

SUMMARY: In this letter dated 26 April 1582 the Spanish Ambassador in London, Don Bernardino de Mendoza (d.1604), confirms to King Philip II that Oxford's first cousin, Lord Henry Howard (1540-1614), continues to act 'with great vigilance and care' as a spy for Spain, keeping Mendoza 'well posted as to what is going on', and that Mendoza, by giving Howard 500 crowns and promising him a pension of 1000 crowns, has succeeded in prevailing upon Howard to 'refuse the embassy in Germany':

Lord Harry (Howard) continues to give me information with great vigilance and care, and keeps me well posted as to what is going on. This forces me again to press upon your Majesty the importance of rewarding him, and at the same time pledging his house, by favouring him in the way I have already suggested. In order not on any account to lose him I have prevailed upon him to refuse the embassy to Germany.

For a detailed summary of Lord Henry Howard's spying activities for Spain, see the copy of Paris Archives K.1447.130 on this website.

Concerning the date of this letter, it should be noted that on 24 February 1582 a bull of Pope Gregory XIII 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 26 April 1582 when Mendoza wrote this letter.

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 translation below is taken from Hume, Martin, ed., *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs*, Vol. III, 1580-1586, pp. 349-52.

Two days ago I received the reply of the Queen of Scotland to the letter which I had sent her with the despatch I had received from Scotland from the Duke of Lennox, and conveying to her the information I had received from Fathers Creighton and Holt, as I wrote to your Majesty on the 1st April. I enclose copy of her letter herewith, and also of that which the Duke of Lennox wrote to her. These fully confirm what I have always said, namely, that she is virtually the mainspring of the war, without whose opinion and countenance Lennox and the others will do nothing. I have therefore endeavoured to keep her well disposed, and, in order to facilitate the business, continue to impress upon her how ready the Scots and the Catholics here are to undertake the enterprise. In the meanwhile I have always proceeded with the plumb-line in my hand, trying to sound the feelings and aims of the Scots, without going beyond generalities, in order not to pledge your Majesty more than necessary, and yet not to lose hold upon them.

I have also instructed the priests who have gone thither to act in the same way, only that as Creighton went from France at the request of the Scots ambassador, and by order of His Holiness, without seeing me, he has changed my mode of procedure, promising, as will be seen, in the name of the Pope and your Majesty, to the Duke of Lennox 15,000 men for the war in Scotland. He has no grounds whatever for this, as is pointed out clearly by the Queen of Scotland, who says that she does not know the origin of the promise, which I have no doubt that the good man has made entirely on his own initiative, in the belief that, as in May last year, when he was in Rome, his Holiness told him he would assist with the necessary number of men, he might promise the round number, perhaps under the impression that the Catholics here will rise and assist the Scots the moment they know that foreign troops have come to their aid. It is out of my power to prevent this error and others of a like sort, which may be committed by the priests who go from France (where the business however must be managed), unless they are extremely well instructed. They (the priests), although ardently zealous as regards religion, cannot be trusted with matters of state unless they are taught word for word what they have to say, and in order, if possible, to prevent such mistakes in future, and avoid the disappointment of the Scots if the aid promised them be not sent, I have replied to the Queen of Scotland on the point to the effect that, though I was sure that your Majesty and his Holiness would assist, even with a much larger force than stated, whenever it might be necessary for the attainment of so inestimable an object, yet there were great difficulties, as it would be impossible to form a fleet, since French affairs were in their present state and religion in France so unsettled that the moment an expedition was fitted out the suspicion of the French would be aroused, and they would be led, in order not to lose entirely both England and Scotland, immediately to join with this Queen more intimately than ever, whilst heretics on both sides, and especially Alencon, fanned the flames of war between France and Spain. This would enable the heretics to crush the Catholics here, and, such is their malice that they might turn their weapons against her own person. For these considerations I said it was best that the aid to be given to Scotland should not be strong enough to drive the French to despair of preserving the ancient alliance with Scotland at seeing a powerful foreign force there. It was also necessary that the force should not be so weak as to render it impossible for the Scots Catholics to subdue the heretics, and it is certain that this Queen would not dare to interfere unless she had the French at her back, as she is so apprehensive of the English Catholics joining those of Scotland. When the French see her position they will presumably stand by and watch events, as they will consider it no disadvantage to them that their old allies the Scots should become more powerful, especially in the absence of any of the Queen's forces which the Scots themselves could not withstand.

From these points, which I summarised to her, I said depended many others, which she herself would perceive, and I therefore thought it would be best for her to convey them to the Scots, so that the affair might be managed in the way best calculated to obtain the end in view with peace and quietness, rather than to inflame fresh wars between Christian princes. I said that the Duke of Lennox should be instructed not to move from Scotland, as, amongst other reasons, it is of the highest importance in your Majesty's interests that the troops to be raised should not be, as he says in his letter, collected by him in France,

but should be sent by your Majesty. With regard to the instructing of the priests, I said I was pleased that those who had gone from here had proceeded prudently, and the errors committed by those who went from France were no fault of mine. I would do my best to confer with them if it were possible for me to be in two places. I had written to them in Scotland what she replied with regard to the commissions for the two ambassadors, adding that, if it were not evident that the Pope and your Majesty were so ardently anxious to help forward the war in these countries it might be necessary to send special ambassadors to lay before you the opportunities for doing so, but since we are already so well informed upon the subject, and as the ambassadors to be sent would necessarily have to be persons devotedly attached to the Catholic religion, well versed in matters of state, and of high standing in the country, it appeared to me that their absence from Scotland at this time would do more harm than their embassies would do good, whereas if they did not possess the qualities stated, the two Setons, whom I do not know, being so very young, it would be much better for them to stay at home in order to avoid attracting attention, and arousing suspicion by going to foreign courts.

I also replied to Lennox in general terms, agreeing with the despatch to the Queen of Scotland, it being taken by the same priest that came hither. For greater security he returned as he came, on foot disguised as a tooth-drawer, and he took with him a looking glass which I had made for him, inside of which the letters were concealed, so that unless he himself divulged them no one could imagine that he had them. I say nothing to Lennox about the promise made by Creighton, in order that he may understand that it was made without any foundation, but I inflame him with the glory and grandeur which he may gain by the enterprise, which I say will be entirely attributed to him, he being by his person, gifts and position worthy to lead such a cause. I write thus as I am told this is in accordance with his humour. I also touch, but lightly, on the Queen of Scotland's remarks about association with her son, in order, in the first place, to satisfy her, and, secondly, because I see that the Scots should proceed under this pretext, which will pledge the Catholics and adherents of the Queen of Scots here unanimously to join in the claims of mother and son, and will bind them together to attain the end, leading them, in the interests of their lives, property and children, to prefer your Majesty's friendship to that of France.

I have also written to Dr. Allen and Father Persons in France, requesting Persons to leave for Scotland immediately, as we had agreed, with the money which I had sent him for the purpose. I say that as Fathers Creighton and Holt had not gone thither, as was expected, they had no doubt changed their plan until they received news of the reply that the Queen of Scotland and I sent to Lennox, and he, Persons, should therefore tell them that it is not necessary for them to leave Scotland or to send the ambassadors they speak of. They should, on the contrary, stay where they are, and endeavour as gently as possible to convert the kingdom to our Holy Catholic faith, gaining souls, and giving me notice of what the Scots want. I say also that it is not necessary for them to trouble to take to the road themselves, as their profession is not that of arranging warlike matters, which must be done by other ministers, their function being to act as intermediaries, for which they are better fitted than any others.

I have also written to the Bishop of Glasgow, ambassador of the Queen of Scotland, in the cipher which she sent me. I press him to hasten his departure for Scotland, but say nothing to him about the promise except speaking of it as a thing without foundation, to ask him what were Creighton's grounds for making it. I will immediately advise your Majesty of the replies I receive, but as I have not your Majesty's special instructions to proceed in all these details, I trust them all into the hands of God, and do my best in the interests of His service, and that of your Majesty. I send this by special courier to Tassis, and ask him to forward it in the same way.

This Queen sent four days ago one of the Scotch rebels who was here with the Earl of Angus to the border, with a quantity of money, chains and other jewels, to buy over some of the Scots, the sole object being to get possession of the King of Scotland and stir up civil war there.

Lord Harry (Howard) continues to give me information with great vigilance and care, and keeps me well posted as to what is going on. This forces me again to press upon your Majesty the importance of rewarding him, and at the same time pledging his house, by favouring him in the way I have already suggested. In order not on any account to lose him I have prevailed upon him to refuse the embassy to Germany. London, 26th April 1582.