

SUMMARY: The document below contains articles allegedly proposed by Oxford and answers to them by Charles Arundel, miscellaneous accusations by Arundel against Oxford ('Consideration of the accuser'), and a letter from Arundel to an unnamed friend, all said to be in Arundel's hand.

Arundel's answers give his responses to accusations allegedly made against him by Oxford. However if Oxford did make such accusations, no independent copy of them has survived.

Arundel indicates in his first answer that he has been 'committed' 7 months, including 4 months during which he was 'kept close in a chamber'. However in the letter to his unidentified friend below, Arundell states that he has been imprisoned for 8 months, which would date the letter to August 1581. Another letter from Arundel to an unnamed friend which is almost identical in wording is found in TNA SP 12/151/53, f. 114.

In his third answer below, Arundel to an earlier time at which Oxford (whom Arundel terms 'the fool') was confined to his chamber at court in the keeping of Sir Thomas Heneage as a result of 'libelling' between Oxford and Leicester. However Arundel's reference to Leicester in the document below as Oxford's 'reconciled schoolmaster' indicates not only that Oxford had been reconciled to Leicester since the 'libelling', but also that in Arundel's view, Leicester was guiding Oxford's conduct at this stage. The reconciliation between Oxford and Leicester doubtless came about, and continued for some months, because Oxford was in an extremely difficult situation. He needed a powerful ally against Howard and Arundel, and in a series of accusations against Oxford at the end of his answers, Arundel says that it was a condition of the reconciliation that Oxford and Leicester would unite against Howard, Arundel and Southwell. Moreover it seems unlikely that Oxford would have secured his release from the Tower after the birth of his illegitimate son by Anne Vavasour in March 1581 without Leicester's agreement.

According to Arundel, the original breach of friendship between Oxford and Lord Henry Howard was initiated by Howard when he ceased to keep Oxford company at court, a very public insult. Arundel dates this action of Howard's to mid-December 1580, and indicates that Oxford deeply resented it. Arundel says that 'ten days before this brabble was begun', i.e. ten days before 25 December 1580, Oxford sent Howard a message 'that either by means direct or indirect, by right or wrong, he would make him repent his leaving of his company'. Arundel also reports Oxford as saying that 'the name of Howard . . . exceeded all the world in treachery'. These statements suggest that the original breach of friendship, initiated by Howard in mid-December 1580, did not involve either Arundel or Southwell, although both later elected to side with Howard against Oxford.

Another of Arundel's comments suggests that Southwell had been the first of the three to be arrested. His arrest probably took place on the night of 25 December 1580, the same evening Howard and Arundel fled to the house of the Spanish ambassador, Mendoza (see Archivo General de Simancas Leg. 835, ff. 121-4). It thus seems possible that the reason

Oxford met with Arundel on the night of 25 December 1580 (see TNA SP 15/27A/46, ff. 81-2) was to warn him that the arrests of Arundel, Lord Henry Howard, and Francis Southwell were imminent and to offer Arundel a pardon from the Queen if he would give evidence against Howard and Southwell.

In light of allegations that Oxford had been reconciled to the Catholic church after his return to England in 1576, it is significant that Arundel affirms in this document that Oxford was 'never in our company at any Mass or conference'.

A brief answer to my Lord of Oxford's slanderous accusations

1 Article

First, he accuseth me of hearing Mass six years past in Francis Southwell's chamber.

Answer

Though my Lord speak rather upon hearsay than knowledge, yet this article, being the only true thing he objecteth, is confessed. Marry, we must note withal that, whereas the statute law punisheth no hearers of Mass with one not orderly presented within the year, I have been committed seven months together, notwithstanding six years are now fully past since the time was past which the law prescribeth.

2 Article

It is further charged upon me, for the further aggravating of the fault, that the priest which said this Mass was a Jesuit, whose commission is to reconcile to the Pope etc., and Oxford affirmeth plainly that both I and the other two were reconciled.

Answer

To this I answer that it can avail them little that the priest was of this suspected order unless they can prove that I, knowing him to be so, notwithstanding heard his Mass, for many plain and simple men may light into suspicious company. Again, the Jesuits were no more offensive to the state seven years ago than any other priests, neither was there any statute or proclamation more forbidding one than another, but the truth is, to make short work, that this priest was neither Jesuit at that time, nor is any now, as Mr. Walsingham hath found by the flat confession of the seminary priests within the Tower, who, to justify the fault against me with more force, have been thoroughly and severally examined, so that whatsoever malice hath unjustly built upon this false ground must play castle-come-down and dissolve to nothing.

Now whereas Ox{ford} affirmeth falsely that we were reconciled to the Pope etc.:

First, note that this priest was no Jesuit, nor had not any such authority;

2 that I was never oftener than once in his company, nor never longer than while the Mass was in celebrating;

3 that reconciliation is a secret mystery that cannot be done in public, though the parties would, but privately in the ear, with sequestration of all standers-by;

4 that I never spake with any priest in Ox{ford's} presence, much less was reconciled;

5 that whatsoever I set down shall be confirmed by the formal depositions and oaths of those that were present, whereas Ox{ford} was never in our company at any Mass or conference, but forgeth out of his own giddy brain what he taketh to be fittest for the speeding of his ancient friends and pleasing of his reconciled schoolmaster, but this is as true as that the French ambassador conveyed away the Jesuit, in denial whereof Ox{ford} put up a lie in presence of the Queen, and with shame enough was put to silence.

3 Article

That my Lord Harry should be present when I presented a certain book of pictures after the manner of a prophecy, and by interpretation resembled a crowned son to the Queen, etc.

Answer

Of all other this point is most childish, vain and most ridiculous, for as my Lord Harry never saw this painted book, I protest, much less expounded it or played the paraphrast, so in my knowledge did he never of any such till my Lord of Ox{ford}, being commanded to keep his chamber about the libelling between him and my Lord of Leicester, I declared to my Lord Harry that such a toy Ox{ford} laid up in his desk, which some man of his, as I conceived, thrust upon him under colour of a prophecy to cozen him of crowns, as indeed it was not rare to pick his purse with pretence of novelties and future accidents, adding further that I feared lest Sir Thomas Heneage, who had the keeping of [of] the fool at that time, lighting on the same might wilfully pervert it to his hurt, and give a greater opportunity to those that had a mind to temper or to work against him.

This was my sincere and honest care of my ingrateful and accursed friend, and this was all that ever my Lord Harry heard of of the painted gewgaws, so far his judgment and discretion was from glosing(?) or interpreting, and for his further clearing in this cause, I will depose on my oath he was never privy to the book, and that Ox{ford}, showing it to me, conjured me by solemn oath never to impart the thing to my Lord Harry because he would not hide it from my Lord Treasurer. Now judge whether it be likely that he would make his eyes witnesses of that whereof he was so loath his ears should receive the sound

by report of another, and such unkindness was at that time whereof he speaketh between them that not so much as ordinary speech, much less private secrets, were current on either side.

4 Article

That I should once bring in a Jesuit to see the Queen dance in her privy chamber.

Answer

Christ never receive me to his mercy nor forgive me my sins if ever I spake with Jesuit, much less brought them to the sight of such an exercise, and still less with their severity to follow than with my discretion to proffer.

5 Article

That I both sent letters and messengers to Monsieur.

Answer

Touching this fifth article, if her Majesty object it to X [=Simier?], as I think she will not, he may best acquit me of all others, as being best acquainted with his master's intelligence.

Consideration of the accuser

Now would I require of charity and justice that these brief particulars concerning him that chargeth me may be considered:

First, that he was never kind to any friend, nor thankful to any kinsman in general;

2 That though he love no man living from his heart, yet of all he most detesteth those that are either nearly knit by nature or have deeply bound him by their well-deserving;

3 That his common judgment of the name of Howards was that it exceeded all the world in treachery;

4 That by devising tales and lies he would set one man to kill another, and hath sought my life by indirect devises;

5 That he would have set Hoby to have killed my Lord Harry. When that would not be, to sow division between his nephew and him. When this would not take place, to invent

some speeches that might concern him in duty to the Queen, and when he said that he neither durst nor could lie, he gave him over;

6 Ten days before this brabble was begun, he sent him a message that either by means direct or indirect, by right or wrong, he would make him repent his leaving of his company;

7 After he had once begun his accusation, he proffered me a pardon from the Queen, and a thousand pound in money, a hundred pound land, in case I would concur with him in points whereof he had accused the Lord Harry and Southwell, which I refusing, and professing to do against him that would charge me with the smallest thought against my prince, he would have given me as much to fly, that by the flight of one he might have wreaked his deep malice on another, but this succeeding as evil as the rest, with menaces that I should be torn in pieces with the rack, he left me, whereupon soon after one of us, and within two days both the rest, were committed.

Now the truth is that this noble count, finding himself forsaken for his horrible enormities, rather to be buried in the dunghill of forgetfulness than reported by any modest tongue, obtained my Lord of Leicester's favour by the mediation of his own man Milles, upon condition that he should speed us three, and thus the bargain was concluded.

To my dear friend X,

If the Queen upon your motion pretend a pause or promise to take a time, as she hath done all this while without any fruit, you may weaken that excuse by alleging my 8 months' imprisonment without either care of my defence, or regard of my credit, or calling me to answer.

If she say that she will put it [+to] trial, it is but a scuse, for if that would have sped the turn it had been put in practice long ago [2 LINES CROSSED OUT], wherefore I require that you will never give it over till either I be called forth or set at liberty.

I trust her Majesty will not deny you as much favour in the behalf of me, lightly suspected of nothing, as she granted others in the behalf of Ox{ford}, a person convicted of great beastliness.

If she limit my restraint by Ox{ford's} punishment, first remember that our cases are not like, and then that I was kept close in a chamber four months together while Ox{ford} was grazing in the pastures.