

SUMMARY: In the letter below dated 11 September 1585 (1 September 1585 Old Style) from Don Bernardino de Mendoza (d.1604) to King Philip II, Mendoza mentions that Oxford is to be the leader of a force of 4000 men in Zeeland, and later states that he has now received a letter from England dated 30 August confirming that Oxford had left England for Zeeland on the previous night, i.e. 29 August. It is not clear whether Mendoza's correspondent, who was writing from England, used New or Old Style dating. If the former, then Oxford left England for Zeeland on 19 August. For Mendoza's letter of 19 September 1585 reporting that Oxford and Sir John Norris had arrived in Flanders with a force of 5000 or 6000 soldiers, see Paris Archives K.1563.122.

The letter also recounts the death of Lord Francis Russell, the son of Francis Russell (1526/7-1585), 2nd Earl of Bedford. Francis Russell, 2nd Earl of Bedford died in London on 28 July 1585. According to *The Dictionary of National Biography*, three of his sons predeceased him, 'the last of these, Francis, having been killed on the borders only hours before his father's death. This son was father to Edward, the third earl'. This violent fray on the Scottish border in which a son of the Earl of Bedford was killed suggests that had Oxford, his second cousin, Philip Howard (1557-1595), 13th Earl of Arundel, and Francis Russell (1526/7-1585), 2nd Earl of Bedford, been sent to Scotland as hostages for King James' safety, as was rumoured would happen in Mendoza's letter of 4 March 1585 (see Paris Archives K.1563.43), the mission would not have been without some danger. The translation below is taken from Hume, Martin, ed., *Calendar of Letters and State Papers relating to English Affairs*, Vol. III, 1580-1586, pp. 545-6.

I have no later news from England than those of 21st ultimo advising me that some of the men of Drake's fleet were in London at that date, who said that he was at Plymouth with all his ships, and could not sail in less than a fortnight at the earliest.

M. de Chateauneuf, the French ambassador, who had gone thither to reside, had audience of the Queen on the 18th, and had been received with great warmth, she having sent a ship to Calais to bring him over.

About 2,000 Englishmen had gone to Zeeland under Colonel Norris, and 4,000 more were to follow. The latter force was being raised, and it was said that the leader of it would be the Earl of Oxford.

Horatio Palavicino, a heretic Genoese merchant resident in England, came from the Queen to negotiate with this King for the payment to her of 300,000 crowns she had lent to the Duke of Anjou, he, the King, being his heir. I understand he replied that he would endeavour to provide for the payment of the amount, but under this pretext the real object of Palavicino's coming was to represent to the King the evils which might result from a war upon the Prince of Bearn and the Huguenots, the sole cause of such a war being the house of Guise. She said that as the other side were of her religion, she must tell the King plainly at once that she could not refrain from helping them, and other princes

would do the same, particularly the King of Denmark. The King of France replied in general terms, and Palavicino took his departure.

Lord Russell, the eldest son of the Earl of Bedford, who was married to a daughter of Lord Forster, one of the constables of the Scotch border, was recently in the house of his father-in-law, where the people of the marches periodically meet before the governors of the provinces, and mutually arrange the robberies that have been committed on both sides during the previous three months. They always go armed to these meetings, and a number of pedlars attend with their wares. An English gentleman had bought a pair of spurs from a Scotch pedlar for which he refused to pay, and upon a remark in condemnation of this from a Scotch gentleman, the Englishman gave the latter a blow. The whole fair was set in a tumult, and each nation took sides. During the fight Lord Russell came out, attracted by the noise, and was killed, as well as many other Englishmen. The matter at last got so serious that both Forster and the Scotch governor, who was in his house, thought it most prudent to stay indoors. The English ambassador, Wotton, hearing of this, and the damage that had been suffered by Englishmen, complained bitterly to the King of Scotland about it, and cast the blame of the disorder upon the Earl of Arran, who was concerned in it, and was a declared enemy of the English. The King ordered the Earl of Arran to remain in a castle until he justified himself, and he was there for three days. The reason why Wotton told the King that Arran was the declared enemy of the English was that he, Arran, was the first person who had openly opposed the league that Wotton was trying to negotiate between the King of Scotland and the Queen of England for mutual offence and defence, although the Earl of Huntly and other nobles were also against it. Notwithstanding this, letters of 17th ultimo from Scotland report that the King had concluded a defensive league with England, with the intention of preserving his religion, and with a special clause saying that the terms of the treaty were in no respect to contravene his old alliances with the crown of France, as the whole country was unanimous in condemning an English treaty, unless on this understanding.

The Danish ambassadors had arrived, but the King had deferred receiving them, as the rumour was current that their mission was to ask for the cession of the Orkney isles and Shetlands, which long ago belonged to the crown of Denmark and had been pledged to Scotland, and if the embassy met with a good reception from the King they were empowered to treat of his marriage with the daughter of their master. I have received a letter from England dated 30th ultimo, whilst writing this, but it gives no fresh news, except that the Earl of Oxford had left on the previous night for Zeeland by the Queen's orders. Paris, 11th September 1585.