1 July 1588

From the Vicepresident of Mounster.

Entred.

**Text**

Right Honorable my most humble dewty remembred; whereas her Maiestie by her lettres of the third of JUne last past gave me in commaundement to committ the body of florence MacCarthy, and thereupon to certifie her Highnes of my doings therein, as also of the meanes & maner, 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 also written to me touching the same) to th'end that by your meanes knowledg thereof might bee deliuered to her Maiestie 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 give coler (as seemed) to his intent, and to draw me the further from suspicton thereof, through his seeming conceived 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, for assurance of certein landes, and for performance of some other conditions, amongst which one was, that he should give him his daughter in mariage, he neuerthelesse had broken with him, and therefore offed me (yf I
should so lyke) the benefitt of the forfeictures of the 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 ground thereof (as I am informed, and as by many strong circumstances 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 without the privitie & great furtheraunce of Sir Owen MacCarthy, who by all meanes endevoareth to back & injuriously to raise vp the sayd Florence against his kinsman Donell MacCarthy, aswell in the succession of the Captenry of his countrey, as also in all other 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 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 certeinly given to vnderstand, that at the instant of his departure from thence, Captain Iaques being then in company with him, counseled him very earnestly, whatsoever 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 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 and intent whereof may there I thinck, best bee boulted out of the sayd Iaques, who thereby seemeth to have beeene 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 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 Seneschall of Iniskhillies wife. All which persons doe hang vpon one weake thred, and have their eyes se{tt} all vpon hope of forreyne helpes. but namely the sayd Lord Roche, who sheweth him self in all his behaviour & also in some open speaches, to bee discontented with this governoement, repyning obstinately against all directions of the State here, and supporting him self with the vayne conceipt of his secrete hope, whereof heretofore he hath, and yet 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 allied to forreyne practizers, by difference of religion devoted to the contrary part, by his owne private disposicion hath always showed him self dearly well affected and inclined to the Spaniard, being also generally favored of all his countrey, and now in very plausible acceptaunce, the rather for the late gratious favours, which he received of her Maiesty and that by this attempt hath discoverd 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.
in the old head of Kinsale, which is the Lord Courcies anciant manour house, & a place often heretofore eyed & earnestly motioned, for opinion of great strength to bee fortifyed: 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 reformacion 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 enlargment, 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 councell 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 agreemcnt, 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 injuncions 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 yt if any should happen, litle 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 faithfull dewty & devocion to the same, I humbly take leave. from Limerick, the first of Iulie. 1588./

Your Honours most humble at Com-
maundement euer,

Thomas Norreys

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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