

Letter of estate sent to his friend HR in Gracious Street, wherein is laid open the practices and devices of Robert Sutton, alias Dudley, Earl of Leicester, his packing with England's enemies abroad, his entrapping of the Duke of Norfolk, his rapines, murders, and seditious treacheries, with other his detestable and abominable actions, odious in the sight both of God and man, laid open by way of circumlocution.

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Dear friend, having been overcome with thy importunity, I have thought good to send unto thee the sum of such private talk and conference had at our last being together in Gracious Street. I do so willingly, setting aside all fear of regard of any peril or danger may grow thereby, but with this especial charge unto thee, that thou in any wise be careful with who [sic] and to whom thou dost participate any part or parcel of the same. Neither lives the man besides thyself for whose sake I would so far endanger myself as, by the manifesting of the same, bring myself within the reach of his claws, knowing full well that on whomsoever they light, they pierce so deep as they never recover after, and therefore thou canst not be too careful of the participating of the same. For although he seem chained to a ragged post, and muzzled because he should not bite, yet hath he so unlinked and unmuzzled himself as, where he bites, the remedy is cureless, and with his chain so ranges in the court as therewith he affrights all the rest of the beasts, in such manner that some he thought little once to be moved, they all of them have crept hasty to their dens, daring not once even to thrust forth their heads until such time as his ire and wrath be appeased. For that in his chain he leads the princely lion any way seems best to his own lust and liking, withal in most subtle and politic sort in his bearskin he hath sowed the fox's tail with salt, and reigns in such lionlike sort as daily he doth, prying through his claws into other men's actions without making any acquainted with any actions of his. And therefore once again I instantly urge you to be careful with whom thou acquaint this matter, lest at any time the same should become known, for that in almost every corner he hath spies and agents, each with some claw both to rend and tear. And he, being so saucy with the exercise thereof as to let us verify the old proverb, that *quod* [ ], and that *non est bonum ludere cum sanctis rebus*, a prayer shall ever be from such a saint as he is, *Laus domine*. But take heed, I advise thee, for he has an ear longer than ever King Midas' was, reaching all the way to St. Michael's Mount, keeping birds that bring him news in his ears, as he sits at table at dinner or supper, from all coasts and quarters of the land, which birds are fed neither with [ ] nor hempseed, but with seed that is found in the far west country where the people go for the most part naked, and is sent to their master with the same as a special token of their great goodwill and long continuance of the same. And I tell thee, the force and power of gold are such that, for the love and desire of the same, a man will not stick to betray everything unto the very enemies and adversaries of his home-bred and natural country, as too many examples at this day make manifest. And now, being well warned, I hope thou art well armed, for he that shall deal with so politic an enemy had need to be well provided, I tell thee, for were his fight by plain strength and manhood, it were no difficult matter to overpower him, but all his fight is by Machiavel's policy, to the death, and yet never make open show, which is the most dangerous fight that may be, and so thou must take heed to be shrewd. And as touching that which so much thou desirest, which in as brief manner as I may, I will truly and plainly set thee down, which was in manner and form as followeth.

Having well dined, and sitting in the parlour afore a good fire, the time of year so requiring, much diversity of talk was ministered of divers kinds and sundry matters, but especially of one more than all the rest, which was of the great port, sway and countenance the Earl of Leicester bare in the court, wherein so many men, so many minds, are subject to his high

wisdom and policy because of the great favour of her Majesty, and some to talk to one, some to another, when one man, of honesty and of judgment more than all the rest, entering into his deepest secrets and discovering his flower-pot of Machivel stratagems and Aretinical practices, and entering into his deepest reaches, and withal seeming to wonder from whence so great a tree should so suddenly sprout as to overshadow all the trees in the court, and entering likewise into his stock and progeny from whence he was descended, found him to be the son, and that the youngest, of no better man than an arch-traitor who, in her Majesty's sister's reign, was for his ambition and pride cut shorter by the head, and the son at that time, knowing himself guilty of his father's crimes, more liker indeed to a fox than a bear, hid his head into a hole, not once daring to show the same forth until such time as he might slink away to be saved by that thrice noble duke, the Duke of Norfolk, to whom in most base manner the wretch came creeping, prostrate on the ground, beseeching his Grace to be a mean, if it were possible, for the preservation of his life. Whose wretched case this noble Duke pitying, as one always pressed to help the distressed, in fine so laboured with Queen Mary that that which the traitor least looked for he successfully obtains, a pardon for his treacherous life, which he hath now full well requited, proving the cause of the Duke's confusion. For now, being no longer kept in prison, where afore, for his life, he durst not show his face, he secretly in his mischievous brain conspires the subversion of him which had saved his life, for having an aspiring mind of his own, tristing after dignities, sway and authority, and knowing the nature of the noble Duke to be clean opposite and contrary to such, and that during his life it was not possible for him to achieve his conceived enterprise, he plots and imagines in his wicked brain all means and ways that might be to remove this stumbling-block. Now knowing the Duke to be royally descended, and of high parentage and gentility, and of the nobles and commons not one of higher birth yet lived, [not] ceasing to buzz in his ear many fantastical prophecies unto him about the Howards' belonging within the royal family, he entangled the Duke, through the first evil advice and wicked counsel of this accursed and vild Achitophel, as entering into the Scottish Queen's title, and contracting matrimony with the same Scottish Queen, with heinous matters of high consequence far above his reach and capacity, contrary and opposite to the statutes & laws of the realm, as being called for the same to account, and by sufficient proof and evidence convicted, to the great heart's sorrow of all the nobles and commons, was for the same of high treason condemned, wherein he had no so great an enemy as this vild wretch, whose life he before had saved, as a fatal instrument of his own confusion. For had the noble Duke suffered him, as he worthily merited, to have received the reward of his treasons, he never had lived to have entangled as he did the noble Duke in such a labyrinth, whereout he could never untwined [sic] himself without the loss of his dearest blood, as aforesaid.

And yet was her Majesty of her mercy and clemency, at the entreaty of the nobility, who greatly bewailed this mischance, fully determined to have pardoned the Duke of the fatal sentence of death passed against him, which this vild wretch greatly fearing, knowing in what treacherous manner he had dealt, and that then in some measure the Duke might in time cry quittance with him, confederates with one that shall be nameless about the Duke's present and speedy execution. And yet they knew there was a boar in the land during whose presence no such thing could be put in execution. And therefore most politicly, under the colour of an ambassage, they determined to send him packing till their drift was accomplished, vowing with great oaths and vows that during his absence no such thing should be attempted. But the nobleman was scant there entered into the sea when, with all diligence, they put their pretended purpose in practice, procuring with all speed a warrant as from her Majesty unto the sheriffs and magistrates of the city the night afore the Duke's execution that not any, either masters or servants, should dare once to stir forth of their doors afore ten of the clock the next day at the least, and the lanes' and streets' end towards the Tower to be kept and guarded with soldiers, whereas contrariwise, notwithstanding this great command, there was assembled at seven o'clock the same morning, upon the Tower

Hill to witness this lamentable spectacle, more than ten thousand people gathered there, whenas had the Duke but held up his finger, as one not willing to have suffered what he did, all the force there, had it been ten times more, had not been sufficient to have performed that which at that time with quietness they executed. But his patience in suffering made plain declaration how far he was from thinking of any such matter, for when he came to the Tower Hill, and viewed the huge gathering of people assembled, as one which the fear of death no whit appalled, with cheerful countenance turns himself towards them, & heartily prays and instantly desires them that now, in his passage out of this world and life full of cares, sorrows and misery, into a life full of joy and heavenly bliss, they would not by their clamour or any other means be any occasion of disturbance unto him, but quietly to suffer him to pass forth of the same. Only these few words he had to say unto them for the clearing of that false rumour went upon him, which was that, whereas he was noted to be a great favourer of papists, and also himself to be no other, they greatly wronged him and lied of him, and that he hoped not for the joys of salvation but by the mercy of Christ only.

And thereof he desired them all to be witnesses, and then, turning himself towards the nobility, desired them to commend him to his good lady and mistress, Queen Elizabeth, whom he so grievously had offended, and to desire her to stand good lady to his children, who, through his folly and ambition, would be left in the world as orphans without any guide unless her Majesty, of her accustomed clemency, did protect them under the safety of her wings. And so taking those which were next him by the hand, and the rest by gesture whom he could not reach to, lovingly and kindly took his leave of them all, and then, turning himself towards the executioner, frankly and freely forgave him his death, as he himself wished to be forgiven, and after his prayers said, meekly and willingly kneeled down on the scaffold, and received death with the stroke of an ax, committing his soul into the hands of his God, and his body to be interred in yearth. At which woeful spectacle were more weeping than ever was seen in that place, nor ever is like to be seen again, all of them generally lamenting that unfortunate and woeful accident.

But this was that which his Lordship expected, and with such greedy appetite sought after, knowing full well as [sic?], if that house should have flourished, it had in no manner been possible for him to have insulted in such lordly and princely sort as now he doth. And thus, now having rid this stumbling-block out of his path, as his chiefest let, stay and hindrance, his Lordship, to clear the coast of the last restraint, who [ ] was a hotspur in the North, and one that might as ill endure his surquedry as the other, casts in his brains all practices & devices to bring him within the compass of his bow. But alas, he needed not have cast so far about for that bird, nor yet have angled so deep for that fish, that of his own accord was too ready pressed to enter into the net of disobedience and rebellion against his prince and native country, drawing in like manner into his traitorous society one that in every degree might have checked mate with his Lordship, and been his rival in each respect, who, while they were faithful, true and loyal, lived more as princes than subjects, in no small harmony and faith with their prince and sovereign. But as the state of subjects could not content them, but that with Lucifer they must needs conspire against their head, prince and governor, so in their downfall most plainly appears the end of all false traitors and treason. For one of them suffered a most worthily merited death for his treason and treachery at York the [ ], the other escaped with life, yet enforced to lead a life far worse than death, exiled forth of his native county to wander in a foreign enemy's of the same, his treasons and treachery cast every day in his nose by the basest and racallest kind of people as a fit posy for a traitor to smell, and upon complaint thereof, laughed at and scorned as one that loveth treason and playing the traitor, besides the perpetual stain to be never likely to be restored. Whereas if they might have been contented to have lived quietly in truth and loyalty as they ought to have done, in credit and honour they might have lived forth their days as any the greatest of peers whosoever. But by this we may behold the fruits of sedition.

And now, the court being rid of these states, and none left that might control him in aught, his Lordship began to lift up his head, and pretends to bring no small matters to pass, so presently he so insinuates with her Majesty that presently he gets the great office of the one, being the principallest office of the court, and likewise the most part of the other, being by reason of his treasons deprived of his offices. And growing every day in more favour than other, thought he might attempt anything whatsoever, and being wedded to a virtuous lady descended of a noble and honourable house, and by birth by many degrees his better, and his lust carrying him to the one woman in his eyes seeming more beautiful, like David, but never repenting with David, lusts after Bathsheba, Urias's wife, and makes no conscience, to attain the same, to make away his own dear living lady, who for her virtue, truth and loyalty deserves a far better lord than he. But lost in lawless lust as aforesaid, after some conference had with Dame Lettice, his love, concerning so important and weighty a matter, they both of them betwixt them considered the death of each other's wedded fere, and his good lady to be the first, which he full soon effected as followeth.

The good lady, being at her house in the country, full slenderly accompanied, as one meant towards small good, her Lord seldom or never visiting her, this lamentable incident one day fell out. As two of her gentleservants were in the parlour playing at tables for their recreation, as also to pass the time away withal, they pause in their talk and to their plain hearing something falls down the stairs, whereat the one, jesting, says to the other, *Down for a shilling*, the other likewise merrily answering, *Up for another*. And so they continued in playing their game until the same was finished and ended, little suspecting what was fallen. And their game being come to an end, and hearing nobody make any move to take up what was fallen, one of them stepped to the stair's foot to see what it should be. What to their appalled spirits there appeared unto them, the corpse of that noble lady, without breath, seeming to have her neck-bone broke in sunder, the murderers escaped, and gone past hue and cry, who for the reward of their evil labours may the Lord throw down vengeance from above upon so foul and wicked murders, as also on him which set them a-work, to his perpetual reproach and infamy. But now, to colour the matter withal, most falsely and slanderously it is given forth that she fell by chance down the stairs and brake her neck, which is a likely matter, a lady to fall down the stairs and never heard cry, her neck to be broken but with no blood spilt. But his Lordship said so, and then who durst say the contrary? Much muttering there was about this sudden death of hers, but no man durst say a word for his life.

And well had it been if there he had stayed, but he proceeded to another which was far more worse, which was the death of that noble earl, the most valiant Earl of Essex, who for his truth, honesty and loyalty was by her Majesty appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, in which high office he bare himself so uprightly, administering justice tempered with mercy, that both of high and low he was generally beloved, and wished if it had been possible his office to have been perpetual, such hearty goodwill they bore unto him. And therefore he was driven unto his uttermost reaches to effect that which in his bloody mind he had contrived, which seeing that as he would hardly bring to pass, for that he in all his actions bore himself so honorably that, without it were performed by some means other [sic?], all his devices would come to naught, so as which with Essex himself, well he knew not to fight with this good cushion knight. Better durst he take a tiger by the tongue that ever to look him in the face in the field. What then could he use to do that which himself durst not attempt, that was wished to be done? But his Lordship had another tutor that would fully and with great cunning instruct him how and which ways were best to attempt this wicked, horrible and heinous act, that to the world might be least apparent. And after many devices and practices put in ure for the accomplishing of their purpose, there could no way be so fitly found out, and be so agreeable with his nature, as by poison to rid the noble Earl of his life, which eventually, to all England's great grief, he performed, so that he whom for his life he durst not even look in the face, he cruelly murders from three hundred miles off. So as suddenly

the noble Earl was taken of a disease in all men's judgment thought to be incurable, insomuch as all the doctors in Ireland were sought for drugs and other means to ease him of his pain, but all for naught were their potions ministered, and all for naught were their labours bestowed, their drugs procuring him little rest, insomuch as the worst that might be being feared, her Majesty with all speed was informed thereof, so as it brought no small heaviness to the court, where he was not a little nor meanly beloved, and by her Majesty the most of all, who greatly grieved that when most occasion was to use him he should die, and at her losing at once a special friend, a loving subject and a trusty counsellor, but *in mortis nihil prodest*, and therefore to be borne as patiently as might be. But still the noble Earl's languishment increased, notwithstanding all the help that was procured. And now drawing near to the end of his course, and seeing there was no way with him but one, provided himself accordingly, and setting all things in as good order as his weak state would at that time permit him, with cheerful heart and willing mind yielded up his soul unto the hands of his Maker, there to remain in perpetual joy, and his body to be interred in the yearth with such honor as thereto appertained, his innocent blood crying [wordless?] for revenge upon the false and wicked murderers. But when the news thereof reached the court, many a weeping eye was shed there, but had they known the manner of his death, and by whom and what means the same was effected, no doubt they would with swords and glaives have hewed him into a thousand gobbets. Great weeping in the court there was, and his Lordship amongst the rest made the sorrowfullest countenance, rightly representing the crocodile's part, that weeps for that he would fainest devour. And what did, I pray you, Dame Lettice herself, but appeared, I warrant you, in black to the world, but yet conceived no small content, for that she might now, in spite of anybody, openly enjoy that which so long she had already possessed. Much talk there was muttered in every corner, and much whispering, but not any man durst say a word for his life, for that he was now grown so far into her Majesty's favour as no man but the Earl of Leicester ruled the court. And if any man have any suit to the prince, who must prefer the same but his Lordship, so as bribes came in tumbling two and threefold, which like the [ ] with his hand he refused, but rakes together with his whole fists.

And now he begins to mount aloft, and to beard his betters and tread upon his equals; thinking with Pompey to have no equals, nor yet with Caesar to have no rivals, he forces the chief of the nobility into retirement by his intolerable surquedry. Knowing that Leicester never had merited, either by his valour tried in foreign regions against the professed enemies of his country, or by putting down at any time any hostile insurrection grown by the distempered humours of the commons, to be so highly favoured of her Majesty that in regard of him they should all be set by, and therefore disdain that so carpet a knight should in such base manner insult over them, and, not any wonder, resenting the same, of purpose absented themselves from the court, seldom or never coming there unless by a special command from her Majesty they be at one time or other sent for, which is very seldom unless it be for the entertaining of some strange prince or ambassador, and then are they sent for or else not, which falls out pat as his Lordship would have it, for that, they being gone, he may rule as he list, controlling of all, controlled of none, every man being glad to creep into his favour, counting themselves happy to gain a good countenance at his hand.

And now was his Lordship a lusty young widower, and needs must he have a brave lusty mistress, for that God had not imparted unto him the virtue of chastity, that he should live as a monk, but must needs seek out where to bed. And a fitter match than the Countess of Essex was not to be found out for him in all England, for she was a gallant and fair young widow, and not by the fates allotted to live as a cloistress, much less in a cloister or a cell. And therefore his Lordship became a suitor to her Ladyship, which, to blind the eyes of the world withal, great gifts and presents they sent to each other, and all to bring about that which they long before betwixt them had concluded. But in the end a match was made up,

and nothing wanted but a day of sanctity, which her Grace with her presence shortly [ ] had, where, I warrant you, neither wanted sumptuous apparel nor dainty fare, neither of of [sic] them both fearing at all their former deserved plague and punishment for so horrible, foul and wicked deeds as they in their consciences knew they had committed. And yet the same confirmation was generally suspected of all, and would have shown if they durst have been told of it to their faces. But now who but his Lordship in the court, and as in pride and ambition he passed, so in like manner wedded he in every degree with a Countess fitting her husband's humour, for more liker a princess than a subject, in the court she bore and demeaned herself as one who, seeing her Lord to be the master over all the nobility, and conceiving well that they durst do nothing, and that, as it were, they had him at a beck, thought in like sort all this were nothing if she in like sort had not all the other good countesses in the court at the like stay, and therefore in all that ever she might, practised and devised to effect the same, inso [sic] as if ever once her Majesty were disposed for the entertainment of some strange prince or ambassador to have any new gown made her, she will be sure with [sic] one fortnight after, or at the least afore the departure of the ambassador, to have another of the same sort and fashion suitable in every degree with her Majesty's, and in every respect as costly as her Majesty's, if not more costly and sumptuous than hers. Whose intolerable pride her Majesty noting, after some admonitions for it, and the same slightly regarded, told her as one sun lightened the yearth, so in like sort she would have but one queen in England, and for her presumption, taking her a wherret on the ear, in plain terms strictly forbade her the court, not upon pain of her high indignation to approach within five miles of the same, wheresoever the same should at any time be resident, which patience perforce she was compelled to obey. And seeing that in the court she might not dwell as afore, yet was her pride in heart not a whit abated, but as by her doings more plainly appeared. For if she should at any time be disposed, either for her recreation's sake at any time, or for her pleasure, to take the air, as through Cheapside or some such place, no less than four milk-white steeds will she have to draw her along the same in her chariot, with her four footmen in their black velvet jackets with silver bears on their backs and their breasts, with [ ] a master whom she has to walk alongside, having a couple of knights and thirty or forty footmen afore, then her coaches of gentlewomen, each of them with their pages and servants coming behind them, as people there gazing verily supposing it either to be her Majesty, or else some strange prince or ambassador come from some some [sic] strange and foreign country. And thus, though no prince, yet as princelike as may be, she bears and carries herself in all points.

But leaving her to the reward of all pride, let us a little forth search and seek into his Lordship's secret drifts and policies, whereby he is grown to such state and authority by his continual insinuating with her Majesty, that upon him as the chiefest pillar of the land she wholly relies, and places all her trust and confidence, so as nothing may pass either in Parliament or Council when his Lordship likes or dislikes anything. And well accommodating himself to the time, turning of everything to his gain and commodity, so as, I warrant you, he is not without his sundry sort [sic?] of devices and policies, which divers and sundry ways he employs, as one for papists, another for protestants, and a third for puritans, emboldening the puritans against the bishops, telling them that their livings makes them so fat, and then, being greased in hand by the bishops, tells them that the puritans are a seditious kind of people, and not to be suffered in a Christian commonwealth, animating the one against the other, suffering the bishops to commit them to prison, and straight, of his own authority, releasing them again, telling the puritans he will be a mean to bring reformation and discipline into the church, he being indeed of no religion but that which brings him in gain and commodity, so as if discipline and reformation be not brought into the church afore he bring the same in, it is never like to brought in at all, for he hath learned of his master Machivel to make a use of all religions, and to turn them all to his own commodity. So as if they be papists, but especially recusants, then will his ministers be sure to inform against them, and so be brought within the compass of some statute whereby, at

the least, all they have shall be forfeit, and they clapped up in some prison or other, as the Gatehouse, the Fleet, the Clink, or the Marshalsea, and though they might have dispended five hundred pounds yearly, they count themselves happy if thereof they retain but one, the rest, as they say, being turned to the Queen's use, when God knows the least part thereof come to her coffers by that time each officer hath had his fee. And where before was good hospitality kept, and many a poor man could be fed at their gates, now are the same without shelter, no relief at all or succour coming from thence.

For devices, I tell you, he had of great cunning, in that yearly he dispends so much as he exacted, all to maintain his base and filthy luxury, for I tell you, he hath no ordinary ointment in a bottle all [sic?] that costs more than ten pound a pint, to provoke him to filthy luxury. Well may the men of the Forests of Dean and of Wier [sic] complain of his extreme excess in the same, for out of them, to maintain and uphold the sin, and to burn and consume in his lusts, not in hearths nor in mills, in those quarters he hath had more tall and sturdy strong oaks than would have served to build a right good navy to have served the greatest prince in Christendom, they yielding him each day more than 10 pound sterling. And yet in respect of his other licences that continually bring him in coin and ready money, the same is to be accounted as nothing. So as through the esteem and pride thereof, as also by the great countenance of her Majesty, he is almost so overcome with self-love of himself, as even in his drinking and belly-cheer he sticks not to mock at the misery of him who by birth and right is greatly his better, and to whose predecessor he had been so much beholding, even for the saving of his wretched life. For not long since, sitting at a bench, he consorted with such as fitted his fitted his [sic] humour, and falling into great diversity of talk, as in such company there seldom or never wants, the chiefest was of the [nobility?], and crests that divers of the nobility gave, some commending this man's and some that man's when he, seeming to be ignorant in that which he knew too well, like god Bacchus, out of his cups of wine demands what was the Earl of Arundel's crest, when presently one of his knaves makes answer, And it like your Lordship, the ramping horse. Ha, ha, quoth he, with an envious laughter, not much unlike, for as the horse that is wild and untamed will suffer no man to mount or tame him, but kick and fling, suffering no man to come nigh him, but ready to leap up on every other's back, so the same horse, being taken and tamed, and used a while to the snaffle, bit or bridle, becomes in short time so gentle and tractable than any man, whosoever he be, may sit him and ride him, whom afore, for his fierceness, none durst lay hand on for fear of danger, hurt or spoiling, thus mocking the nobleman in his miseries to whose predecessor he was so much beholding.

But to such pride and dishonesty is he grown that to think thereof is in a manner intolerable, for according to Machivel's rule and order, for his own pleasure, profit and commodity he will not stick to spoil and undo five hundred poor people if occasion serve. As by his dealings most plainly appeared not long since with the poor Denbyshire men, of which country his little son and heir was lord, for to build for himself parks and places of pleasure, he pulls down whole towns, farms and villages, some of them having passed in the same from the father to the son since long afore the Conquest. But such was the greedy appetite and avarice of the man, his ambitious and encroaching humour, that he thrust them forth of their livings, together with their wives and their children, who must seek habitations in the woods and mountains, for from him there was small succour or comfort to be looked for, for that he that could find in his heart to thrust them forth of their livings could in like manner, they knew, find in his stony heart they should there have perished and utterly consumed, and feeling the penury and great misery that by his merciless dealing was fallen upon them, their poor wives and little infants, determined with themselves to seek redress with as much speed as possibly they might. And so the best of them, consulting together, determine to make their humble supplication to her Majesty and the whole Council for redress in such a manifest wrong, which he, like a crafty wretch, misdoubting, so provided against their coming that when they came here their suit was cold, and whereas they hoped

for redress of their wrong, and great injury proffered to them and their wives and children, neither themselves nor their petition might once be admitted to come within her Majesty's sight, or once so much as to the Council table, but with many reproachful speeches and contumelious outbraids, the most of them are clapped up for the presumption in prison, the rest sent home with heavy hearts to be witness of their neighbours' ill success. But the the [sic] good Lord, looking into this inhumane cruelty of his, and with what heartless sort he had dealt with these poor people, even in his highest pomp and in his chiefest glory took away from him all his hope of posterity, his son and heir, the young Earl of Denbigh, who should he have lived for to have proved so vile an atheist as his father, all England had not been enough for them both. But the Lord, knowing that from a good tree oft comes bad fruit, but that from a bad tree never comes good fruit, took him away for England's good, as we hope in His goodness He will do the father, afore his devices take their effect and the danger should grow to success, which the Lord grant of His mercy for Christ's sake, and discover all of Leicester's devices to the world, and provide for the frustration of the wicked wretch all his wicked devices, drifts and practises. For he is now grown to that headstrong presumption and boldness that, presuming so much upon her Majesty that he scorns his inferiors, out-countenances his equals, and abuses his betters, impatient of the least injury presented to himself, and yet abusing and wronging of all others.

As not long since he proffered no small abuse unto the noble Earl of Sussex, who not enduring so carpet a knight as he should in so high a presence offer him disgrace, challenged him for the same into the field, which for his credit's sake he seemed to accept, and promised of his honour to meet him there, although he never meant the same, and yet makes a show of great preparation, making the nobleman dance a whole day's attendance for him that never meant to come to him upon Blackheath with all his men, having privily acquainted her Majesty with the whole matter, who presently sent a straight command that upon pain of her high displeasure and indignation the one of them once to meddle with the other, but to refer it to herself and the Council, whose command was to the noble Earl as a law, who desired nothing so much in this world as to have had but one bout with the meacock, to have given him but one knock for all the great insults proffered to himself and the rest of the nobility. But his Lordship knew it was good sleeping in a whole skin, and that if he had once come there it had been a hard matter to have come safe home again, and therefore made such means as her Majesty and the Council took up the matter, and so they were made a couple of hollow friends.

And yet it was not long ere he proffered the like abuse to one of the chiefest peers of the realm, and being in like sort of him challenged to the field, promised of his honour to meet him there, but meant indeed to have murdered him afore he came, and to that end he hired one with a musket to shoot him as he should have come to the place appointed, but this man disdaining that the nobleman should be so shamefully murdered by his good means, made the same known unto him, who, charging his Lordship with this treacherous dealing, he, with many execrations and store of oaths, utterly denied that by him or any means of his any such treacherous fact was intended, and that seeing their quarrel was of no great moment, that for the same the one of them should seek the spoil of the other, wished for his part an end of the same, and that they might be lovers and friends as erst aforetime they had been, which the nobleman seeing, and knowing that it was not possible to effect what he wished during the great continuance of her Majesty's favour, shook hands with his Lordship and became friends, for well he knew that there was no open standing against him, for that his authority daily increased, and such rule and sway in the court he bare as no man but he was in any favour.

And not long since, for his saucy presumption, he was as rightly served as might be. For her Majesty being abroad in progress, and ready to descend forth of her chariot, he presumptuously offers to take her forth of the same, which he to whom the same of duty



belonged seeing, not able to endure his intolerable arrogancy, took him a sound box on the ear, bidding him take her Majesty's steeds forth of their traces, and hie him with them to the stable, for that more fitly appertained unto him than so malapertly to lay hands on her person. Which disgrace he was fain to pocket up, threatening revenge to him that made small account thereof, who rather had thrust his knife to his ribs than his fist to his ear, had not the rigour of the law withheld him, in regard of an old grudge he had of him. But the fear thereof withheld him from that which his heart longed to do. And afterward it was his sorry hap to fall into to [sic] the clutches of [ ] through his own negligence and inattention, out of which to help him he had not one sure friend of himself, but [ ] if a hateful enemy may be counted a friend.

And now by the way let me a little show you how he rewards them that have spent all they have in his service, marry, deals with them for the most part as men do with their horses, who, while they are strong, lusty and serviceable, feed them and cherish them as men should do, but when they wax lean, old and unprofitable, and that there is no more service to be had of them, turn them to grass on an old ditch-bank or else take forty pence of the dog-master for their skin. And for an instance of the like dealing of his Lordship, I will set you down the whole manner thereof; although it will seem somewhat tedious unto you, yet is it well worth the noting and marking, and thereby one may judge of his pestilent nature, which in manner and form following ensueth.

There was not long since dwelling in Yorkshire a gentleman of good estate and calling which might spend of yearly revenues to the value of three hundred pounds at the least, which gentleman had a longing desire to get the white bear and ragged staff on his back, thinking if once he might but get that on his sleeve, he might lord it with the best gentleman or squire in the country, and therefore made all the friends that possibly he might to effect and bring the same to pass. So after some friends made, and no small bribes bestowed, this gentleman had what so much he desired, which, when he had obtained, his state was soon seen both in his countenance and in his apparel, for having occasion to attend in the court, and always to be in his Lord's presence, he was fain to suit himself accordingly, and whereas afore a seemly suit would have served to have worn among his friends and honest neighbours, now nothing but velvet and satin would serve him, with his chain of gold folded twice double about his neck, costly bracelets about his wrists, and rings on every finger of his hand, and with all the rest of his apparel corespondent, so as if his three hundred pound had been three thousand a year, it would not have sufficed to have borne out his prodigal expenses, insomuch as within four or five years expirance, he was run so far in the merchants' books that he hardly knew which way to get forth, for that he ought more by five hundred pound than all that was left would make satisfaction, so as Cheapside, Paul's, nor the Exchange were no walking-places, insomuch that he was driven to play lease [sic] in sight, and walked for the most part as owls do, by night, and that in such fear and temerity that every nail that caught hold of his sleeve he took for a sergeant to carry him to the Counter. And living in this loathsome life, not knowing how to remedy the same, thought good to acquaint his Lord, with good cause, in what miserable state he lived, hoping for that in his Honour's service and [to] do him credit he had consumed his patrimony, he would now at this instant stand his good Lord and rid him out of these troubles, and presently put his determination in practice, so as having got access unto his Lordship, and to him made known his miserable state, with desire of his Lordship's favourable mind, he presently received this answer of his Lordship, how that he had well considered of his state, and that he was not altogether unmindful of him, but that he should find that he would stand his good lord. Marry, well you may think that it should not be for naught, for most subtly, seeing to what desperate state he was brought, and that for hope of reward he would attempt anything, calls him into his secret chamber, and there talks with him about his matters, telling him that if his heart would serve him to attempt a matter he would mention to him, and therein be both faithful and secret, he should find that he would be a good lord unto

him, and that when he had this performed and done, he might anything command of him, and he should make full account. And therewithal manifesting the same unto him, which was no less than wilful murder, with somewhat in hand as good luck to begin withal, and promise of mountains when the deed was finished, presently goes about to perform the same, which, ere it was long, most wickedly he effected. And being for the same worthily apprehended, was cast amongst other malefactors in the gaol, from whence with all possible speed that may be he informs his Lordship of all that had happened, and withal desires his Honour to be mindful of him, who presently again sends word by the same messenger that he should not need to put him in mind, for that of himself he was mindful enough, and that it stood so much upon his honour as that he could not forget him if he would, but he willed him to be merry and fear nothing, and for that he could not stay the course of the law, but that the law must needs have his [ ], he should not therefore doubt of anything, and as for death, not so much as a thought thereof should once trouble him, for that it was as far for [sic] him as from his Lordship, and that his pardon was already sealed, and thereto he bade him trust of his honour. And although this cheered him somewhat, yet was it no small grief unto him, being a gentleman of good birth, to be arraigned at an open size. But there was no other remedy, and, session being at hand, he amongst others was called to the bar, and upon his own confession found guilty, had sentence of death pronounced against him, which he seemed little or nothing to fear, hoping upon that which was never to be sent him, insomuch as, when the rest of the condemned prisoners were praying unto God for forgiveness of their sins, he on the other side was surfeiting of wine, and drinking carouses to the health of his Lord. But now the day of execution being come, he among the rest was conveyed to the scaffold, with time passing away, and he waiting for that which was never meant to be sent him, and the executioner hastening to perform his office, and seeing how foully he was deluded, with the small time of repentance for his sins, with many grievous exclamations on his Lordship, as on the author of all his mishap, with great penitence ended his life. And to this great preferment he preferred him, after he had consumed all his patrimony in his service, and lastly his life, who although he suffered worthily, yet the blood both of him and the other [will] be one day asked at his wicked hands. But twenty of these devices hath he to rid those out of the way that may any way descry any of his wicked practices and devices.

And how he disparages the noble blood of the land, witness the match he made betwixt a mean knight's daughter and the noble Earl of Derby's son and heir, and another as ill, or even far worse, betwixt the Lord [ ] and a mean gentlewoman, which had been like to have cost him her Majesty's favour, but so could he insinuate with her Grace that on him as on the chiefest pillar of the land she wholly relies, and puts all her trust and confidence, whereas contrariwise, unless the Lord of His mercy do bring his treacherous practices to light, he is like to prove the only hand-saw that shall hew the main pillars and posts asunder, and ruinate all of this noble land, which so long time hath flourished over all others, which the Lord for His Son's sake forbid, and discover him afore his devices take their effect, and cut him off, that they may never take effect.

And thus, according to my promises, I have sent thee so much as I can well remember. Till time discover the rest of his dealings, be wise and careful.

R.F [or R.P.]