

TNA: PRO SP 63/89/18*Copy of John Nugent's confession, 5 February 1581/2*

Sir Christopher Nugent, ninth Baron Delvin, had been implicated in the winter of 1580-81 in the rebellion of James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass; he was taken into custody, along with the Earl of Kildare, on 23 December 1580 (see SP 63/79/24, 63/79/25, 63/79/26, and 63/79/30). Delvin's younger brother, William Nugent, seems at the news of Delvin's arrest to have taken himself and his wife, Gennet Marward, into hiding in his castle on Lough Shileen, thereafter – according to the testimony of John Nugent in this examination – engaging in various combinations with unsavoury and rebellious figures in the Irish political landscape, in an attempt to avoid capture and, perhaps, to foment resistance to a Pale administration increasingly antagonistic to Old English interests in the east of Ireland, and to Catholics. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this examination is its clearly sophisticated quality: Sir Robert Dillon, then second justice of the Common Pleas, and Secretary of State Geoffrey Fenton were both eager to see the downfall of Sir Nicholas Nugent, Dillon's longtime enemy and a staunch Catholic defender of Old English interests in the Pale. This examination of Nicholas Nugent's servant John, which implicates Nicholas' wife (and William Nugent's mother-in-law) Ellen Plunkett, has apparently been carefully crafted, and in places distorted, to make connections between William Nugent's rebellion and the far less suspicious – even circumspect – actions of his uncle Nicholas. It is no accident that, upon Nicholas Nugent's trial and execution, Robert Dillon was given his office of Chief Justice. For the secretary copying this examination, the whole affair must have seemed at once tawdry and cunning, consistent with the general Dublin culture of secrecy, self-interest, and hypocrisy (and it is perhaps significant that other copies of this examination include a note before paragraph 20, indicating that all the subsequent statements were added by Fenton himself, in his hand; did Spenser remove this important, and possibly revealing, distinction, before forwarding the copy to Westminster?). Many of the Old English and Irish men named in this examination are not elsewhere recorded, and some of the place names – though undoubtedly in County Westmeath, the seat of the Nugents – have resisted identification. For all the rest, see the notes, and the biographies and map contained in the appendix.

The main text of this document is neatly written in Spenser's characteristic secretary hand, and the annotations, running down the left margin of each page, are in Spenser's mixed hand. That Grey personally checked these annotations is indicated by the second of them, where he has added a final phrase ('hee was my Lord of Delluins steward.') in his distinctive hand. The original endorsement is almost certainly in Spenser's mixed hand, and the others, added later, in distinct italic scripts.

Endorsements

Copy of Iohn Nugents
Confession.:/

Iohn Nugents
confession

.Lords.

The coppinge of Ihon Nugentes
confession.
5 February 1582.

Text

A playne Discourse aswell of William Nugentes rebellious Actes as also of the search made for his youngest sonne Christofer & also of his wife Gennett Marwardes behaviour during the tyme of the Rebellion, where in Ellen Plonkett wife to Nicholas Nugent is touched, made & declared by Iohn Nugent hereafter particularly ensueth. At the castle of Dublin the vth of February 1581 ./

The first going out of William Nugent vpon the apprehension of the Lord his brother.

Edward Delahyde sendeth victelles to William Nugent. This Edward is taken but yet not thoroughly examyned, hee was my Lord of Delluins steward.* Piers Oconoghan since taken & his confession herewith* sent.

1 First vpon thapprehencion of the Lord of Delvin, the said William Nugent being then in the Clonene, hearing say that Captein Bryan fitz Williams & McStraunge then Sheriefe was come thether to apprehend him he made an escape & tooke his said wife with him to a Castle that lyeth in Loghsiline in the Breny, which he purposed to defend against the Princes powre, & had victelles sent to him thether by Edward Delahide my Lord of Delvins Stuard out of the Clonene & from the Neighboures therevnto nere adioyning. Whose names I doe not perfectly know, by reason that I do dwell a farre of. which Edward & another of the Houshold servauntes of the Clonene called Pieres o Connoghan are fled & gone out of the Countrey, for the said cause./

Edmond Christofer & Robert Bane Nugent & Edmond Faye./

2 Item his wyfe being as he thought layed vp safely he sent to his base brother Edmond Nugent who then was a Horseman. & soone after he sould his Horses & caused Christofer Nugent, Robert Bane Nugent & his owne brother Edmond faye to sell their Horses which he gave them & to become kearne & they & ij of the Fayes viz Robert & Edmond, Cahell mac Gillese o Relye & the rest of Sleight* Hee accompanied the said William, where euer he went.

Richard Nugent of Donnower./

3 Item it was spoken & bruted throughout the Countrey, that the said Captein would have lefte a ward in the Clonene & the said William assembled his people & was lurking about the Clonene afforesaid along while to prevent him: & Richard Nugent of Donnower was of the company, & as many men as he could make./

4 Item about the
tyme that Sir
Lucas Dillon
knight &c &
Nicholas Nugent
then Iusticer went
in Commission
into the County of
Westmeath to
appease the warre,
the said William

William Nugent – procureth all the Nugents to breake out.

John Cusack falsefieth this in the Article 36./

Victellers of Castelton

send meat to William Nugent This Castleton is belonging to my Lord of Delvin.

The Oconnoures & others combine with William Nugent.

Purpose fayled, for Proteccion could neuer
be graunte{d}

Garrett Nugents sonne.

John Cusack taketh an
oth of the Confederates.

William Nugent doubteth Oneill./

Nugent was a Commen procurer of all the Nugentes in generall to Rebellion, except Thomas Nugent of Dardestowne* & Levallen Nugent of Dromcree, that would not bee ledde by him, vntill by the good exhortacion of the said Sir Lucas & Nicholas they were brydeled & stayed./

5. Item vntill Sir Edward Mores coming into the countrey the said William Nugent & his company were wont to lye at a woodde called killmenekartagh, sometymes at the Bolly Roo, & Lavallen Nugent of Dromcree his woodde of the Dirre, where they had great fyres in the night, & victelles was sent to them by the victelleres of Castelton, viz Thomas Bane, Teig o Balrey, Edmond Browne, & William Fernane./

6 Item at which tyme the Oconnoures viz Patrickes sonnes,

viz Teig, & Briene, & Lisagh Oconnoures sonnes, Brian Magoghan, his brother Coule & his Cossen Calvagh Magoghan appointed Clonefaddy in Ferrebille as a meeting place for William Nugent to come vnto them, & there they combyned together & it was concluded betwene them, that William Nugent, Brien Magoghan, Sir Nicholas Eustace & a few more should goe into the North Edmond Nugent & his company to goe to ORorick his countrey & the Oconnoures to remayne about the great more, of purpose to th'end that they might draw the Irish lordes to come & disturbe the English Pale, where they remayned a long tyme./

{7.}* Item the said William Nugent procured his base brother Edmond Nugent to come before him into the Countrey, & to make suitt for a Proteccion, vnto th'end that he might have liberty to come into the Countrey, so as he might bee a Procurer of the countrey people to goe with him: at which tyme Edmond Nugent sonne to Gerrott Nugent & as many men as he could make, was perswaded to goe with him; And when soeuer that they had heard of his Coming from the North, to send to the Oconnoures, and they all to meete vpon the great More.

{8} Item during which tyme Iohn Cusack now Prisoner wrought with the Gentlemen & Heires of the Pale, that they might bee furtherers of the holy cause now in hand, as they tearmed yt, And his maner was to take a Corporall othe of ech one that made him promise that they would doe & bee ledde by William Nugent their generall in whatsoever entreprize he would take in hand. and because I was neuer required to bee of the number of them, that wrought the Conspiracy against the Prince, I doe not know what they pretended to doe, but what I heard by the Common brute of otheres. And therefore I referre that to the said Iohn Cusack, who knoweth most of all men thereof.

9 Item when yt was motioned that my Lord Deputy would goe into the North the said William Nugent came vp from thence

The Rebelles sever them selves.

bycause he stood in doubt of Oneill and he dispersed his People, & went but a few in company, whereof Patrick Cusack & another Iohn Cusack were euer two that went with him in his company, & the rest were dispersed as followeth. viz Cahir Beddy oReily, who supplied Cahill mac Gillese rownie was alwaies succored in Fertullagh; Edmond Nugent, moriertagh mac lysagh & Christofer Nugent remayned in the Countrey & tooke meat & drinck violently wheresoeuer they came./

Piers Boy Nugent telleth th'examine of william Nugent. wherevpon he speaketh with him./

10 Item yt was my vnfortunate Chaunce, that as I had occasion to goe to the Towne of Coilladogherane, I went through the towne of Maxeston, & there it fortuneth that I mett Pieres boy Nugent of the same, who told me, that William Nugent & Edmond mac gillteane Harper lay in his Barne & he would gladly have spoken with me: to whome I made answeere & said, that I durst not goe to him; & he said that I should not need to feare. by whose persuasion I went in. And emongst all other Communicacion the said William said, that he was litle behoulding to his vncles & kinsmen, which gave him nothing, & was at their owne Ease at Home, & he driven to travell into farre countreies & that it should not be long so. And said he is it possible, that you should shifte me 20 or 40 Banlavase of rough Canvas to make me a Tent to lye in, in the Night. No indeed, said I, yt is not possible for me to gett so much Canvas, but that yt should bee knowen by mee, but I have a Caliver, and a Flaske which Captein Crase gave me, and I will bring yt you at Night, and a small bottle to carry some Aqua vite about you, and according to promise I brought the Calliver & the rest the Night following./

11 Item I being in company with the said William & Edmond in the Barne aforesaid, yt fortuneth that a litle before supper Iohn Cusack came in, being before in the English pale. and the same William reioysed greatly at his Coming. and as he beganne to tell newes of the Pale, they stood both a litle besyde, & they had long Communicacion together, & what they said, I know not. but Iohn Cusack spake of a Monday, and said William, say not so, keepe that to your self, and by all lykelyhode yt was some meeting day, that was betwene the Conspiratoures./

Nicholas Nugent & his wife come vp towards William Nugent.

12 Item when supper was doen, we went all fowre to a litle grove of wood, that lyeth vpon the land of Maxeston, and there we lay vntill yt was towardses day: at which place & tyme the said Iohn Cusack began to tell to the said William that his wife was somewhat crased. and that his vncle Nicholas & his mother Ellen were coming vpon the morrow after into the Countrey to fynd out his sonne Christofer; & tould him, that the said Nicholas was bownd to bring him in by a day, or to submitt his body to the castle, wherevnto the said William answered, that it was lesse force, that he should remayne there awhile, then that he should

William Nugent refuseth
to deliuer in his child.

have iij pledges from him, signifying my Lord of Delvin his brother his wife & his childe. what said Iohn Cusack, will ye seeme to be so vnkynd to your vncle, that ye will suffer him ly in prison for a childe, & cannot tell how long he will live. no doe not so, said Iohn Cusack, for it is the mother of the childes pleasure that the Child bee sent in, in hope to gett her self sett at Liberty: for I saw a lettre written with her owne hand of that effect with her mother to the childes fosterfather. & have not you seene it as yett: no indeed said William I saw yt not, & yf I had seene it, yt shall not be hable to persuade me to putt in the childe. But in this sort yf I can gett my wife enlarged, & at myne owne will, I wilbe contented to send in any of both my sonnes & not otherwise. which argument was mislyked of by the said Cusack & me.

William Nugent meeteth
with Ellen Plonkett at
Richard Crosses house.
The said Ellen is wyfe to
Nicholas Nugent late
Iustice & mother to
Iennett of Skryne wyfe
to William Nugent. This
Crosse is fled.

{13} Item at the breake of the day we removed from that place to another place called Bolly roo, & Iohn Cusack said I promised to mete Ellen Plonkett to day at Killowa, & yf you will I will bring her to some convenient place, where you may have speach together; I wilbe glad thereof said William & there they concluded to mete at Richard Crosses howse in Castelton & thether they came both vpon the said Cusackes draught the night following: & what Company they had, or how they did behave them selues, I doe not know, by reason that I was not present and I referre that to Walter Porter now prisoner, who was then present. But yt fortuneth after that I mett the said Crosse* who tould me that yt was through the night, that my Mistris Ellen Plonkett came to his house, & that he was constraigned to flie from the same: how hapned that, said I? yt hapned said he, that she would needes goe to the great Castle, & thether came William Nugent & Tadee Noland in his company; and they had conference together; and I have vndoen my self (quod he) that I followed not Sir Edward mores Counsell when he would have me to goe to Dublin.

Ellen Plonkett deliuereth
to thexamine a lettre
from Iennet of Skryne
mentioned in the 12th
former Article.

{1}4 Item vpon the morrow after her being at Castleton she came as farre as the wodde of Ballinvealle & there lighted, & yt was my fortune to heare of my Master Nicholas Nugentes coming to Dromcree, and thether I went, & being standing with him awhile there he willed me to ryde forward towards Ballinvealle, & to bidde his wyfe to stay for him; and I did so. And there she deliuered mee the lettre mencioned before by Iohn Cusack and she told me how my Master was vexed for William Nugentes youngest sonne: and therevpon she willed me to goe with the lettre to Hubert Faye, who as she said brought away the childe from kilkarne. & bycause I knew of William Nugentes* mynd before, I said yt was but in vayne for me to goe thether, and that vnlesse it pleased his father that the child would not bee had.

- John Plonkett & Oliuer. 15 Item soone after my said Master Nicholas Nugent & his brother Oliuer came present, & then they mused what was best to doe therein & in the end they concluded to goe to Iohn Plonkett of Bally Loghcreawe, & he to worke with our Thomas mac Shian Orelly who is an alter to William Nugent, to gett the childe, & we lighted on a hill about Bally Loghcreaw: & I was sent to the said Iohn Plonkett to require him to come forth, & to speake with his cosen Ellen Plonkett, that staid for him on the hill ouer the towne; & thether came he & fownd her there: & being in comunicacion together, Nicholas Nugent came thether, who went a while in the way with his brother Oliuer; & after he had lighted they began to talke of the childe: in somuch that Iohn Plonkett said that* it lay not in Thomas mac Shian to gett the child, vnles yt pleased the father. & when I heard him say so, I said, yf you will keepe counsell of me, I will presume to goe to his father, & I will shoue him his wives handwryting, & then I hope he wilbe moved to cause the childe to bee sent in./
- Thomas mac Shane Orelly./
- Nicholas Nugent & Oliuer speake for William Nugents child.
- William Nugent at the house of Gerrott Nugent in Fower./
- 16 Item this being doen, I traueiled so farre vntill I came to Fowre, & I fownd William Nugent in Gerrott Nugentes chamber in fower afforesaid, & I shewed him his wives lettre concerning the childe, who answered that he would not assent, that the childe should be deliuered, vnlesse he could gett his wife sett at liberty. which answeere I repeated at my retourne./
- Another lettre from. Iennett of Skryne for her Childe.
- 17 Item soone after I received another lettre by William Miller of kilkarne, which was subscribed by William Nugentes wife, and directed to Hubert fay concerning the said childe; & I told the said fay of the tenour thereof; who answered that one Robert fay by William Nugentes appointment brought the child from kilkarne & not he, which lettre is forthComing./
- Ellen Plonkett sends money to the traitour william Nugent
- 18 Item vpon relacion made by me of William Nugentes wantes and lacke of money, Ellen Plonkett deliuered me iij^{li} in money, which I sent to him after by Bryen mac gillhev{e}ike* his footboy./
- fermanagh is maguyers cuntrie
- 19 Item when all practizes could not fynd out the child, the said Ellen Plonkett disposed her self to make search for him in the Breny, & went as farre as lough roue. & I went with her & there we learned that the child was sent to a countrey called fearr managh, and there as it is said remayneth./
- The traitorous Actes giuen me to be* vnderstand and by whome particularly ensweth./
- Maguyre promised to ioyne.
- 20 First William Nugent tould me that Maguire promised to send him iij^{xx} shott & targett men vpon his owne proper charges, when soeuer that he would attempt to doe any harme to the English Pale

- The Priour & Art Oneill consented.
- 21 Item he told me that the Priour Oneill & Art Oneill with as many men as they can make, promised to assist him in this Rebellion, & he told me also that he did send vnto them already and that their answere was, that they would not hazard them selues nor their men vntill the said William had begonne the warre & donne some harme of him self.
- William Nugent made Generall of the Pale by the Popes authority. which sheweth further that this Rebellion was intended before any apprehencion of matter meantt against the Lord his brother or him self.
- 22 Item the said William told me that vpon the death of Iames fitz Morish the pope of Rome made Sir Iohn of Desmond Generall & furtherer of the holy cause, so by him termed and the said Sir Iohn gave him the same Authority to bee Generall of the English pale./
- 23 Item he told me that yt was partly through his meane that the pray of Breacklure was taken
- Practize to intercept Sir Nicholas Malbey.
- 24 Item the said William told me that he lay in an Amboishment at killareteary for Captein Malbey, thincking that by taking him he should purchase him self a Pardon
- 25 He saith that Ellen told him that she had talked with William Nugent in the great castle at Castleton. He saith further that he thincketh vpon his conscience that Nicholas Nugent knew that Ellen spake with William as is afforesaid
- Written by Mr Secretary Fenton./*
- 26 He confesseth that William Nugent told him, that a litle befo{re} Michaelmas last, the Baron Delvin wrote a lettre to the said William of this tenour: viz lett the poore man enioy his shepe, or elles you doe him great wrong. This lettre William answered in this sort. viz, yf yt had bene a Shepe that had bene scabbed, yt had bene better he should haue perished, then the whole flock.
- This lettre was written in the name of fraunces Hamon & directed to Laurence Hamon but meant to the Lord of Delvin./*
- 27 Another lettre at the same tyme the said William shewed to thexamine conteyning this matter, viz the worke that I haue taken in hand, I cannot as yett go through with it, for that nether the stones nor Masons are ready nor lyme burnt. And therefore we must wayt a tyme. This was written with William his owne hand./
- Signed vnderneath with
Iohn Nugentes owne hand
wherewith all the rest was written

Textual Notes

* **Marginal notes hee was my Lord of Delluins steward.]** Added to Spenser's marginal annotation in Grey's hand.

† **Marginal notes herewith]** A long oblique line pointing to this underscored word appears in the left margin below it.

†

* **after of Sleight]** 'he accompanied' deleted.

† **Dardestowne]** Annotated in the text with a small cross.

†

* **{7.}]** Most of this number, and the '8' that presumably heads the next paragraph, have been subsumed into the binding.

†

* **Crosse]** Annotated in the text with a small cross.

†

* **after Nugentes]** 'wife' deleted.

†

* **that]** Inserted above the line.

†

* **gillhev{e}ike]** The unclear letter in this word was apparently smudged in the writing.

†

* **be]** Inserted above the line.

† **Marginal note Written by Mr Secretary Fenton./]** A bracket connected to this note takes in articles 25, 26, and 27.

†

* **Marginal note Delvin./]** A hand (or index) has been drawn in the left margin, pointing to this note.

Annotations

William Nugentes] William Nugent was the younger brother of Sir Christopher Nugent, ninth Baron of Delvin; see biographies.

his youngest sonne Christofer] One of the most confusing aspects of historical research in Ireland in this period is the tendency of families to use the same Christian names in successive generations; this Christopher was the younger son of William, the rebel and subject of this examination, whose custody had been granted to his great-uncle, Sir Nicholas Nugent, for close keeping during his father William's rebellion. It is unlikely, as *ODNB* maintains, that Christopher was born in 1582, as this would make the child less than a month old at the time of the events recorded here; probably Christopher was born at some point in 1581.

his wife Gennett Marwardes] The daughter of Walter Marward, Baronet of Skreen and his wife Ellen Plunkett (who later married Sir Nicholas Nugent). Nicholas White records in a letter to Burghley of 12 December 1573 (SP 63/43/14) how William Nugent abducted her from her stepfather's house with 'twenty naked swords'.

Ellen Plonkett] Wife to Sir Nicholas Nugent, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (Ireland), and daughter to Sir John Plunkett, Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench (Ireland).

Nicholas Nugent] Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (Ireland), and, being the fifth son of the seventh Baron Delvin, William Nugent's uncle; see biographies.

John Nugent] The exact relation of John Nugent of Scurlockstown to the main branches of the Nugent family is not clear. Because of the way he refers to Nicholas Nugent as 'my Master', it seems reasonable to conjecture that he was from a client branch of the family, and in some sense in service to the Chief Justice.

vth of February 1581] 1582, new style.

Lord of Delvin] Sir Christopher Nugent, ninth Baron; see biographies.

the Clonene] Clonyn, the seat of the Nugent family near Castletown Delvin, southwest of Kells in Co. Westmeath; see map.

Captein Bryan fitz Williams & McStraunge] Captain Brian Fitzwilliam, the brother of sometime and future Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam, had been stationed in Leinster with a band of horsemen for the preceding six or seven years; his band was discharged in early January 1582 (SP 63/88/9, 63/88/40/1). 'McStraunge' may be Nugent's or Spenser's error for Thomas Le Strange, another captain of horse discharged in Leinster in early January 1582, perhaps by this point serving as sheriff of the county.

a Castle ... in the Breny] The position of the castle is unknown, but was probably on the edge of Lough Sheelin in the Brenny or Breifne (a large area stretching from Cavan westwards toward Fermanagh), just south of Cavan.

Pieres o Connoghan] Unidentified.

Edmond Nugent] The base brother of the Baron of Delvin and of William Nugent.

Robert Bane Nugent] Unidentified.

Edmond faye] The Fayes were, like the Nugents, an Old English family of Westmeath. It is not clear why William Nugent should have called Edmund Faye his brother, though it is possible that a sister had married into the family.

kearne] See glossary.

ij of the Fayes viz Robert & Edmond] Unidentified.

Cahell mac Gillese o Relye & the rest of Sleight] Unidentified.

bruted] Noised, reported.

Richard Nugent of Donnowre] Little is known of this Richard Nugent (not to be confused with Richard Nugent, eighth Baron Delvin), apart from his participation in resistance to the cess in 1577, which caused several of his cousins and other relations to be imprisoned. He was pardoned for his role in the present rebellion by June (SP 63/93/1).

Sir Lucas Dillon knight &c] Chief Baron of the Exchequer; see biographies.

in Commission] Under orders from the Irish Council.

County of Westmeath] Northwest of Co. Kildare; see map.

Thomas Nugent of Dardestowne] Richard Nugent's cousin, and probably William's uncle. Other manuscripts of the examination may have read 'Carlinstone' here (see Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, D/3835/A/5/14, a nineteenth-century transcript of another copy of this examination, now lost). Modern Dardistown is located immediately to the west of Killagh or Killagh, a few kilometers southwest of the Clonyn; see map.

Levallen Nugent of Dromcree] Considered 'simple witted' and eventually pardoned (see SP 63/93/1), Levallen was probably another of William's uncles. For Drumcree, Co. Westmeath, see map.

Sir Edward Mores] A captain of horse in Leinster, whose band was cased at the end of 1581 (see SP 63/88/40/1). He remained in command of a band of footmen in the garrison at Philipstown; ultimately he would receive the reward, for his service, of Nicholas Nugent's goods.

killmenekartagh] Unidentified.

Bolly Roo] Unidentified.

woodde of the Dirre] Unidentified.

Thomas Bane, Teig o Balrey, Edmond Browne, & William Fernane] Unidentified.

Oconnoures ... Calvagh Magoghan] The O'Connors were based west of the Annaly (Co. Longford), and northwest of Athlone. These particular men have not been identified.

Clonefaddy in Ferrebille] Unidentified.

Sir Nicholas Eustace] In a letter of 18 February 1581, Chancellor William Gerrarde informed Walsingham of the behaviour of Sir Nicholas Eustace, a Roman priest, who would swear Irish gentlemen to confederacy with the rebels while saying mass at their houses (see SP 63/80/61).

ORorick his countrey] Brian O'Rourke, the O'Rourke, was the major Irish lord of Leitrim; see biographies.

the great more] Probably the Bog of Allan, south of Lough Ree.

make suitt for a Proteccion] In order to travel freely past the garrison towns, gentlemen required a kind of passport – the protection – from the local governor; in the Pale, protections could be secured by suit to the Lord Deputy or Council.

Edmond Nugent sonnet to Gerrott Nugent] Unidentified. Gerald Nugent may be another of the seventh Baron's sons.

Iohn Cusack now Prisoner] One of William Nugent's chief co-conspirators, his defection to 'state's evidence' in return for protection made possible the Council's trial and punishment of the other conspirators. It appears that Grey also granted him a pension for his pains (see SP 63/98/64), though this was apparently quickly discontinued after Grey's revocation. His uncle, Edward Cusack of Lismollen, heir to Sir Thomas Cusack, was also pardoned in April (SP 63/91/22, *infra*).

Gentlemen & Heires of the Pale] Young gentlemen heirs to Irish noble houses, perhaps influenced by the political practices of the tanists of Irish septs, were notorious for taking on the (often rebellious) political causes that their fathers, bound by their status, could not openly countenance.

holy cause] Resistance to the Protestant Elizabeth, who had been excommunicated by a Papal bull in 1572. The pope's influence on the Irish rebellions during this period was a matter of intense speculation in Dublin and Westminster

Corporall othe] An oath of the body; perjurers would suffer execution.

when ... into the North] Grey journeyed into Ulster against Turlough Luineach O'Neill in the second half of July, returning on or around 9 August (see SP 63/84/26, 63/85/5).

bycause he stood in doubt of Oneill] Unsure of O'Neill's chances against the Lord Deputy, and of his faith in the treaty he had negotiated with him, Nugent returned out of Ulster.

Cahir Beddy oReily] Unidentified.

Cahill mac Gillese rownie] Unidentified.

Fertullagh] Unidentified.

morertagh mac lysagh] Unidentified.

Coilladogherane] Unidentified.

Maxeston] Almost certainly a copyist's (Spenser's?) mistake for 'Mapeston', or modern Mabestown, halfway between Drumcree and the Clonyn in Co. Westmeath; see map.

Pieres boy Nugent] Unidentified.

Edmond mac gilleteane Harper] Unidentified.

20 or 40 Banlavase of rough Canvas] Possibly 'baulavase'; an obscure measure.

Caliver] A light musket.

Captein Crase] A captain Cruce was discharged in August 1581 (SP 63/85/23), and received the right in a copper mine from John Ussher, at Burghley's and Walsingham's request, in July 1582 (SP 63/94/58); the spelling here may be Nugent's or Spenser's error.

Aqua vite] Unrefined spirits.

the said Iohn Cusack ... somewhat crased] Gennet Marward's anxiety for the return of her son Christopher is understandable, given his likely age. William Nugent's reluctance to send the baby in for safe keeping as a 'pledge' clearly derived from his cynical attitude to the Pale government's promises; while his wife believed she would be released upon the commital of the child, William thought they would both be turned over to close keeping.

said Nicholas ... the castle] Sir Nicholas Nugent had been instructed by legal order to produce Christopher Nugent (William's son) by a given day, or himself be imprisoned in Dublin castle.

Killowa] Probably Killagh or Killaugh, Co. Westmeath, 5km southwest of the Clonyn; see map.

Richard Crosses howse in Castelton] Unidentified. Castelton is, again, probably Castletown Delvin; see map.

draught] Horse.

Walter Porter] Unidentified.

Tadee Noland] A Nowland Tadee was examined in January 1584 (SP 63/107/46) as to the subsequent flight and conspiracies of William Nugent in Paris and in Rome; he had perhaps returned to Ireland and turned himself in, perhaps in hope of a pardon. His subsequent fate is unrecorded.

wodde of Ballinvealle] Probably modern Ballinvally in Co. Westmeath, about 2km northwest of Castletown Delvin; see map.

Hubert Faye] Unidentified.

kilkarne] Kilcarn in Co. Meath, near Navan; see map.

his brother Oliuer] Little is known of him.

John Plunkett of Bally Loghcreawe] Ellen Plunkett's cousin; Loughcrew is in Co. Meath, about 3km south of Oldcastle.

Thomas mac Shian Orelly] Unidentified.

an alter] Obscure; a foster-brother?

it lay not in...] 'It would not be possible for'.

Fowre] Fore, Co. Westmeath, lies about 6km northwest of Drumcree, and just over 10km northwest of the Clonyn; see map.

William Miller of kilkarne] Unidentified.

Robert fay] Unidentified.

Bryen mac gillheveike his footboy] Unidentified.

lough roure] Possibly Lough Ramor, though this is considerably far east; but Nugent is less likely to have intended Lough Ree, which is perhaps too far west for Ellen Plunkett's journey. It seems likely that there has been some corruption in transmission here.

fearr managh] Fermanagh, north of O'Rourke's country; see map.

Maguire] Chief of the Maguire sept, based in Fermanagh.

ii^x shott ... proper charges] Sixty archers in his own pay.

the Priour Oneill & Art Oneill] Art O'Neill is almost certainly Art McBaron O'Neill, the younger brother of Hugh O'Neill, Baron of Dungannon and later Earl of Tyrone.

James fitz Morish] James Fitzmaurice, son of Sir Maurice Duffe, and grandson of the fourteenth Earl of Desmond, and thus first cousin to the sixteenth Earl. He led a revolt, with continental Catholic backing, in Ireland during the late 1570s, and was killed by Tillot Burke in August 1579.

Sir Iohn of Desmond] Sir John of Desmond, the brother of the Earl of Desmond, was still at this date in open rebellion in Munster.

the pray of Breacklure] On 'pray', see glossary; 'Breacklure' unidentified.

Amboishment at killareteary] The site of this ambush is unidentified.

Captein Malbey] Sir Nicholas Malby; see biographies.

purchase him self a Pardon] William hoped to use a hostage as leverage with the Dublin government, to secure his restoration to obedience.

great castle at Castleton] Probably Castletown Delvin, about 20km southwest of Kells; see map.

lett the poore man...whole flock] The Baron of Delvin apparently tried to encourage Nugent to refrain from a rebellion that would disorder the lives and livelihoods of the poor; Nugent replied that it was a price worth paying, for right.

thexamine] I.e. John Nugent, the author of the present examination.