Transcript

Editorial comments:
SP 70/127/36 f. 173r - 184v (a booklet, blank from f. 181r - 184v, possibly sewn into a booklet at the time of sending). William Herle's Discourse on Flanders. The scribe has a peculiar method of writing 'etc.': instead of the more common '&c.', he writes 'xch.'.

Letter text:

[fol 173r] Master Herle's Discourse on Flanders [fol. 174r] Certain discourses which the Prince of Orenge had with me at Sondrye times touching the state of the Lowe Countries and of the troubles that did impende to all those of the religion unless they provided in tyme for the same: Whearein he wold perswade howe necessary and charitable it were for her Majestie (as the moste soveraigne and mightiest Monarche that nowe mainteyneth the generall cause of god) to assiste and defende theim that be afflicted for the same cause and for theire liberties withall: Whiche shee may justlie and Lawfullye doo as a goode Prince without prejudice to any and thearein to prevent the mishceife that is moste assuredly intendid against her selfe and her whole kingdome and Lande by a longe hande before by the K. of Spaine and his Counsaile to be Masters one daye of the Crowne of Engleland which was never so neare as noe if shee wolde suffer those of the Religion Low Countries to be oppressed by withdrawing her releif and countenance from theim in geving of it to th'enemye of God and of her owne estate. Which Arguments I have observid so neare as I could, And doo moste humbly presente theim unto your Lordeshippe. Bothe for that my dutie so commaundeth me (the suggestion of the and matter being Weightie,) As for that it toucheth her Majestie so neare, the effecte wherof followeth./

That it was very certaine, that the K. of Spaine had determined longe since to make warre with England Wanting only th'opportunitie of tyme to see those troubles of fraunce and of the Lowe Countries once ceassid, the easlier then and with more advauntage to atcheive his purpose./

Lyke as it dothe manifestlie appeare by the sondrye allyaunce so often renewed tending to in generall to the utter ruyn and rooting upp of all those of the reformid religion (amongst whome the English Nation kepe the first place,) And in particuler to invade Englelande, provoked therunto by a number of sufficient reasons which maye give the occasion and pretence to their desired execution./

And to prove that the same is so it hath bene many waies discoverid and expressed not onlye by a number of speaches and particuler discourses hearde and observid even from the K. of Spaines owne mowthe and from other great personags of his Courte, also that which is more by Lres and writings full of apparaunt tokens and demonstracon of this resolucon agreed upon against Englelande besides the ordinary Speaches and devises that still passed amongst the Souldiers Spanishe Souldiors bothe presumptuously threatening the saide Realme and State, And no les detracting the honor and Majestie of the Q. her selfe./
[fol. 174v] [marginalia by unknown hand: His sinister practises and devices as the Popes Bull xch. Touche of her Majesties honor. Sturring her subjects to Rebellion. Exposing her realme as a pray. The speciall duty of some Spanyards to execute the Popes decrees.]

But also it is confirmed by many sinister ^driffts^ practises and other acts of hostillitye even commytted and disclosed in the face of her Majestie and of her whole Realme, As by the Popes Bull and other declaracons fastenid in open places and dispersid abrode aswell, without Englande as without by the said K. of Spaine and his adherents to the blemishing of her Majesties honnor and greatenes and to the sturring upp of the ^her^ subjects and people against her by sedicon treason and tumults and lastelie in exposing her Realme for a pray to those that by invencon or practise coulde first cease of it: Therfore howe greate and dangerous their proceedings have bene all those may well judge that have had any knowledge of thaffaires of Christendome for some present which yet to this daye doo holde their authoritie and right more then ever before in Spaine for thobeying and executing of any of the popes decreese inviolably./

[marginalia by unknown hand: The Bull accompanied with conspiracies xch.]

Withall it is evident that those Bulles and declaracons were newlie and Immediatlie accompanied with sondrye conspiracies uproares and wicked platts proceeding from very principall personages in England suborned and stirred upp therunto by suche ministers as had the handlinge of theim and handelid with suche vehemencye as there is none but maye easlie beholde what was and is pretendid and from whence thoriginall grounde proceded./

[marginalia by unknown hand: The causes of his intedid warre.]

Also that the causes which might move this the rather in the K. of Spaine were so apparaunte and of suche moment as might perswade any of sounde judgement to see that the saide K. coulde not be removed from theim. For is he pretendid, (as it was in deede his whole pretence to make an absolute Conquest of those whome he esteemith to be his subjects in the Lowe Countrye and yet be not (which may the more declare howe ambitiously he woulde usurpe he muste of necessitye [marginalia by unknown hand: Necessitie] bringe Englande to his obedience also without which the foundacon wherupon he wolde setle his greatenes and securitye were most weake and of no continewaince./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Religion. Injuries xch of Thenglishe nation. Malice hote against England.]

Being needeles to alleadge what good grounde or speciall coullor he had therunto seeing that the religion onlye of those in Englande was more then a sufficient cause to make title to whatsoever he woulde, whome he pursueth (as he doth the rest of the proffession with an Immortall hatred never to be reconciled esteeming them woorse then either Turks Marranos Jewes or infidells the blasphemors of gods holy name and of his sonne Jesus. And heerewith the Injuries and wrongs that he presumith to have recevied of The English nation and Realme: (being knowne to be the Vindicativest of all other Princs in nature and malice, are of no les force then the quarrell of religion to his purpose especially while those of the Lowe Countries whome he hath condempnid as his sworne and deadly enemies whose memorye he wolde abolish from the very earthe have founde not only pitifull refuge and hospitallitie in Englande mainteyned and protected there with all humanitie and freedome and in the free excercise of the religion somuche hated of the Spanyards, but also have had open supporttacon and ayde both of men and munition in these warres that have bene so extremely made against theim for their lives and liberties./
[fol. 175r] By whiche Christian disposition their blouddy purposes coullored withe the pretence of restoring religion into the lowe Countrie(s) (which they meane by placing the Spanishe Inquisition theare) hath bene made frustrate and vaine having thought at one instant to have spoiled so noble a Countrie of her riches prosperitie liberties and priviledgs and with the bloude of so many of Gods creatures to have quenched their cruell thurst and with their goods to have sattisfied their greedy hands: But whiles Englands remayneth either unsubdewid to their powers or unallured to their desiers they see no apparaunce at all./

And therfore doo they make it an open quarrell that Englands hathe bene allwaies and is the principall roote of all the heresies (as they terme theim) that have spredd theim selves abroade into the lowe Countries and nourished theim at home. Which Concludeth that their malice as even hote against the said state is occasion sufficient to sturre theim upp to any revenge./

[marginalia by unknown hand: The great commodities which England wolde bring to him to the infinit encrease of his power and wealthe.]

But laying aparte bothe the respect of religion and of any other offence that might be conceyved the greate and singuler commodities which the kingdome of England might bringe unto the Spanyards are causes of theim selves to sturre upp any attempte for the subdewing of it Namely when as they shalbe able from thence with greate ease and expedicon to keepe the lowe Countrie(s) under as a sclaive to Spayne furnishing upon every occasion from so neare and so aboundaunt a place bothe shippes munitions and ^all^ other necessaryes, besids for the keeping of theim in perpetuall dutie and servitude. And besids this in having Englande the proffit woulde be great and incredible that woulde rise to their traffiques and entercourses which in one instant wolde make theim both quiet Masters of the Whole Ocean, and of the greatest wealthe in the Worlde./

But Contrarywise if the Realme of Englands should either be an enemye to theim or remaine but halfe suspect therof it appeares presently into howe manye and sondry inconveniencs they fall into of necessitie The passage firste of Spaine and of the lowe Countrie(s) being therby cut of and consequentlie the meane taken awaie (which in a state that hath his members so farre devided from the bodye is still seene) to compasse their desired purposes. Lastly the warehouse that they hope to make of Spaine with the Spoiles of the Lowe Countrie(s) sholde have but a shorte reckoning and they misse of their intent in the very begynnyng./

So as if all other respects which are Very greate shoulde not move the Spanyards againste Englande yet this latter sheweth that it is impossible but that they who in kinde of all other are moste Ambicious have decreed to suborne Englands to establish therupon their greatnes and securitie Who otherwise shold want bothe courage and judgement if this platte Were not thoroughlie attemptid./

[fol. 175v] [marginalia by unknown hand: The ficklenes of our State.]

And herewith beholding that there is no yssue of her Majesties bodye to succede in the Realme after her, but the matter like to fall amonge many compeitors the same doth serve also as a newe firebrande to kindle upp the covetous desire of the Spanishe K. who taking parte with one side then mighte the better oppresse the reste and then by some newe allyaunce withe the next of the bloode to assure him selfe of the whole state for ever./

[marginalia by unknown hand: The easines of the exploite, the Lowe Countries once subdewid.]
Who having this disposition (as certainly he hath) yea rather forcid and constrayned to have yt if he will mainteigne him selfe safelie in his owne state and reputacon what better commoditie might he wishe for? having subdewed the Lowe Countries to his will and theare quietlie established his tryannye then to bringe over his power and Armye (yet blouddy and terrible of the murther and oppression of the people, into Engelande./

[marginalia by Herle: The helpe and furtheraunce of the Pope and others states of Italy.]

To the which albeit that he him selfe had either small or no desier at all yett the Pope and other Princes confederats aswell in Italy as elswhere woulde certainly constraine him to this enterprize even for his owne promise made in that behaulfe unto theim: partly to be revenged of the English nation of whom they thinke them selves greatlie and many waies Injured, And partlie to enterteigne the K. of Spaine still in warres in the remotest partes from Italy for that it cannot be chosen but that his greatenes if he shoulde be quiet and neare theim wolde growe suspisious and dangerous unto theim./

[marginalia by unknown hand: The malicious aide of the fr. K. and others of his faction.]

And to further this bothe the fr. K. and the house of Guise would give all the assistaunce they might aswell for those comen reasons before remembred whearin they be joyned with the Princes confederats as for some particuler reasons that doo concern the Crowne of fr. it selfe. But especially the hatred that the house of Guise beares to her Majestie (as shee that hath bene and is the sole disturber of their wicked enterprizes intendid against Scotlande and other places) would set fourthe any mischeife any against Engeland as maliciously as might be and the rather that by the same meanse they mighte tourne from the Realme of fraunce nowe so wasted and weakened by theis Inwarde warres and by the murther of suche a number of valyaunt subjects the puissant furye of the K. of Spaine to some other place, A neighbor no les dreadfull then suspected./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Opinion and hope of his Successe (the lowe Countries being subdewid.)

Wheareunto may be added that if the Spanishe K. shoulde come once to effecte with his purpose over the lowe Countries (which god defende) he woulde be so puffed upp with proude overweening and with thopinion of his owne greatnes as nothing coulde be thought harde to his exploytes nor once able to resiste his only name, so as the same name shold serve as a terror to astonishe Nations fom the boldenes once to resiste him in any thinge that either he might or wold attempt or woulde prescribe unto theim./

[fol. 176r] [marginalia by unknown hand: The comodity of Shippes, Marriners Souldiours xch.]

And having the lowe Countries thus at comaundement he sholde finde him selfe streight possessid of suche a strengthe by sea suche a number of good Shippes well furnished with skillfull Marriners and with plenty of all munition and Artillerye as also with well trayned and resolved souldiours suche as boyling in heate to converte their weapons allready bathed in Civill bloude and made blunte with the destruction of a Countrie spoiled and ravished, against a Countrie entire bothe a strainger to theim, welthy, riche and aboundant of all necessary things to sturre upp ther courage the more./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Devision for Religion and privat humor. The pronenes of E. to favor Innovations. The Delicacy and lack of experience ^of warres^ in our Nation.]

Which partlie the devison that is there aswell for religion as for privat humor and offences
nourrished by sondrye: as for the Quarrel of Scotlande whiche is stomacked by mightie persons bothe at home and abroade with the uncertainie of succession before mentioned might serve to enkindle the mynde of a nombre to desier innovation and to conspire with the Spanyards who unto their good successe in the lowe Countrieys woulde give courage to the Englishe Papists which are not a fewe in nombre to desier and hope for a like alteracon at home who also shoule be holpen by those that nowe Lurke as Newters (a sorte moste dangerous of all other) till thocasion were presented to discover theim selves at full. And herewith considering the longe ease and quietnes that England hath enjoyed, and the people enured with pleasur and delicacye farre from the hardenes and experience of warres it bothe provoketh the enterprize the more and makith it the easier and of les dainger./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Conclusion.]
The facillitye then wherof according to all apparaunts is sufficient to inflame the Spanishe nation to enterprize this warre whose naturall and highe ambition accompanied with vaine glorye and speciall hatred towards England dothe make theim thinke the tyme very longe which is not employed therin allready which undoubtedly concludes that the warres of the lowe Countryes once finished the Spanyards have nothing in more certein determinacon then to prove their forces against Englantse./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Howe to meete withall. To joyne with the States of the Lowe Country against the Sp.] Which very easely and without great charge might be mett with by her Majestie In case shee woulde prevent the harme in tyme and cutt of the blowe before hande in ayding those of the lowe Countries nowe to resiste the power of the Spanyards who being let of this course, were the assured meane to enterteigne her Majesties quiet with the quiet also of whole Christendome therby (a matter that requires but a small power and les coste for brydling of theim as eche man may perceave that hath but a meane knowledge of the state of the said Lowe Countries. And in effecte when every thinge is rypely weighed it shalbe founde that there is no meane so fytt and so expedient to turne the warres from Englantse as this is which otherwise is moste certenly to followe if the Spannyards atteigne their purpose quickly over the said Lowe Countryes./

[fol. 176v] But if their affaires of the lowe Countries be strengthenid and Countenanced to holde outhe then is it a thinge assured that the Spannyards shall not onlye loose their longing for making an Invasion in Englantse: But also be excluded from the meane howe to disquiet theim in any degree./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Theire Necessitye & Feare drave them to confirme thenentercourse though to their greate disadvantage] Whearewith some of the proper actions and proceedings that the Spannyards have theim selves shewid to the worlde wolde be considerid of. howe since the tyme that those inwarde warres have begone in the lowe Countrieys thay have contrary to their accustomid ^hartie^ manner of dealing with the Q. Majestie used suche forced and hypocriticall humblenes and suche dilligent meanees to wynne her favor as Lastlie what by greate intreatye and what by importunate solliciting thay have obtained an agreement for the entercourse of Marchaunts, and a confirmacon of thallyaunce betwenee her and the house of Bourgondye though with greate disavauntage and prejudice to their side. Which as it is open dissimulacon apparant to all men so are they compelled therunto for the
tymes sake leaeste that the affaires of Hollande and Zealande succeeding well her Majestie might joyne with them also to their utter destruction: Which occasioned the D. of Alva so speedely to take upp the matter with what condicions soever he mighte: (An acte that is accomptid to him in Wisdome and Industrye the greatest that ever he did having pursuid therby his courses which certainly were readie to fall.) And wynning the commoditie withall to compass his secret practises in the same whose faite towards heretiques (for so reckoneth he of her Majestie and of all those of her profession) as to be kept with theim as may serve his owne turne and the tyme hereafter./

Thus is it easelie perceavid what mynds the Spannyards have and wheareunto they presently aspire in that they feare nothing somuche as that her Majestie shoulde declare her selfe of their side that be thus afflicted in the Lowe Countries, And so wheare were their whole platt of mischiefe overthrowen at once by her Majesties goode resoluccon which depended entierly of her goode or ill will so sclender was their power without her./

Concluding therfore that all their practises and humble sutes for thobteyning of this accorde tendid to planne mischeife and deceite./

And otherwise to thinke once that they ment sincerelie towards Englande (the lowe Countries once subdewid) were farre from reason and from any goode grounde, both for the weighte of those former arguments rehearsed as in respecte of their owne Nature which in their prosperitie shewid allwaies an arrogant mynde and proude behavior towards Englande, A matter not lightlie to be forgotten the memory of yt is so freshe and of that gravitie.

Onlye they woulde temporize (till the saide lowe Countryes (as forsaken of her Majesties aide were supressid and then to invad Englande at their moste ease.

Preparing in the meane season their platts and intelligencs with suche of the said lande as they knowe to be favoraible to their side and desirous of Novelties to th'ende their turne maye be servid of theim as th'opportunitie of the tyme and cause woulde suffer./

Which might be avoided with very small charge if her Majestie at this tyme woulde declare her selfe againste the Sp. K. in open manner and this were the waie the said pr. of Orenge alleadgid to enterteigne the lowe Countries in suche a ballaunce as neither the Spanyards shoulde devoure it nor shee her selfe be molestid though all his force were at once imploied against her which was of small consequence the same being so devided as it is and so weakened and shaken otherwise. But rather it sholde be an evident undoing to all his state the more he strove therin. And to saye in one woorde the Q. only countenance without further power declaring her selfe openly favorable to those of the lowe Countries woulde make all the rest of the placis there to revolte: so generally doo they abhorre the Spanishe government and so great is her authoritie if she did but once discover her selfe this farre by whiche goodnes shee mighte preserve the whole Counrye to her Immortall commendacon and suertye And the kinge him selfe woulde thinke it moste happie to receave whatt Composicon her Majestie woulde give seeing once this assured resoluccon in her./
For why those of the religion doo besides other portes that they have keepe the three principall keyes of all the lowe Countries in their handes Flessinge, The Bryll, and Inckhusen whoo doo master and shutt in all those seas theareabouts. And then howe can the K. of Spaine be furnished of a sufficient Navye either to offende or defende without the frendship of Englande? having neither commoditie of havens nor shipping nor yet of skillfull Marriners to attempte things with all as hath well appearid in theis encounters of late in Zealinde, and is a notable mayne unto him./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Almains can do him no goode]

Besides that he is not able to supplye him selfe with that nomber of Souldiours which the dainger of his state and of thexploite that he should doo doth importe But it may be saide that he maye reteigne some Almains to his service which helps nothing at all for that the Almain footeman is not only unproffitable uppon the Sea, but is not fitt to handle a harquebuze a weapon at this instante well nighe sole and proper for the marine affaires./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Of Frenchmen he can have no supplye.] Then of frenchemen he cannot be furnished whiles theis warres in fraunce doo contynewe for that the Country it selfe hath want of theim./

[marginalia by unknown hand: of Bourgonyons & Italiens there are few to be had.] For Bourgonyons and Italiens there are not many in nomber to be had./

Yet let it be admitted that he had of theis nations suche a nomber as he might desier howe coulde he imploye them against Englande or against any place by Sea whiles he is deprived of both of havens shipping and Marriners?

[marginalia by unknown hand: Thimpossibility to supply his lack from Spaine.] Which want of Shipping cannot be supplied from the coaste of Spaine for that all the pitche, tarre, cables, mastes and other apparaill for a Navye must come cheifely by their meanes of the Lowe Countries thither which being nowe impeached doth take awaie the meane how either to furnish fourth a Navie thence or to mainteigne the same that they have allready there Unles it be by Englande./

[fo. 177v] [marginalia by unknown hand: The Turks annoyaunce of Spaine]

Then as it is further knownen that Spaine cannot make oute anye greate nomber of men of their owne either by Sea or Lande especially nowe that the Turke threateneth theim so neare and so puissantly as he dothe Besids that it is neither ^easie^ nor possible to sett fourth Shippes appointed with victualls and necessaries from thence like as it is from other placs./

For when there is question or necessitie to have any armed Shipes furthe to conducte or wafte only a fleete of Merchaunts yt asketh allwaies the respet of 7. or 8. monethes to do yt./

Which prooveth then by all degrees that there is no cause at all to feare any dainger or Invasion at that whole side./

[marginalia by unknown hand: Their State standing in effect upon beggerly Termes. No present meane to supply yt.] But then let their wealth be examined which to a nomber appearith bothe huge and fearefull and
may supplye many defects: But the experience of things paste and present hath well discoverid
that it is neither of bothe: for in respect of the great chargs they have bene and be at, And of theis
longe inwarde troubles consumyng and taking awaie the whole revenue, withall they are
unprovided either of wealthe in their purse or of credit with Marchaunts having undone the best
Marchaunts and Cownters throwrought Christendome by breaking with theim, And though
Marchaunts woulde give credit yet can they not do yt for any round somme so longe as the affaires
of the lowe Countrieys continew in this trayne they are in the traffique decaying therby
everywheare both in generall and particulier./

Which hath taught the K. of Spaine that the weakenes of his State is suche and the difficultie and
dearth of victualls so greate, the want withall of traffique, the number of Bancqueruots and the
lacke of that meane howe to employe Artifficers wherof the lowe Countryes stande moste by with
a thousand other incomodities which the Civill warres have joyned unto yt that all his states
togeather cannot beare out longer the necessary charges of theis warres nor suffer him to stand as a
kinge if present remedy be not founde/ But howe much more shoulde he be pressed in deede and
dryven to the very wall if her Majestie of Englane did joyne with those of the lowe Countries in
so just and lawfull a cause as nowe is defended./

As for example of one only Towne of Flessinges which is neither riche nor puissant nor hath bene
assisted in all this tyme by any prince or forrein ayde hath yet bene able to make suche sharpe
warres uppon the K. of Spaine shutting upp the Whole passage against him. And so often stopping
the releife that sholde have come to Mydelborough how muche more were it impossible for the
Spanyards if the Q. Majestie wolde declare her self aganst theim either to mainteigne any warres
in the Lowe Countryes or to advaunce yt against England but rather consequently to be
overthrown for ever./

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in the Lowe Countryes or to advaunce yt against England but rather consequently to be
overthrown for ever./

But it maye be objected that the Towne of Midleboroughe, The Ramkine, and Armoye,
notwithstanding all this doe holde out still: Whiche objection is of small weighte. for her Majestie
in assistinge those of the religion with some monye a fewe souldiours and cannons to besiege
Midleborough, in good earnest it coulde not endure 12. daies at th'uttermoste against theim which
is a matter so well known as cannot be denyed, And the same a place not onyle weake and
subject to the Canon but to be easelie famyshed, which had bene done er nowe if their forces of
Flessinges and Hollande had bene somewhat greater and not applied to other places./

But be it as may be while those of the religion be Masters of the Seas as hitherto by gods grace
they are bothe in number of Shippes, in vertue and experience of Marryners) the Spannyards
though they kept not only that they have in Zealande but had 10. Townes more as gooede as
Midleborough yet sholde they never be able to set fowrthe any Navye sufficient to invade or
annoye Englane withall which is utterly impossible for theim to doo whiles theis men kepe their
owne, or to passe once out of Zealande to the seawarde but to their apparaunte discruction so farre
be they within the dainger and subjection of those of the religion./

Wherby her Majestie might with great facillitie deliver the Countrye and Subjects at once both of
all daingers of warres and of all suspicons that might growe therunto which a small ayde of men
and women would perfourme making her able to give what Condicons of peace and agrement shee
woolde to the Spainishe K. and be as humbly obeyed in the same by him./
But of the contrary side if shee staie till those of the Lowe Countries (which god defende be once subdewed, then renues the warre furiously upon them her owne state and people, And will cost whole myllions of golde before it be endid besides the dainger to lose all according to the Uncerten events of Warre. Englane being a Countrye void of stronge holds to staie Thenemye any while by the waye which then will either drive it to a generall hazarde at the first or to a longer warre by Temporizing./

Which every goode Prince for preservacon of his state and subjects is in duty bounde to prevent whatsoever League or amytie there be, which with ambitious neighbours and malicious serves but to cloake their secret projects till they come to their full ripenes and so wynne the advantaage they seeke for, uppon which pointe I had often repeated unto me that the plenty of Englane and the delicacye of the people did geve great and many advantaages to the enemye which two if they sholde be accompanied with thintelligence and aide [fol. 178v] of Conspiratours within Land, And With the scottish faction within Lande and without woulde make well nighe all thinges open for a Conquest

Wherfore the said prince of Orenge concluded that one of her Majesties wisdome, and magnanimitie ye woulde provide in tyme for the tranquillitie of her Subjects and her selfe knowing with whom she had to deale by the best and aptest meanes that God dothe presente (which were not presented in vaine) and with the least spoile of her Countrie and burthen to her State which were easelie done if once her Majestie were but resolute which I humbly commendid to that singuler prudencye and grace that god had wonderfully indewed her with for the staie of whole Christendome./

Nowe uppon theis often conferencs which it pleasid the Prince to have with me for som lykinge that he had of my proceadinges there in my freends behaulfe, he at laste did enter into some nearer and more secret declaracon of the state of that Countrye with me and of his humble devotion borne allwaies to the Q. Majestie of Englane whose greatenes and prosperity he saide that he singulerly desired, having made her privie of his proproceadings from tyme to tyme both in fraunce by his brother and by master Walsingham her Embassador theare and since by one Cassembrod by Boysot and lastelie by 4. that were sente into England to her Majestie in the name and behaulf of the states of Holland and Zealande who at severall tymes had presented to her Majestie the whole Countryses of Holland and Zealande with their bodies and goodes to be entierly at her disposition, intreating for Christianitie and Justice sake which were the two things that they woulde be Justified by) that her Majestie woulde take theim into her protection and defend their comon cause of religion and libertie against the Tyranny of Spaine and the blody devices of Rome committing to her Majesties hands as pledge of their humble trust and devotion.4. principall Townes even the very keyes of Zealande and Holland and those which did master and brydle all the attempts either of Spaine or of the Lowe Countryses But her Majestie in rejecting both them their causes and their offers had turned an incredible greife in the mynds of the better sorte to see them selves so forsaken of so Christian a Prince and especially of her Majestie terming both him and the states of Hollande no better then Rebells to their K. with whome she concluded that she wold have nothing
to doo: And yet they had bene enterteigned he saide from Cassembrods first coming over [fol. 179r] till this laste aunswer with some better hope. Protesting for his parte before the Almighty Majestie of god that those warres which he had made were not for ambition or gaine having ynoogh in Germany and elswhere to content him withall to the delight and quietnes of his mynde and to the confort of his frends, (which kinde of life he did preferre to all other) but for the defence of religion and of his Countrie and for the lives and liberties of the people of the same (who were all to be rootet oute) for the whiche he woulde refuse no travaill nor dainger till the laste droppe of his bloode were spente in which resolucon he woulde be founde bothe constant alyve and deade commending him selfe and the cause to god who of his providence might mainteigne yt and take uppon him the defence of his Churche and people. According to his will, declaring that to avowe this note of ambition howe he had ever eschewid the place of Soveraignyte as a subject to greate envie and more charge permitting also to those of Hollande the government of their owne thinges by their owne states thoughe intreated and importuned by them all to take it absolutelie uppon him And to commaunde in whatsoever he woulde be obeyed: Whiche might modestlie shewe howe farre his mynd was from aspyringe and howe little he regarded those degres which other men so greatlie desired. Yet if things were necligently and slackly handeled by those that had the charge he was sure the whole faulthe woulde be imputed to him as one that were either irresolute or wanted courage and skill. But touching that they were rebells he very well knewe the Q. Majesties judgement so cleare thearin and so satisfied many waies as small excuse neadid and les declaracon of their Innocencye in that they woulde Justifie all their actions and the taking of Armes uppon him for their just desire to be lawfull bothe by devine and humaine lawes which hathe bene sufficientlie tried and allowed in the Chamber of The Empire at Spires he saide which place is their souvereigne tribunall and resorte aswell to judge with indifferency and without respect of persons the D. of Brabant or Thearle of flanders Hollande, as the laste subjecte of The Empire owing neither dutie nor homemage to the K. of Spaine as K. of Spaine nor yet to the Lordes of Brabant longer then they mainteigned the liberties unto theim their auncient rites and liberties without Innovation or breache in the leaste jotte. Whearein they are to refuse no judge nor lawe that is indifferent for decision of their right and quarrell: Marye he knewe that the Q. Majestie in terming him and theim rebells had some further respecte inwardelie then was convenien for so many men to knowe understande being meete perhaps that it should be knoen to the worlde that she had used theim somwhat sharpelie which contented him very well. Yet humbly beseeching her Majestie to interprete graciuslie of those that are not only joined in one and selfe religion with her: that had commendid theim selves thus entierly to her faiithe and grace but also that desier to doo her faithfull service with body goodes and life for ever.

[marginalia by unknown hand: An Untrustie practise to wynne truste.] Which they are the more bounde to doo (he saide) in that her Majestie did take very well ill that some Counsaillor of hers shoulde perswade the reste to accepte those .4. [fol. 179v] [marginalia by unknown hand: Their offer renewid. Thextremity.] Townes offered by the States of Hollande and then to deliver them upp againe to the K. of Spaine as rebells whiche were the waie as the said Counsaillor thought to wynne an everlastinge truste and freendshippe with the said K. But her modestie and greatenes of mynde did well expresse theim selves at once in this that as they had done in all other things) with a trewe prove of her naturall goodnes which made him the bolder having conceaved very dearly of me (he saide) to imparte with me thus faithfullie and secretilie the state of thinges as he did, And to desire me even uppon my alleagaunce to declare unto her
Majestie and your L. what I had hearde and see[n]e of him, who commendid by my mouthe into her Majesties hands once againe the entier possession of Hollande and Zealande which was the earnest desier of the states of the lande so to present her with all if shee woulde as willinglie receave their goode wille[s] as they might lawfullie perfourme what they offerid: And happily her Majestie might be more induced the rather for the preservacon of generall peace which dependid muche upon their holding oute, And for the rescpecte of gods cause which was defendid herein to take upon her their protection and save that ^which^ otherwise was utterly loste./ But rather then they woulde fall into the Spannyards handes, (if her Majestie refused theim) they woulde not only dye with their Countrye but before they died intangle the same with suche a devill as shoulde roote oute the name of the Spannyards for ever from thence, whiche they shoulde be compellid to doo respecting only their consciences and liberties to live withall withall. Wherin I might best serve to sollicite this matter with her Majestie (he said, with suspicon to the cause and with greater truste of that I shoulde deale in being her subjecte and a privat partie and then to aunswere him [1 word expunged] againe with speade what she wolde resolve to doo, having founde to late he said that theis often and publique messengers sente oute of Hollande did bewray before hande theeffect of their negociacons by the conjecture of the places from whence they come. And might have withdrawn some goode parte of her Majesties disposicon to deale thearein, whare the matter was so openlye handeled. Againe he sawe that they had perswadid suche a necessitie wherby her Majestie ought for the saide necessitie and for her owne safetie to helpe theim, that the commendacon of her bountifull worke yea their thankes and obligacon for the same was takin awaye though shee woulde have holpen theim: But he besoughthe her to beleive that it was onlie grace that they soughte for at her handes as the Princesse that did favor religion and Justice above all other, and to whome for the temperaunce of her mynde and gouvernment they had only recourse, which woulde binde theim for ever to remaine her moste humble and faithfull servaunts and to acknowledge her for their souvereigne helper under God./ And in case she did accept their offer and set foote in Hollande she shoulde presently have Flessinge [fol. 180r] [marginalia by unknown hand: Their offer of contribution./ to be encreased by. The profit of the herring fare. The Morgantake. Confiscation of Abbey landes xch. The Customs, imposts xch. The Dicaige. Besides Benevolencs in which only the D. had in 3. yeeres 1800000 [crowns] 32 greate Townes at her Majesties commaundment] The Brill, Roterodame, Inckhusen in possession with what other places she woold desier. They also woold yerelie contribute unto her the somme of 8 or 900000. [crowns] and all her charges shoulde not rise to 400000. [crowns] which woold be gevin without grudge of any or difficultie in the gatheringe of it: for then their trafrique by Sea and their husbandry at home shoulde to their greate benetif and by her Majesties onleye meane florish[...]

Letters of William Herle Project 2006 AHRC Centre for Editing Lives and Letters www.livesandletters.ac.uk
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Townes both newlie forified and planted with garrison (for they have mainteined by lande and Sea this whole yeare .34000 persons, what pyoners, Marriners, and Souldiours and have at this instante above 200 Shippes in service) and with all she sholde be Misteris of the puissantest Navye in Christendome and of the aptest havons for thenterteignement of them and of her owne traffique with all nations wherby if shee woulde restore this againe in thende she might make (thoughe yet K. Phillipp hath loste all his right therof forever and of the lowe Countryes, besids, by those reasons that he disclosed to me, the honorablest composition and the profitablist that ever Prince made. And to concluad he woulde procure he said of him selfe that the Germanes shoulde secke unto her Majestie as to the souvereign heade of religion) to [1 word expunged] have an assured league confirmed betweene her and theim: Wherin they shoulde every one for his degree becontribute goode sommes to mainteigne the said league And so her Majestie might be assured of two of the greatest strengths in Christendome without greate charge to her selfe. And yet with equall contribution to the cause from many parties: Besids that *Hollande and Zealande* were able to susteigne thexpences of that quarrell and league alone. for what enemye were there once to provoke her Majestie if shee were thus setlid in those Lowe Countries and so knytte with Germanye: Neither were *Baion* league ([fol. 180v] [marginalia by unknown hand: Three chosen men to treate in this behalfe] to prevaile, nor yet the league of Lansberge, whom wie oldye of theim selves by this meane as greate and huge bodies are wonte to doo, that wante nourrishement for their members: And thereupon he did devise of three men whoe for their calling and wisdome were meete to deale with her Majestie in this league bothe accordinge to the Wrightines of the cause and the dignitie of her Majestie and the Germany Princes whome it concerned./ [marginalia by unknown hand: An Earle of Wittensten. Zowleger. Berlips. A desier of Secret ayde by mony if thother will not be. The assurance for yt. The woorste.] The first was an Earle of Wittensten, a singuler man in Hussia, The seconde *Zowleger* a Counsillor of the *Palsgraves* And the therde Berlips, a noble man Counsaillor to the Ellector of Saxonye and very deare unto him. By whose industrie things maye take the better and speedier effecte. And to thende that nothinge shoule be omytted, her Majestie he saide had sondry meanes to reconcile the fr. K. with his subjects which were a noble and godlie acte bothe to their safetie and her strengthe) wherby shee might not only recover *Calais* againe with goode handelinge, but set him upon the K. of Spaines Toppe betweene whome the jealouesie was greate and thoccasions weightie that sholde move the fr. K. therunto. And thus every parte of Gods adversaries shoulde be enterteigne with their owne harms and quietnes to be restorid to the poore afflicted churche by her Majesties only meane under god./ But if all this coulde not move her Majestie to deale openly in the cause yet that it might please her to ayde them secrete lie and speadelie with 40. or 50000. Li in loane with the which they wolde so enterteigne their affaires bothe in Germanye and other places and have therby tyme withall to breathe at home till the revenues were ready as that the D. of *Alva* should have more cause to defende him selfe elswhere then able to annoye *Hollande* or those confines and happelie might lose at one tyme (as his causes were nowe) which hanged he saide uppn a very twynn threede) bothe reputacon and gouvernment. for the which sommes in present they wolde bynde to her Majesties use sufficient revenues and places in Hollande that shoulde with in one yeare trulie satisfie the same againe with infinite obligacon for her Majesties goodnes and as secretlie to be kept as they helde deare to enjoye their consciencs and liberties free. And if need be for further assuraunce her Majestie should have a garrison in what place she woulde choose maintained at the chargs of the Countreye. Which mighte be commytted to some trustie man as thoughe he servid there with the other Englishmen for wags, And thus in secrecy and suertie
shoulde bothe waies aunswerid. Beseeching her Majestie (even for gods cause and for the commen cause of all goode men) by one of theis two waies to use her favor & aide towards theim without which as they stoode upon extreeme termes (using this proverbe to me to expresse their necessitie as it was, *Nullum violentum perpetuum*, so must they be forcid to sett all upon 6. and 7. and to commend theim selves to that resolucon which they wolde be lothe to do and which were [fol. 181r] halfe a mischeife bothe to theim and their neighbors also. Yet beseeching her Majestie first to make theim som present aunswer to so weightie a sute that accordingly they might provide for their affaires in time, hoping that she had the more cause to thinke well of theim that so entierly and earnestlie did commend theim selves and all theirs unto her without condicon./

[marginalia by unknown hand: The Fr. K. disposition to deale in this cause.]

Which was theffecte whiche he committed unto me by mouthe with greate secrecye and charge to be openid to your L. and my L. of Leicester and so consequentlie to the Q. Majestie like as his lres to youe bothe dothe importe. Whearein he referres the relation and truste of thinges to my speache and will perfourme no les. (he avowes) then I have said in his name and there: Which for the weightines therof I have putt in Writinge craving pardon if I have made it the more tedyous in that I thought goode to adde the manner and Circumstancs of his procedings with me, assuring your L. that if this be not acceptid by her Majestie the fr. K. will ayde theim bothe with men and monye and be Master of the whole, which was a parte of *Lombres* commyssion (if he received no countenance heere to negotiat with the fr. K. what was convenient who had written three lres to the Prince in Hollande for that matter and hath his secret ministers bothe theare and with C. Lodovicke also which have wroughte very farre therin promising pacificacon to his subjects excusing the murder uppon the K. of Sp. and the house of Guise, as thoughe uppon the suddainenes of the thinge he were constrained therunto, And that he wolde wholie therfore converte the warres wheare he might moste endamage so malicious an enemye that had so weakened him in credit and strengthe, Alleaging that if he did laie handes once uppon the Churche goodes in fraunce he hath a sufficient treasur to mainteigne any quarrell for many yeres, And that the Turke had promised him three ofmillions yerelie of Crownes to endomage the said K. of Spaine. Lastlie he wolde be in hande to have some frontiere Townes to make an entrye againe into the lowe Countries to kepe the Spanyards also occupied of that side as the Turke shall doo in other partes, In which busines *Lombres* who is a vaine babbling fellowe and wholie frenche hath bene a greate travailler with the Prince to inclyne him to that side but never coulde obteigne goode hearing or countenance in any thinge (as one in deede that was out of all favor since my coming to that Countrye) till the publicacon of th'accorde for thentercourse was certified to the Prince to have bene made with greate joye at London, Antwarpe, and Ansterdam which so movid theim then as they thought it to be to their utter undoing and the verie waie to discourrage their people at home and their frends abroade. Which I thought my humble dutie to certifie your Lordeship of. And so I humbly doo take my Leave. At London the xj^th^ of June 1573. Your L. most bounden W. H.