

Appendix: Letters and Transcriptions from the Burley Manuscript

6 It is worth my wondering if I can compleaine of my selfe
 writing: when I have letters come to hand as if they had
 all the waye appear a blegg. I have received from you a letter
 almost every one hath a commission to speake of many of them
 felicity, like of kindred or kindred in the same company & asked for the
 rest of his kindred: but my name no mention of any of
 mine, and yet it is not long since I ventur'd much of
 my experience out of me on a piece of paper: and perhaps not
 of my credit. It is of me of writing by Ad. whom of vice
 you wrote me of that he - felt a Agony. I do pray
 you not only much at all & not least I think rather
 my selfe; of the future I would faine give the thing
 out now and then - to the world. What comes me here
 you or me to do, will be what I shall be great in
 what it comes against I would not be of the
 I would now write now Orally, & maguify
 Donnelly & Mac Mahony & favor of them. It is
 true & they knowe best ill affection & ill comple
 At they who are have a stronger desire: you
 diminish all of it low down & yet of itselfe were easily
 examined the quality of it: is as of the best of it
 every to as well as of fame. There be the nature of
 pithy & of Courty: which have upon earth to request
 place. I will say no more of it ~~but~~
 have they agreed to do as much of it ~~as~~
 - that waye & by & kind of writing & long
 written & not to self.

7 This becom a gentleman of Germany is worthy of your acquaintance
 since: Hee out of Scotland by the north of Ireland, through
 the best of respect of I am in it. I where he can well be
 in most language. I like his industry and his desire that I
 had him to look after light of a prosperous estate upon
 a miserable: for calamity do better instruct than
 his. especially a parricide that cannot stay long for
 his letter if could him hardly who is: & they - a further of him
 he had been to be left - some necessity of money
 or not kind of civility either actually or passively
 hand always to do. I stand bound for him. & without
 not - but I say after his arrival from some with
 speech with him: if any had or killed to some of his page on
 me: At the due indication & how he might be
 we couer with him of any I should be come: or if
 had

Letters from Wotton to Donne in Parkhurst's hand. Summer 1599.

(Image courtesy of The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland)

Transcript of preceding page:

Sir. It is worth my wondring that you can complayne of my seldome writing when your owne letters come so fearefully as if they treade all the waye uppon a bogg.¹ I have receaved from you a few & almost every one hath a commission to speake of divers of theire fellowes, like you know whome in the old comedy that asked for the rest of his servants²: but you make no mention of any of mine, and yet itt is not long since I ventured much of my experience unto you in a peece of paper: and perhaps not of my credit: It is that which I sent you by A.D.³ whereof till you advertise me I shall live in fitts or Agues. I do promise you not only much but all that hath hitherto passed in my next; of the future I would fayne speake now if my judgment were not dim in the present; whatsoever we have done or meane to do, wee knowe not what will become of itt, when itt comes amongst our worst enimies ^{which are} interpreters⁴. I would there were more Oneales, & Macguires, & ODonnells & Macmahons & fewer of them.⁵ Itt is true that this kingdome hath ill affections & ill corruptions but they where you are have a stronger disease: you diminish all that is here done & yet you doubt (if you were neerely examined) the greatnes of itt: so as you believe that which is contrary to as much as you feare. These be the wise rules of pollicy & of Courts: which are uppon earth the vaynest ~~things~~ places. I will say no more & yet peradventure I have sayd a great deale unto you. God keepe you & us in those wayes & rules & kinds of wisdom that bring mortall men unto himself.

Sir. This bearer a gentleman of Germany is worthy of your acquaintance: Hee [came] out of Scotland by the north of Ireland, thorough the best of rascals of our enimies, of whome he can well discourse in most languages. I like his judgment and his desires that did lead him to looke after light of a prosperous estate uppon a miserable: for calamities do better instruct then felicities. Especially a passenger that cannot stay long for his letters I commend him hartely unto you: & thus much farther of him he hath here found himself in some necessity of mony in which kind of buisnes either actively or passively I have alwayes to do. I stand bond for him: & intreat you within some dayes after his arrivall frame some such speech with him as find whether the mony be payd or no: but with due precaution that there be ministred no conceipt unto him of any distrust in mee: which I [MS continues overleaf] should be sorry for though men commonly call this wisdom.

¹ 'bogg': an apt simile, but one which probably needed no consideration by Wotton: the Irish terrain was high among his dislikes.

² 'the old comedy': not identified.

³ 'A.D.': unidentified.

⁴ 'interpreters': not translators, but those who report on, and interpret, to the Court the progress of the war.

⁵ 'Oneales' etc: Irish clans. Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, was the rebel leader. 'of them': i.e. of the interpreters.

Germaines are not suspicious naturally, but they are naturally very retentive of such impressions as they receive. I will addresse him unto you and your discourse may rise from some generall questions of the security his voyage from robbing or manner of his exchange or the like heads that will bring on the rest, which knowne I expect speedy advertisement: The inclosed letter after you have read, seal & deliver itt: you must neither be ignorant of the matter nor know all; it is enough that he perceave me to expect from you or himself by your conveyghance, knowledg how that matter proceedeth, & you may know I have appointed him to receive the mony but if you desire to know more you tast the forbidden tree. I may now discourse of our condition here. This Towne of Dublin is rather ill inhabited then seated: the people of good naturall abilities but corrupted some with a wild, some with a loose life & indeed there is almost nothing in this contry but itt is either savage or wanton. they have hitherto wanted nothing [^]more than ~~kep~~ to be kept in feare; which (by (gods grace) they shall not want hereafter. ⁶ They are inclined more then any nation I have seen to superstitions, which surely have crept in betweene ignorance and liberty. In their hospitalities ther is fully as much unhandsomenes as plenty. for their general parts, their bodies are active and their minds are rather secret then nimble. When I have gotten a litle authority of experience here: I intend to enlarge myself unto you in my opinion of them. For our wars I can only say we have a good cause, & the worthyest gentleman of the world to lead itt.⁷ The God of warrs & peace keepe you in his favor.

I must not forgett wee tooke last night a towne of Oralois for our quarter,⁸ where we found infinite store of all manner country provisions ducks hens geese & such like as if hee had lived in much peace of conscience: this mans guests we were a night but so ungratefull that wee left him this day not so much as Seges ubi Troia fuit.⁹

We are here amongst boggs & woods that is where they would have us to bee: while they are only unfortunate in this, that they scant know what is left them more to desire. Certaynely obedience & good publique ends brought us hither not our owne wisdom I dare warrant itt.

⁶ The duplication of the opening bracket is in the MS.

⁷ Wotton was at this time still a close and admiring supporter of Essex.

⁸ 'Oralois': if one places the accent on the second syllable, and pronounces 'lois' as in the English forename, it becomes clear that 'Oralois' is probably 'O'Reilly's'. The Gaelic form is O'Raghailligh, and Orelly and Oreille are also found. The O'Reillys ruled Co. Cavan, just outside the English pale.

⁹ 'Seges ubi Troia fuit': Wotton quotes Ovid, 'iam seges est, ubi Troia fuit', [Now are fields of corn where Troy once was]; Ovid, *Heroides*, trans. by Grant Showerman, Loeb edition (London: Heinemann, 1947), I, 53. *Heroides*, I is a verse-letter in the voice of Penelope writing to Ulysses a lament of long absence, which is perhaps what has called it to Wotton's mind. In this line, she is speaking of the destruction of Troy, so total that only cornfields can now be seen.

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I. I promised a rovery like godfathers wth promises & vowe
 these things for children before they know whether it bee
 in the childrens destiny to bee able to keepe these vovues or no.
 for I am since overtaken, & mett & miscreant in busineses such
 I could neither suspect nor avoid: nothing else could have
 made me comitt this omiffion. for wth yet it will not aske
 pardon because y^e cannot quite it & my best offence of not
 coming is my punishment. I meane the want of that good
 company y^e have & see. If I would some great friends
 or men were dead I of might chuffe them on some stony
 one Countrey, but the more so I were not with them, if I might
 have some notes to ease the itch of roving wth a dayly
 me for no done or in the diabolous Council I know nothing
 worth y^e exposing wth of I might mistyfy this reprochable
 headlong litle. wth least I heape up many sinns I will hence
 cut off. always & all ways y^e.

S. In this sickly dotage of y^e world where better languishes
 in a banishment I must be glad shee hath found so high a way
 to nothing in y^e mind I dare not only have been here, but about
 it by y^e words & deed. for it is as dangerous to have been
 in this world as it will be to have wanted it in the next
 & I am faine to find more finery in heaven then honestie
 upon y^e earth. yet y^e greatest harme & honesty doth y^e
 it I aske my iudgement & suffer it not to go to board to
 consider y^e with y^e learning & other worthines.
 because me thinkes I have taken a witley peeple & made
 a rare discoberie when I have found an honest man:
 & therefore what so ever y^e have more then honesty is
 the wast & unchristyner of nature: I know it a fault
 to commend a thing so much out of fashion as honesty yet
 since I desire infinitely to converse a friendship wth you
 by cause I know how fare y^e over shipp me in all other busines
 I stand most upon honesty wth wth I have had most acquaintance
 in home & society. I am best able to keepe wth wth in it
 though y^e see high. I have not read our letter from y^e since I
 saw y^e & by it I see I should have bee glad of mine: when
 y^e think my litle on me worthy of offence. Salutations, write
 & when our of y^e letters I shall wth out an answer & thanks

Letters from Donne to Wotton in D1's hand, the first (printed by Simpson as No. 8) of Christmas 1597-8, the second (Simpson's No. 12) of uncertain date.

(Image courtesy of The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland)

Transcript of preceding page:

Sir. I promised a jorney like godfathers which promise & vow three things for children before they know whether it bee in the childrens destiny to bee able to keepe there vowes or no.¹⁰ for I am since overtaken, & mett & inwrapd in businesses which I could nether suspect nor avoyd: nothing else could have made me committ this omission. for which yet I will not aske pardon bycause you cannot give it & my verie offence of not commiing is my punishment I meane the want of that good company you have & are. Sir I would some great princes or men were dead so I might chuse them or some states or Countryes overthrown so I were not in them that I might have some news to ease this itch of writing which travayles me for in our owne or in the d'amours Court¹¹ I know nothing worth your reporting whereof I might justyfy this reprobate headlong letter. which least I heape up many sins I will here cut off.

alwayes & all wayes yours.

Sir. In this sickly dotage of the world where vertue languisheth in a banishment I must be glad shee hath found so holesome a dwelling in your mind that dares not only harbor her, but avouch it by your words & deeds. for it is as dangerous to have vertue in this world as it wilbe to have wanted it in the next & I am sure to find more sinners in heaven then honest men upon the earth. yet Sir the greatest harme that honesty doth you is that it arests my judgment & suffers it not to go forward to consider your witt your learnings & other worthineses. because methinks I have taken a ritche prise & made a rare discoverie when I have found an honest man: & therefore whatsoever you have more then honesty is the wast and unthriftynes of nature: I know it a fault to commend a thing so much out of fashion as honesty yet since I desire infinitely to contract a frendship with you (bycause I know haw far you overstripp me in all other vertues) I stand most upon honesty with which I have had most acquaintance & society. I am best able to keep wing with you in it though you sore high. I have now red one letter from you since I saw you & by it see I should have bee[n] glad of more: when you think my letter or me worthy of oftner salutations, write & when one of your letters perisheth without answeare & thanks [*MS continues overleaf*] lett me forfeit you. I had almost condemned you of forgetting me but you are saved by your booke.¹² which I will keep till it pleaseth [you] to dispose it otherwise. Sir in a long & well studied oration no man shalbee able to commend to you

¹⁰ At infant baptism, godparents promise that the child will 'forsake the devill and all his workes, and constantly beleve Gods holy worde, and obediently keepe his commandements.' (Book of Common Prayer, 1588).

¹¹ 'd'amours Court': The Christmas revel Prince d'Amour was acted at the Middle Temple in the 1597-8 Christmas season.

¹² 'your booke': probably a manuscript copy of The State of Christendom, written in 1594, but not published until 1657, many years after Wotton's death.

an honest love then this galloping letter doth: & therefore till the next commodity of
sending let me here kisse your hand & vow to you the observaunces of

your servant & lover