

Transcript

Editorial comments:

BL MS Cotton Galba C VII f. 205r - 207v. William Herle to the Earl of Leicester. Fol. 205r has the signature 'Gg'.

Address leaf:

[fol. 207v]

[Superscription:] To the R honorable my verey good Lord, the Erlle of Lecester &c. give these wth speede / att the Cowrtt

Letter text:

[fol. 205r] Belgia 1582 20 march S . R.

Uppon sondaye the xvijth of this monethe, the prince of Orenge having harde Asswell the minister of Turney preche in the castell churche appendent to the princes howsse, he tooke home to dynner among others, Monsieur Dellavall, & Pruneawx, where passyng the time wth sondrie discowrse, & with intentyon to have supped att the generall banckett, that monsieur had prepared att St Michelles, to the States generall, & to that magistrates & Coronelles of Andwarpe in comemoratyon of the same his byrthe daye./

The dynner ended, the prince passyng owt of the greatt chamber, with the Cowntt of Hollock, & the sayd Dellavall, & followed by the Trowpe, he tooke occasyon upon Lavalles speche (who comended the Tapistrye of the chamber) to saye sondrie things abowtt the same, & in beholldyng the Tapistrye as he went, was redye to have entred the seconde chamber, havyng his eyes still fixed upwardes, when sodaynlie a person of small stature, & lesse representacyon (of the Ayge of 3. or 24. yeares, yll clad, & of face pale, drawyng to a blacke melancholyck colour, shaven savyng the upper lyppe, whens a thyn blacke here begane to yssew) presented him sellf as though he had som reqweste to exhibyte, & ones beyng putt backe by a halbarder, still persisted & sodaynlie discharged a pistoll (that he helld unsene) att the prince, which by reson of overcharyng reculed in ^{his} hande, & made the peece & pellett to mownt upwardes from his Levell, takyng the prince betwene the eare & the end of the jawe of the right syde, passyng clene throw the lefte cheeke, withowt offence to the Arterye, the jawe, tong or toothe (as yet hitherunto is sayd) savyng that a lyttell ytt grated upon on toothe (a provyden[s] of god most admirable) wheratt the prince nether stagryng, nor astonyed, behelld the fellowe, till he amased with his owne facte, & bownd as ytt were to the place by a devyne power, lett his Dagg fall to have made awaye, wheratt one Bonnyvett stabbed him into the brest, & then was he presentlye ~~murthered~~ ^{slayne} in grett furie by the companye, muche against the princes will, who cryed still to save hym butt in vayne. for he had in lesse than a moment 33. mortall wowndes gyven hym./

The perturbatyon that followed wthin the princes howsse, was so grett & dolorows, as scarce can be expressed, The poore princesse overcom with vehement passyon dyd swownd contynuallie: The children confownded with teres & cryes, trobled all the place, & the rest of the frindes & familie present were utterlye perplexed, as though they had not onlie sene the prince allredye

dead, but theme sellves exposed to the sworde of the enmye./

Butt in the mene tyme, the prince was had to his bed, & dressed by a singuler surgyon of this towne called Skon Thomas, who dowtting that the bullet had byn poysoned (as ytt was not) did temper his medecyen to resiste the same./

Next they sent in poste to Herentalles for the onlie surgyon of this contrey, called *Hans of Herentalles* brother to that Dyruck that served somtymes Sir Thomas Gressham & next her majestie./

And herewith Monsieur was advertised by the yonger Erle of Egmont (as faste as he cowd come from the princes lodgyng) of the strange & fereffull accident that was hapned, which dyd wonderfullie appall & terreffye Monsieur, for the sondrye events that deppended therof & for the compassyon that he had bothe of him sellf, & the prince, in this sodayne actyon, & lastlie overcom with affectyon, resollved into teres, not hable to be appeysed in halff an howre, sobbyng & uttryng that he had loste his father, his cheeffe hope, & assurance, & the worthiest [fol. 205v] personaige [...] wisdom & perfectyon that ever was, inveyghyng therwith against the Tyrannye & vilenes of the K. of Spayne./

During this while, the Towne was in an uprore & confusyon, promyseng no better than a miserable & blooddye end therof, the alarme was sownded everie where, & sodaynlye the gates shutt, the walles & Bullwarckes occupied wth armed men, the markett places taken The Cor de gardes sett in everie strete, & all others comanded to kepe theyr howses. The people cryeng out for their prince, their father & only succor & right hand whom they named to be murtherd by the frenche, & that he was, allredye ded, wissheng that england had never conducted suche gestes, who had not bin receved here, but in the assurans that they conseved of the Q. of englandes good mynde, confyrmed by the cowntenance of suche honorable personaiges as accompanied Monsieur & the rest hither./

Butt the reporte of the princes dethe still incresyng by messengers that were yll informed, the people were converted into playne furie & precipitacyon threttnyng then Monsieur, the frenche, & the papistes (who had the same daye byn att theyr fyrst masse) that not on of theme shold be lefte alyve, Ronyng hereupon by vyolent trowpes, to the palyce & to the castell, to do som executyon, whom followed upon the spurre, the cornett of horsse, that is of the towne Burgers, & trulye, yf this desperate attempt had bin defferred till night, the same had bin easelye executed att the Banckett, & Monsieur with his trayne noted for that, & consequentlye murtherd, besyde a moste cruell massacre that had enseed, whersoever the Raige & conceytt shold have directed those handes that had byn ones embrewed in blood.

The frenche for fere retyred to the safest partes of their lodgyngs, & Monsieur sent, for the generall norris, butt the messengers cowd not passe the stretes, Monsieur wissheng manye tymes wth grett affyans that (*La Noblesse Anglouse*) were by hym./

The Coronelles of the towne upon the fyrst brute of the princis dethe, repayred to the castell with exceding diligens, gyveng order to the captaynes to chayne the stretes, & to drawe their forces to their knowen quarters, & that all the Gylldes & Fraternities shold be armed & in redynes to be employed./

Att the castell they were assured by Monsieur St Aldegond, that the prince was alyve, & that there was hope of recoverye, & that the person pretending this fowll murther, was a spanyarde, & no frenche man, shewyng theme writengs & charmes fownd abowt hym in the spanyshe tong, & therfore that the captaynes & people shold be advertised hereof, to staye disorders, & especiallie to have a care for the garding of Monsieurs person, & deffending that no insolencye shold be used to the frenche, nor to anye, which charge with verey good order & gravitye was observed, & the people that were in furie & marching, returned to kepe warde in theyr own stretes, placyng certayne of their principall bandes abowt St Michelles, to assiste anye necessitye that Monsieur might have, wherupon to wyne benevolens, Monsieur refusing the garde of his Swytzers, desyred that som of the gylldes might be sent, to whom he wolld comytt hym sellf, [fol. 206r] and the palayce, which was estemed a confydens, & plesed the Coronelles well. Butt to saye trulye the apprehensyon is grett that is of ether syde & manye difydences have byn discoverd by this./

The Coronelles then & other principall personaiges, were admitted into the princes chamber, to whom he made a verey lovyng & pythye oratyon, shewyng that this subornatyon against his lyfe, proceded not from Monsieur, nor from anye frenche devyse, but directly from his capitall enmye the K. of Spayne, comending Monsieur for the excellencye of his nature, for the affectyon he bare unto the state of these Contreyes, & for his habiltye & wisdom to be the onlye prince that coud & wolld conserve theme, exhortyng theme reciprocklye to love, embrace & serve him in all dutie & loyalltye, as they tendered their securitye, wellfare & estimatyon. To whom he sayd appertayned the government of these contreyes, as to their naturall soveraigne by their own electyon, & to whom he wolld assure agayne theyr faythe & allegyance, as a thing most sincere & perfect, & incase that I (sayth he) do dye of this hurte (as men be mortall that be most sownd, muche more I that am this inffyrme) I charge yow in the zele that I have ever borne yow, to be observers of my advise for your own good. comending to your love and protectyon, & to the states generall of this land, my wiffe & childerne as swete pledges of my harte, & servyces ever don & still desyrowes to be done unto yow. /

Which speche of his was receved with tendernes towards his person, & inclynatyon in shewe to obeye hym throwlye. yet the states generall will not procede to delyberate of anye matter towchyng Monsieur, & the proportions made by him, till the sayd prince of Orenge, be restored to som better disposityon & integritye, the jorney allso intended to Gawnt by the sayd Monsieur beyng differred till then. Imedyatelie after the hurte of the prince they dispatched messengers to Bruxelles to warne theme of this accydent, & to stande upon their garde, for that the towne is grett, & mixed wth manye factyons, & not perfected in fortificatyon by a grett dele to that which may be reqwyred ether for deffence, or was projected for strengthe./

The lyke advertisment they have sent sythens to all theyr townes & garrysons ells where, asswell in flanders & Brabant as in the remoter parts. keypyng all the passayges by water & land garded, & the gates of this Towne contynallye shutt, even from admytteng of daylie provisions theryn. to the end that the enmye may nether have yntelligens from hens by practys within doores, nor prevayll of any advantayge abrode. by surprise or lacke of order./

Now to retorne to this fellow agayne that was slayne upon his wicked enterprise, ytt was fownde that by overcharyng of his pistoll the stocke was broken in his hande, & had sent the brawne of the same from the thomb downe warde, with a grett & terryble gashe ~~theryn~~. In his pockett was a

naked dagger, which he had never the assurance to use after. / Abowtt him were had ij dried todes, & som powder [fol. 206v] judged in the beginnyng to have byn poyson. A Bulle of the popes promiseng pardon for all fawtts bothe don & ^to^ be don whatsoever. A charme wherbye he was perswaded to have byn invisible after the facte. A shyрте of superstytion sett wth crosses and characters hallowed att our Ladye of *Charters* to kepe hym from dethe, wownde & ymprisonment. A wryteng expressyng his enterprise to be don agaynste certayne sedycyows flemishe heretyckes, fyrst for the glorye of god, next to revenge his kyng, thyrdlie to delyver certayne godlye men owt of prison, fowrthlye for the honor of his natyon, lastlye for his own ymortalitey (ytt was not trew that he had any lre abowtt hym of the Spanish: Ambassadors resydeng att Parys, but he had ij Bylles of exchange, the one of ijm [crowns] & the other of 86s addressed to on Casper Aniaastro a merchant of this towne./

When his bodie & these things had bin well perused, they erected hym in the same apparell in the cheeffe markt place upon a skaffolld to be vyewed & decyphred, where he was incontynently knowen of a number to be a Byscayn ~~[sen] & borne in Bruges~~, servant & booke keper to Casper Aniaastro a Biscayn inhabyteng here. Wherby in serchyng presentlye of Aniaastros howsse, they fownde hym removed the wensday before owt of the towne & his goods made away which gave occasion to sease the persons of suche as were lefte behynde among whom the Cassyer beyng princypall, he declared who made the pistoll, & tolld of a preest that had confessed hym the fryday beffore & that the same daye had seyde masse in their howsse & who were presente theratt./

The smythe that made the pistoll discharged him sellf indifferentlye, shewyng that he had tawght hym to shoote theryn, as a person unsuspected pretending a vyage into england, & had cawsed him to exercise the sayd pistoll 3. severall tymes, But at the third tyme the stocke of the pistoll brake abowtt the breeche which was naylled up agayne by the sayd smythe, & then charged a freshe by hym the sonday mornyng butt to what use he knew not, yet assuryng that there was no poyson theryn./

Towching the preest, he att last was dryven to open that he had byn Confessor to this lewd person, & had absolved hym for the facte that he sholld do, & therupon sayd masse unto hym upon the sondaye./

The Cassyer desyres to be permytted to dye an ordynarye deth, & not by Torture & qwartring, & then wyll he disscover the truthe & grownd in partycularityes, whens this fowll practys ys derived & who be Actors theryn./

Aniaastro cam to Bruges on Thursday mornyng, & from thens ryd to Donkyrck, som affyrmeng that he is in England, which is to be loked to, & som others that he is stayed att Calyce by his Credytors./

After that the dead corse had bin shewed the Sondaye on the markt, he was the daye followyng behedded as a traytor, hys privie parts cut of, embowelled & qwartered./

On sondaye abowt 5. of the clocke, Monsieur went to visyte the Prynce, be[...] whom was verey sweete yntertainment, muche to the comfort & assurance of Monsieur to ^se^ the corayge & resolutyon of the sayd prince, & the principles that he instructed hym yn, by whose advyse he dispatched that night on messeng[er] to her majestie, & another to his brother, to signeffe unto

theme the truthe of the accidents hapned./

Tomorow shalbe a generall faste & prayers for the health of the sayd prince./

Towching the state of the princis person, this is to be considered, both of the person & the hurte. First that he is of yeres given to surfetts, & had att that dynner comytted som extraordinarye excesse. Further that he is one whose hed & spirytes do labor contynuallye and was never hurte beffore./

The hurte is in suche a place, as wilbe harde to kyl the fyre, and therefore to dyvert ynfflamatyons, they have lett him blood twyse since the hurte. They have dressed hym allso twyce yesterdaye, & do fynde that the swelling decreseth (at lest wise they saye so) & that att the latter dressing som whyte matter appered. he is forbidden to speke but he hathe wrytten synce above 3. shetes of paper wth his owne hand of som specyall matter & dothe now admytt verey few to se hym./ Votallis Monsieurs doctor hathe the cheeffe charge of hym for phisyck, being estemed singuler in the wowndes that do com by fyre or by bullett, wherof he hathe wrytten a treattys, & to him is joyned Monsieurs surgyon, & on Gasper a surgyon of this towne, with the other surgyons beffore recyted./

Ytt is thowght impossyble butt that the Arterye is towched with the bullett, or with the accydents of the fyre, which yf ytt be, ytt is then a cure uncurable. he can verey hardlye swallow, & till the xth daye be past nothing can be assured, for his life depends of the accidents that will appere yn the mene tyme ether by fever or ympostumatyon./ Which humble discowrse I do beseeke your L. in all speade, to ymparte with her majestie & with my L. Thresuror, & Master Secretorye, beyng throwlye ynfformed of that I wryte, & therfore have sent this my servant to your L. of purpose, prayeng yow for the ymportance of the cawse, & the occasyons that do daylye breke furthe, to retorne me present answere. wherwith I humblye fynyshe, assuryng your L. that I will do her majestie when I have harde from yow, servyce of ymportance, as ytt ymportes her indeede to have a trustye dilygent, & ~~suffeyent~~ person here att this ynstant the 20. of marche from Andwarpe. 1581 your L. most humblye W. Herlleli.