

SUMMARY: The letter below dated 28 February 1583 was written by Mary, Queen of Scots, to the Spanish ambassador in England, Don Bernardino de Mendoza (d.1604). In the letter, Mary states that she will write Mendoza a separate letter to be forwarded to him by Lord Henry Howard (1540-1614) in order to assure Mendoza that he can safely use Howard as an intermediary:

*I will write you a word by Lord Harry, to assure you that you may safely send by him any letters to me you may think proper, but do not trust him with anything of importance.*

Another brief letter from Mary is enclosed, which appears to have reached Mendoza, as Mary had promised, via Lord Henry Howard:

*M. l'Ambassadeur. At the urgent request of Lord Harry I write you a word by him, and say that it will be advantageous if you will show him the deciphering of this in order that he may see that I have fulfilled his desire. You told him that some time ago I had sent you this cipher key, without anything else, but we have not written in this cipher hitherto.*

*The Dictionary of National Biography* describes Lord Henry Howard's involvement with both Mary and Mendoza at this time:

*By the 1580s [Lord Henry Howard] was in secret correspondence with the Queen of Scots (who did not trust him with anything of importance) while between 1582 and 1584 the Spanish ambassador Mendoza paid him a substantial pension for regular information from Elizabeth's court. He attended the Chapel Royal but was widely regarded as a Catholic.*

Lord Henry Howard was thus in secret correspondence with both Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Spanish ambassador in England, Mendoza, and in receipt of a pension from the King of Spain.

Concerning the date of this letter, it should be noted that on 24 February 1582 a bull of Pope Gregory XIII had 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). Since Mary, Queen of Scots, was a prisoner in England, it seems likely that the date of the letter is February 28 Old Style.

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. II, 1568-1579, pp. 446-9.

I have received your three last letters of 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January, and it was a great

consolation to me to learn, by the report of your conference with the Duke of Lennox, the condition in which he had left Scotch affairs, and how he had proceeded with the Queen of England. In his letters you have forwarded to me, he could only give me a very brief account of this himself, but he assures me in general terms of my son's entire obedience and duty towards me, and of the fidelity to our cause of most of the gentlemen of the country. He presses me, more strongly than ever, to the execution of our enterprise, and is convinced that, with the least foreign support, he will be able to crush the entire opposing faction in a fortnight. He says it could not stand at all but for the help of the Queen of England, and our party would already have attacked them, as we are the stronger, but for the fear that they would endanger the life of my son or cause him to be carried out of the country. It is my intention to use every effort to get him out of their hands, in which case I pray you will represent to His Holiness and the King that war cannot fail to break out in the country, and that the aid requested, or a part of it pending the arrival of the rest, should be in readiness. As my son cannot be consulted beforehand, the Duke of Lennox will not fail to return to Scotland with the foreign forces, which he assures me will be safely received at Dumbarton, according to the arrangement he has made with the captain there.

I have received no advices for the last five months from my ambassador about the negotiations in France, Rome and Spain respecting the enterprise, and I am quite ignorant of the present condition thereof, although I have written firmly several times, and also have told him to keep up correspondence with you. I am much displeased at this, but in order to banish any suspicion you might be led to entertain in other quarters, I am obliged to tell you plainly that the whole fault proceeds from the ambition and bias of my said ambassador, and unfortunately it is not in my power to make him agree with anything unless he has the entire direction and control of it. In order to be able to preserve this liberty of acting according to his own fancy, he would prefer that I myself should refrain from mixing in the business, although, up to the present, I fail to see any advancement of the negotiations which he has undertaken, as he will not allow any other person to intervene. Even in Spain I have been quite unable to get him to enter into communication with Sir Francis Englefield, who is a gentleman of great experience in English affairs, and has had the direction of them hitherto. He will not endure the Bishop of Ross either, who has done me very great service, or any other of my special agents. I pray you, then, lay upon him the blame of my not being obeyed in my orders that he was to keep in touch with you with regard to what happened in France concerning me. In order to forward my affairs I have had communication with my cousin, M. de Guise, by an English gentleman named Morgan, and although my ambassador has done all he could to obstruct him, I have determined in future to communicate with my cousin only through this Morgan, who has served me long and faithfully there (in France). He enjoys an excellent reputation with my principal friends, and I should be glad if you can communicate with my cousin Guise through him, and so from time to time get fresh intelligence of what is going on there. I have therefore given Morgan orders to try to open up a correspondence with you, and I assure you he may confidently be trusted with the most important matters touching my interest.

With regard to your leaving for Spain, since things have reached a position when it is

necessary that they should be managed from France, I have begged the King (of Spain), through Englefield, to appoint you to that country, and I pray you will second this request in the interests of the business, because not only have you a full knowledge of my intentions, and of the state of affairs here, which makes you more capable than anyone else to deal with these people, as will be necessary, but I will not, for my part, commit any of my affairs here to Senor de Tassis, as I have no confidence in or knowledge of him. I hope that the Catholic King will grant this just petition, and I pray you if only until you receive the reply, to defer your departure from here. I should be sorry that your health should suffer by a long stay, but I have great hopes of a prompt execution of our enterprise, to which your presence is so very necessary. I am quite of your opinion that, if the enterprise is carried though swiftly and promptly, no plans should be undertaken in England for fear of premature discovery, but if the Catholic King and His Holiness resolve to delay the matter, I do not think it would be unwise to approach the principal gentlemen here, with the object of gaining them over and getting them to make preparations themselves, without communicating the affair to others. I already have had some of them sounded, but until they know the foreign troops are embarked and on their way, there is no possibility of getting them to pledge themselves. They say that in the last northern insurrection the fine promises given to them and unfulfilled were the cause of their destruction, and of the cruel persecution they had to undergo. They consequently will make no engagement until they are quite assured of the intention of His Holiness, and the King (of Spain), your master, towards whom, at this time, I presume Fontenay will be travelling, after being so long delayed in Paris by my ambassador. You will favour me by recommending Fontenay and helping him with your influence at the Spanish court, as I intend to make him my representative there.

Your testimony to Morgan is very agreeable to me, and I can assure you I am more deeply indebted to him than I can say, for without any obligation from him towards me, I have found him so zealous and affectionate for the restoration of my State and prosperity, and I pray you to trust him in all he may tell you as if it were myself.

I will write you a word by Lord Harry, to assure you that you may safely send by him any letters to me you may think proper, but do not trust him with anything of importance.

I cannot omit to congratulate you upon the recent accident in the Netherlands, and hope that it will facilitate greatly the submission of the country to the Catholic King, and peradventure bring the Duke of Alencon to seek his friendship.

*The following letter is enclosed in the foregoing:*

M. l'Ambassadeur. At the urgent request of Lord Harry I write you a word by him, and say that it will be advantageous if you will show him the deciphering of this in order that he may see that I have fulfilled his desire. You told him that some time ago I had sent you this cipher key, without anything else, but we have not written in this cipher hitherto.