

SUMMARY: The document below is a copy in Sir Christopher Hatton's letter book of a letter dated 13 July 1581 in which Lord Burghley thanks Hatton for his intervention with the Queen 'in the case of my daughter of Oxford'. For a letter dated 12 July 1581 in which Sir Francis Walsingham advises Lord Burghley of Sir Christopher Hatton's discussion with the Queen, see TNA SP 12/149/67, ff. 156-7.

Oxford had been estranged from his wife, Anne Cecil, since his return in April 1576 from a continental tour. It appears Hatton had spoken to the Queen about making Oxford's reconciliation with his wife a condition of the restoration of Oxford's full liberty.

The cause of the Queen's imprisonment of Oxford in the Tower, and her later confinement of Oxford to house arrest, was the birth on 21 March 1581 of his illegitimate son, Edward Vere, by one of the Queen's Maids of Honour, Anne Vavasour. See Sir Francis Walsingham's letter of 23 March 1581 advising that the Queen was 'greatly grieved' by the incident, Huntingdon Library HA 13066.

In the letter below Lord Burghley thanks Hatton for what he has done, but requests that a reconciliation with his wife not be forced on Oxford, but rather merely suggested to him as being in his best interests, lest 'otherwise he may suspect that I regard myself more for my daughter than he is regarded for his liberty'.

Harris suggests that the letters in BL Add. 15891 were copied by Hatton's secretary, Samuel Cox. See Nicolas, Harris, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton* (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), pp. vi-v [sic], 177-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsoflifetim00nicouoft#page/n15>

and:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsoflifetim00nicouoft#page/176>

Sir, though I cannot always pay my debts, yet I use to acknowledge them many times to move my creditors to accept my goodwill in towardness of payment, and so at this time, though I know myself many ways indebted unto you for your goodwill, except you will accept for acquittal my reciproque goodwill, I shall not be able to pay you that I owe you.

Yet yesterday, being advertised of your good & honourable dealing with her Majesty in the case of my daughter of Oxford, I could not suffer my thanks to grow above one day old, and therefore in these few lines I do presently thank you, and do pray you in any proceeding therein not to have the Earl dealt with strainably, but only by way of advice, as good for himself, for otherwise he may suspect that I regard myself more for my daughter than he is regarded for his liberty. I know only the Queen's Majesty's motions shall further the cause, and more than her motions I wish not. You see, being a debtor, I

prescribe my manner to increase the debt, but if I cannot acquit it, I know it belongeth to Almighty God to do it.

I am most sorry to hear of the disaster fallen out yesterday betwixt two great planets, but I hope they know their Jupiter, and will obey her Majesty rather to content her than to follow their own humours. It is far out of season to have these breaches; our adversaries are ever ready to make them greater, and to leap in also to our common harm.

LM: These two great planets were the Earl of Sussex & the Earl of Leicester which were fallen out.

I am not yet fully recovered; this north-west wind keepeth me back from my port of health, which God send you ever, with increase of honour. 13 July 1581.

Yours assuredly,
W. Burghley