

# Transcript

## Editorial comments:

BL MS Additional 48023 f. 123r - 126v. William Herle to Lord Burghley.

## Letter text:

[fol. 123r] December/Jan. 1571 [2 words expunged]

Herle to the L Burghley

This partie my Lord, of whome I wrote unto yow by my last letter, hath ben sondry times with me since, still egging me to a mislike of the states and that there was nothing but spoile and [raine] in it, which wold suffer me and a thowsand moe to begg. therfore that it rested in owr owne vertues and right hands to amend all thinges. alleging for example that it was good fishing in trobled waters wishing me that I wold be beholding to him either for money or any thing ells, wherof I shold not want. adding that I went still in one lether garment without change. which was meter for those that dwelt in a comon weale where the maners of men are prescribed and not in a kingdome which permitted any licentiousesse or spoile, so it were borne out by force or policie. Lastly he brought me out one of those dayes into the feldes, sendinge his man away of purpose and desiring me to do the like by myne. and there betwene Islington and finesberie, taking me me hard by the hand, [conjoined] me to be an assistant to the practise that was intended, which shold make us for ever, and to be able by cutting the throtes of those that now disdained us, to comand them and other too. Wherunto I answered that in dede I saw my state every day to decline, and that there was no accompt made of men longer than there was use of them: that our nobilitie and Counsel was growen to that strangenesse, that there was neither accesse unto them nor any bountie to do men good but for private respect, whereby they were ignorant bothe of their owne weakenesse and of the foundations of other thinges, this way entred as it were into a very barbarisme. I saw also hard wittes suppressed, vertue unrewarded, and flatterie mixed with vanitie and follie to prevaile most, being my self excluded from anye good hope, and from the place also where I might make my mone, so that nothing remained unto me but despeire charged with dettes and povertie. And where my trust was in the L of B I found him as cold as the rest. therfore that I was redye to entre into any mater so it were worthy and faisible. but having before myne eyes the follie and grossenesse of these late practisers, I wold not procede so fondly as they but wold execute somewhat in dede, first layeng substantially what our ground shold be whoe shold joyne withus: what abilitie there were for the effecting of it: and what the end shold be of all this. which being ripely debated before hand, bothe the cause and successe were the easier. Herupon this partie after some pawse told me, that if I wold be ruled by him, he wold make such a fray and division amongst the nobilitie and Counsel as they shold be instrumentes of their owne destruction, and that we twoo shold abuse them all, setting the whole world in their toppes. concluding that never a one of them had any jugement in forein states and affaires, nor yet in their owne. Wherat I laughed. Naye saythe he, but yow must promise me faithfully to use service, for I meane to goe through with it as *Themistocles* did when he toke *Pylum*, cryeng out, *Si Athenes non me vult pro cive, nequam ego* [fol. 123v] *Athenem pro patria* withwhome he said that he beheld aforehand the successe of that which might follow. Well, sayd I, goe on, for I perceive your counselles are violent, and may trouble me withall, if I shall not use silence in them. yet smyling I bidd him remember that where he had alleged Plutarch for *Themistocles*, so might I *Euripides* for my self,

*quod cum Lingua iurasset, mentem iniurata[m] tenebat* which he toke to be spoken merily, proceeding in this manner, that if his trust were deceived in me, that yet there were no more witnesses to be produced of our speche but we twoo, and then were the same easily to be denied, or boldly to charge me with as much, which he used as a principle in these great causes to conferre, but with one at ones till time had confirmed him better of mennes natures and mindes, least iij or iiij might faile of that perfection which he conceived to be in him self and me and so bewray all. this being a special and necessarie point observed ever in all wise practises and wise practises from the beginning: wishing me to consider further that when this mater shold be reveled by me and be [belevd] withall, yet the hearers wold make construction that I had it under some great and secret trust and could therefore be trusty to none hereafter. which were a worthy condemnation for such a fawlt And for the present state he was resolved that it was declining, disposed to the [good] of none but of such as were dawncers eunuches, and effeminate people, unthankfull of all [marginalia by unknown hand: L] god services, confused in it self, using men for [purveyers] while they might serve for any office, which did stirre up vertuous and cowragious minds against it and against the governers of the same to their just destruction. so as wisemen shall in time forsake the upholding of so rotten and weake a stage, least the whole weight fall upon their owne heds unwares. proceding that one man (meaning your L) did usurpe all the offices and partes to himself of this realme, out of whoes brest onely we received our lawes, our governement, our charge, and finally whatsoever apperteined to the weight of the state, which by yelding to the quenes affections was ~~geven~~ ^growen^ onely and mainteined to the great shame of the nobilitie in suffering of it, and our great bondage in beholding it. but yet that your L. was so countermaunded by certaine companions or rather favorites at times, as it did restraine your course muche to his comfort, and did present a greater occasion to dispatch yow out of the way by them. as tolerable a mater, he sayd as to mark men in the forehed with whete irons, in which act the rest of all other enterprises did consist and might easily be persuaded and done, folowing some nede and season which dayly and wekely is presented, repeting therupon the spoyle yow received in maintaining by way exemplarie justice the cause of Sir Henrie Norise of late against Sir E[dward] unton. and how happy your L. hath ben in your greatnesse to have seen the end of the Erle of Penbroke and Throkmorton so timely as it happened concluding [fol. 124r] concluding that he hoped for no good whyle this state endured, nor feared any ill in attempting against it, and that he had hetherto lyed of the quenes Liberalitie used toward him which in effect was nothing and wold deliver up this lease againe as a mater of very small profit unto him, but that it was in his owne hed and hand to use correction upon the proudest of the land, which he could execute when he wold, comparing the Erle of Leicesters hed and youres to be like brasen metal and earthen. for when ye mett rudely together, his wall still broken and yet faine to fetch his plaister from youres againe. To conclude he sayd if I wold entre faithfully into the cause, there shold want neither good foundation to the same, sufficient parties for the execution, nor abilitie to bring thinges to a desired effect, and nor shold be bothe great and happy to our selves, but more happy to our contrey and comon weale, whoe crye out for a law *Salike*, not to be ruled by distance any more, repeting often in Latine *Quaerite regna viros*, yea, that Kingdome he sayd, shold seke men, and women shold exercise their lustes in comon places, and not under clothes of estate, which might warne the world in the persones of the twoo Joanes Queenes of Naples, what frute was in that governement, whoes memorie was lothesome, and whoes end was bothe just and ferefull. Wherunto I replied that there had ben more monstrous governement under men, were it in state elective or hereditarie, than ever was under women, wherin tyme rather failed than examples to be produced, rehearsing some brefe notes out of stories as well of auncient time as of later memorie, aswell out of holy scripture as of

other prophane authors, willing him lastly to behold the government of the hie bishops of Rome, and other prelates of the chirche, whoes learning and life shold be a lanterne to the whole world, but whoes corruption did excede either *Comodus*, *Nero* or *Heliogabatus* in the worst partes they had. willing him further to behold other princes of this present time, what imperfections they had and to compare the same with our Quenes reigne, whome I thought to have more clemencie and justice than all they, unlesse to much clemencie were used, which caused men unable many times to beare their owne felicitie: proceding for government that it was not much unlike to the bodie of man, in which when any humour to much exceded the bodie was streight sick and distempered neding reasonable remedies to qualifie the same, remedies I sayd to reduce the bodie to health and not to kill it for the sicknesse sake, which were bothe wicked and unnaturall, but much more violent and dangerous to whose members in changing of any government for private errors growing therin. for every particular bodie or publike bodie had his insensible errors growing within him naturally, which neither did hurt greatly nor [fol. 124v] were seen easely, neither were they to be corrected but with time it self and with easy medicines mete for the same, reproving them that did run hedlong from the libertie of the popular state to a licentiousnesse, from the modestie of a whole nobilitie to the insolence of a few, and from the moderation of a just kingdome to an unsufferable tyrannie, which was a violent error and a sensible breeding innovation in dede, and not to be found here I sayd, for the prince sought to preserve all her members entire to the bodie of her state, and did mornefully behold the defection of those that had by conspiracie against her sequestred themselves from the rest, yet had deferred their jugementes this long to show the more justice and pietie, and not for want (as some wold ascribe it) of due mater or sufficient courage. For the respiting of them was a token to all wisemen of hyer courage and better conscience where feare and tyrannie have no respite, no not to their owne suspicions, nor could abide any jugement at all. But for the princes owne private life and disposition, I sayd they were maters that touched her owne soule and smally offended the state or any particularitie, whether she used more pleasure or lesse continence, or more continence or lesse pleasure, whiles duely she ministred justice to all sortes and preserved her state from all injuries, preferring for my part (so all virtues could not be joynd in one prince, as it never yet happened) the god prince in his government though he [tired] [ ... ] before the reprochelesse prince in his god life governing unwisely wherof henrie the vth and Cordilla might shew a true profe of the one side, as henrie the vjth and the late Quene Marie described the contrarie of their sides, persones in ded more mete for a cowle than for a crowne, And so was the elected Emperor William of Nassow and others whoe were deprived from their states even for their unaptnesse to governe, though otherwise god and discrete men in their private lyves/ concluding thereupon that the Counsell that the Quene had were they that disturbed all thinges, against whome if we [ ... ] our plat I sayd we shold have the more [parteners] and the lesse encounter as a mater that all sortes wold harken to and we the more easily atteine the scope we desired. Arguing this farr in contraries with him to the end I might pearce the further into hym, and by entreteining the cause as though it were upon some ground of jugement not to seme to yeld so sone unto him. To the which he gave me great thanks that I dealt so frankly and plainely with him. wherin he confirmed his opinion, he sayd, that he had conceived bothe of me and my fidelitie, and wold make me see more fully with some leysure some error of myne owne in supposing the Quene sufficient for government whoe was subject to all passions and imperfections, and whoes wisdome onely rested in happe and in the calamities that other princes her neighbours had. Yet that he wold follow my advise in turning these stormes first upon [fol. 125r] the Counsell wherby she shold entre a jealousie of them all and lastly into a mistrust of her self, seing these confusions thus discovered to the world, wherby these Counsellors shold cutt

one an others throte, and plaine ruine and innovation to follow without one stroke geven, only that as the occasion did arise, so to minister still more mater to the fire, wherby one might applie our selves to any avantage or greatnesse that we wold and to a just revenge of these that made so small accompt of us now he sayd. But specially he affirmed that he wold describe your L. tyrannie and ambition whoe from a servant of the Counsell did usurpe the state of them all, and in joyning your blood with the auncientest of the nobilitie of this land to make your house great and strong, wherby wanted nothing but the kingdome it self to stepp into. Further that your L. kept the Quene from mariage by colorable meanes from time to time least your rule shold streight cesse or diminishe, yet pretending as though yow set it furthe to the uttermost, where in dede yow did secretly and maliciously drawe it back to the destruction of the state and the prince and to the whetting on of mighty princes our neighbours for the mockerie we used and for the infidelitie that was in all our procedings. Further how that yow bare the Erle of Hertford and his house secretly in hand for the succession, therby to winne an opinion of those that favored religion, and to have him and his faction to support yow if ned were (as though yow wold have sondry thinges to your bowe at one instant) when yow meant nothing lesse than to advance him or his part, suchewas your ambition he sayd and doble dealing to serve your owne turne with every side. Yet he reconed the Erle of Hertford unworthy of any favor or preferment, whoe was the proudest foole alyve and become a covetous beast and a very dronkard. Further he proceded how that your L. in shewing coningly that yow meant nothing ells but the effecting of the mariage betwene the Quene and the Duke of Angeow, that ye utterly overthrew it, in devising meanes that the Cardinall Chastelleon shold sollicit it at one time with the Vidame of Chartres whoe were mere contraries, and proceding with like conning witt vehement letters to the sayd Vidame to follow the mater, as though yow wold have it take place above all thinges, meaning nothing lesse, whiche was the effect of the speche that passed then betwene us/, referring the rest to some other meter time, (for that it was then even dark night) when as we shold putt this into wryting, with many other notable objections as he termed them against your L, the L. keper, the Erle of Leicester, and Sir Walter Mildmay, having provided he sayd a printer a sufficient man for this purpose. The copies wherof shold **[fol. 125v]** be dispersed in the Court, the citie, and sent over the seas, and a great number dispatched into the contries throughout England by carriers and directed to the chefe protestantes there, meaning thereby to bring them into jelousie with the Quene and the Counsell. and an other way to emprint some misslike in them of the government of the states and of the governors Lastly assuring me to furnishe me of sufficient instructions (for that I desired it) to make the better jugement in me to procede in the rest of the conspiracies, how the maters of france, Spaine, Flanders, and Scotland stode. Wherwith we ended for that time. Thus humbly taking my leave, the xvii<sup>th</sup> of December 1571 Your L. most humbly