

NA (PRO) SP 63/135/66
Thomas Norris to Walsingham, 1 July 1588

Address and Endorsements

To the right Honorable Sir Fraunces
{ W }alsingham knight
{ prin }cipall Secretary
{ to } her Maiesty./*

1 July 1588

From the Vicepresident
of Mounster.

Entred.

Text

Right Honorable my most humble dewty remembred;
whereas her Maiesty by her lettres of the third of Iune last
past gave me in commaundement to committ the body of
florenc MacCarthy, and therevpon to certifye her Highnes
of my doinges therein, as also of the meanes & maner, 5
by which the sayd Florence compassed the mariage with the
Earle of Clancarties daughter; for that the circumstances
thereof doe inforce a tædious recitall, I presumed not
to trouble her Highnes with the particularities, but thought
them rather meet to bee aduertized to your Honour (who have 10
also written to me touching the same) to th'end that by
your meanes knowledg thereof might bee deliuered to her
Maiesty at her good pleasure. Vpon the first arrivall
of the sayd Florence here, coming vnto me he gave no
signe of any such purpose, as sithens fell out, but to 15
give coler (as seemed) to his intent, and to draw me the
further from suspicion thereof, through his seeming con-
ceived vnkyndnes against the Earle, he then discouered
vnto me some ill dealing of the sayd Earle towards him,
namely how that being bownd to him in great bandes, 20
for assuraunce of certain landes, and for performauce of
some other conditions, emongst which one was, that he
should give him his daughter in mariage, he neuerthe-
lesse had broken with him, and therefore offred me (yf I

should so lyke) the benefitt of the forfeitures of the 25
sayd bandes: **which** speaches (as sithens I have conceived)
seeme to have proceded of some further matter in **the** secrete
of his hart, those his wordes being so contrary to that,
which he eftesoones did attempt. But the very
grownd thereof (as I am informed, and as by many 30
strong circunstances may be gathered) proceded from
the Earle him self, how euer sithens he would fynd him
self grieved therewith and was compacted betwene them
in England at the sayd florences there late beeing, &
not **with**out the privitie & great furtheraunce of Sir Owen 35

MacCarthy, who by all meanes endevoareth to back &
iniuriously to raise vp the sayd Florence against
his kinsman Donell MacCarthy, aswell in **the** succession
of the Captentry of his countrey, as also in all other 40
causes, that may advauntage him therevnto; Wherein
yt is very certein, that **the** Earle also hath euer greatly
favored him. Besydes yt is here by many reported
(the further proofes whereof I have not yett had tyme
to sifte onto) that the sayd Earle gave to Florence at his
coming, his secrete **lettres** to his wife, to that effect **which** 45
now hath happened: to whome **presently** after his arrivall
he repayred **with** the same, and soone after dispatched
his hidden intent. And for more lykelyhode that
yt was then wrought & concluded in England, I am
certainly given to vnderstand, that at **the** instant of 50
his departure from thence, Captein Iaques being then
in company **with** him, counseled him very earnestly, what-
soeuer he did, to goe through **with** the mariage out of
hand; assuring him, that for obteyning her **Maiesties**
consent therevnto he would so work **with** some his frendes 55
there, that yt should bee brought to passe: and to **the**
end to bee more speedily advertized of his procedinges,
he sent a servaunt of his owne ouer* hether in company **with**
Florence who vpon conclusion of the matter, was **presently**
dispatched hence back agayne. The further knowledg 60
and intent whereof may there I thinck, best bee boulded
out of the sayd Iaques, who thereby seemeth to have
beene acquainted **with** the entreprize from **the** beginning
and to bee privie to any other purpose, that may depend
therevpon. For sure yt carrieth great shewe of 65
deepe consequence, considering how strongly **the** sayd
Florence is allyed to such, as euill may bee looked from.

first his mother was foster to Iames *fitz* Morice the Archtraytoure, whereby he is nephew to the Lord Roches wife and to *the* Lord of Muscries mother & coosen german to the

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to the Seneschall of Iniskhillies wife. All *which* persons doe hang vpon one weake thred, and have their eyes se{tt} all vpon hope of forreyne helps. but namely *the* sayd Lord Roche, who sheweth him self in all his behaveour & also in some open speaches, to bee discontented *with* this go-vernem^{ent}, repyning obstinately against all directions of the State here, and supporting him self *with* the vayne concept of his secrete hope, whereof heretofore he hath, and yett dayly doth give apparant demonstrations. So that now the sayd Florence by this his late knott hath given great strength to that syde, and hath combined all the reliques of the house of Iames *fitz* Morice to *the* kindred of the Clancarties; *which* being *the* greatest name and nacion now in Mounster (all Desmond, all Carbery, all Muscry, all Dowalla being of that line), yt inferreth great importaunce & matter of neare respect to bee prevented, or at the least well eyed; the rather for *that* the sayd Clancarties have heretofore, before *the* coming in of the Geraldines vpon them, had all this Province in their subieccion: the continuall memory whereof they yett vse to nourish emongst them, and to deliuer to their posterities by dew succession. And now this new ••••* occasion meeting in a man of *the* same race being of his quality & sort, who by blood is so nigh allyed to forreyne practizers, by difference of religion devoted to *the* contrary part, by his owne private disposition hath alwayes shewed him self dearly well affected and inclined to *the* Spaniard, being also generally favored of all his country, and now in very plausible acceptaunce, *the* rather for *the* late gracious favours, *which* he received of her Maiesty and that by this attempt hath discour^{ed} his ambitious desyre to make him self great; yt is greatly to bee regarded, to what end *the* same may grow. Moreouer now lately (whether for any further intent, or that yt is through his heedlesse vnhappinesse so fallen out) he hath by all meanes laboured to bee interesse*

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in the old head of Kinsale, **which** is the Lord Courcies
 auncient manour house, & a place often heretofore eyed &
 earnestly motioned, for opinion of great strength to bee
 fortified: the title whereof he hath (as I vnderstand
 compassed, and was the same day, that he was apprehended,
 mynded to ryde thether to take possession thereof. All
which concurring so daungerously to **the** increase of doubt,
 I would therefore wish (vnder reformation of better advizement)
 that though hereafter he shall **perhaps** work him self grace
 or pardon of the present dislyke, yett that very good
 assuraunce bee taken of him before his enlargement, for avoyding
 of the euilles **which** are depending vpon **the** circunstances of
 his **person** and condicion. Him now I have according to
 her Highnes pleasure committed, as also according to **the** later
 direccion in your Honoures lettres of the iiiijth of the last moneth
 have caused the Countesse, Mac finin, Teig Merigagh
 and such others, as I could learne to have bene privy
 to the practize, to bee apprehended as I could come by
 them; and doe not doubt but very shortly to come by
 the rest likewise: of the **which** I vnderstand **that** Osullivan
 More was the greatest forwarder & nearest of councill
 though indeed all the Chief of that countrey were wrought
 by Florence to consent therevnto, who (as I am lett to
 vnderstand) before the mariage gott all their handes to
 firme that agreement, by a generall combinacion of them,
 and soone after accomplished **the** sayd mariage in an old
 broken church thereby, not in such solemnity & good sort
 as behoved, & as order of law & her Maiesties iniunctions
 doe require. Thus am I carried by large re-
 lacion of particulares, into a tædious length of lines,
which I beseech your Honour to pardon, in regard of **the** vrgentnes
 of the matter, and many occasions meeting **with** **the** same.
 Further I haue thought good to aduertize your Honour of
 the **present** good quiett of this Province, in **which** yt is not
 vnlikely to continew, yf forreyne invasion doe not
 occasion the chaunge; **which** yf any should happen, litle
 stay (god

stay (god wote) can here bee hoped for, and lesse
 meanes of defence, by reason of the great wantes of
 men, municion, and all other necessaries, **which** are re-
 quisite therevnto: for **which** I have often importuned my
 Lord Deputy, but yett cannott receive any thing to
 purpose in so great occasion. But I fynd great

comfort by your Honours lettres, & lesse cause of feare then
wee haue hetherto conceived: which I beseech god to
confirme to his good will & pleasure. To whose
gratious proteccion & gouernement recommending your Honour
with most humble acknowledgement of my faythfull
dewty & devocion to the same, I humbly take leave.
from Limerick, the first of Iulie. 1588./

155

Your Honours most humble at Com-
maundement euer,

Thomas Norreys

160

Note on hands

The address and the main text of the letter, including the subscription, are in Spenser's regular and flowing secretary hand. The two endorsements are in separate, and distinct hands, probably added during the filing process in London. Norris's autograph signature concludes the letter.

* **Address**] as often, some of the address has been obscured by the removal of the seal upon receipt/filing of the letter; the missing words can be very safely inferred from other examples.

* **58 ouer**] 'ouer' inserted above the line, with a caret mark.

* **94 ••••**] 'succ' deleted. It seems that Spenser began accidentally to write 'succession' (as just above; note the similarity of 'dew' and 'new') before realizing his mistake and correcting it to 'occasion'.

* **107 bee interesse**] while this is clearly what Spenser wrote, it seems likely that he miscopied; the sense, however, is clear: Florence McCarthy sought to be invested in the title of the house and lands of the Old Head of Kinsale.

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