging money for Alencon. She was very dissatisfied, and referred the answer to some members of the Council, who have not yet resolved upon it. Cecil, Sussex, the Admiral and others are of opinion that nothing whatever should be given to him unless he marry the Queen, whilst the rest say that the rebels must be supported. Each one gives his own reasons privately to the Queen, and, between them, they have made her so perplexed and ill-tempered that it is noticed by every one, as she rudely scolds all the ladies and others in the Chamber. Walsingham, after this Council, told a friend of his, with great anger, that he had no idea that the Queen had so many Spanish Councillors as were in Council the day before.

The other day the Queen had a great squabble with Leicester, whom she told that he had only gone to Flanders for his own ostentation, and to make light of Alencon. Besides which, he had thought fit to be present when the ceremony of investing Alencon with the mantle and cap of Duke of Brabant had been performed, whereby it was inferred that the Queen had sent one of her principal Councillors to assist by his presence at the investiture, and to violate the peace with your Majesty. She used the most scandalous words to him, and ended by saying that he was a traitor, as was all his stock, and that it was a planned thing between him and Orange, in order that the latter might be able to continue his tyranny with greater assurance. She then called Walsingham a rogue for having incited Alencon to go to the Netherlands, wherefrom, she said, he would only reap infamy from all Christian princes.

She has written a letter to him (Alencon) with her own hand, which Sussex told Marchaumont contained, in substance, that he was not to trust overmuch that Flemish rabble, and not to engage himself too deeply in the enterprise, unless with full assurance and due regard for his own position and dignity. She asked him not to resent her avoidance of a breach with your Majesty, as she was not only pledged by old friendship to avoid war but it was necessary also for her own reputation. He must, therefore, not think her inconsiderate if, upon this point, she went beyond the King his brother, her sufficient excuse being that this was not a matter which touched her alone, but concerned the common welfare and quietude of her realm, and the maintenance of good faith between princes.

She hears from Antwerp that Alencon is thinking of leaving for France within a fortnight, in order to raise money and men, and persuade his brother to break with your Majesty. She has therefore resolved to send a gentleman to him, but his despatches are not ready.

I understand that whilst Leicester was in Antwerp, he, Orange, Lord Hunsdon and Prince d'Epinoi met in a room alone, and after they had been conversing for some time they were joined by two burgesses of Antwerp, and presently by two from Ghent, who had just arrived, booted and spurred. Each one brought a key, and, bringing out a casket with four locks, they opened it and exhibited to Leicester and the others a gold cup set with many precious stones and the "Landsjewel" which is a carbuncle, and other gems.

Leicester was so much enamoured with it that he asked them why they had not sent it to London, as if the Queen had seen it she would have done anything they liked. They then closed the casket and Leicester put his seal upon the lock, a deed then being drawn up, and signed by him, Hunsdon, Orange and the four burgesses. I have not been able to learn its value or whether the casket came hither. They say the jewels came from one of the abbeyes. London, 6th March 1582.