

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 4 November 1598 from the Stratford upon Avon lawyer, Abraham Sturley (c.1550-1614), to Richard Quiney (d.1602) mentioning William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon.

In the letter Sturley mentions having received two letters from Quiney, the first dated 25 October and the second dated 1 November 1598. The letter below is thus closely connected to Quiney's letter dated 25 October 1598 to Shakespeare requesting help with arranging a loan of £30 upon his own security and that of 'Mr Bushell' or 'Mr Mytton'. For that letter, see SBTRO ER 27/4.

As noted in the letter below, Quiney was in London pursuing a suit on behalf of the Corporation of Stratford upon Avon:

October came, and Richard Quiney was again in London, this time to petition the Privy Council for a corporation charter on better terms and for relief from the latest subsidy voted by Parliament. With the bad weather and two devastating fires, Stratford had fallen on hard times, so Quiney had a good case. But he was forced to wait in London for four months.

See Schoenbaum, *Samuel, William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*, rev. ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 238 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=6VS_J9IVIYC&pg=PA238&lpg=PA238&dq=%22prosecuting+the+cause%22+%22Greville%22&source=bl&ots=SgtR1FWOw7&sig=N2hAc76Yujiz_3ghmIyVGJpVo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi4i53X-J_JAhXWNogKHZ6cBWQQ6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=%22prosecuting%20the%20cause%22%20%22Greville%22&f=false

Sir Edward Greville (1565-c.1628) mentioned in the letter below was lord of the manor of Stratford. As Sturley points out, his interests could not be trusted to coincide with those of the Corporation of Stratford.

For further particulars of Sturley, Quiney and Greville, see Palmer, Alan and Veronica Palmer, *Who's Who in Shakespeare's England*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981, 1999), pp. 97-8, 198-9, 246-7.

The modern spelling transcript below is based on Halliwell-Phillipps, J.O., *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, (London: Longmans, Green, 1907), pp. 59-60 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/outlineslifेशa00hallgoog#page/n64/mode/2up>.

For a facsimile of the letter see the Windows on Warwickshire website at:

<http://www.search.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk/engine/resource/exhibition/standard/default.asp?txtKeywords=&lstContext=&lstResourceType=&lstExhibitionType=&chkPurchaseVisible=&txtDateFrom=&txtDateTo=&x1=&y1=&x2=&y2=&scale=&theme=&album=&viewpage=%2Fengine%2Fresource%2Fexhibition%2Fstandard%2Fchild.asp&originator=&page=&records=&direction=&pointer=&text=&resource=10122&offset=0>

For a letter from the Stratford upon Avon mercer, Adrian Quiney (d.1607), to his son, Richard Quiney, dating from the same period, see SBTRO BRU 15/1/131

All health, happiness of suits and welfare be multiplied unto you and your labours in God our Father by Christ our Lord.

Your letter of the 25 of October came to my hands the last of the same at night per Greenway, which imported a stay of suits by Sir Edward Greville's advice until etc., and that only you should follow on for tax and subsidy presently, and also your travail(?) and hindrance of answer therein by your long travail and th' affairs of the Court, and that our countryman, Mr William Shak[sper] would procure us money, which I will like of as I shall hear when and where and how, and I pray, let not go that occasion if it may sort to any indifferent conditions. Also that if money might be had for 30 or £40, a lease etc. might be procured. Oh how can you make doubt of money? Who will not bear 30 or 40s towards such a match?

The latter end of your letter, which concerned your household affairs, I delivered presently.

Now to your other letter of the 1st of November received the 3rd of the same. I would I were with you. Nay, if you continue with hope of those suits you write of, I think I shall wt. concent(?) and I will most willingly come unto you, as had you but advice and company, and more money present, much might be done to obtain our charter enlarged, 2 fairs more, with toll of corn, beasts and sheep, and a matter of more value than all that, for, say you, all this is nothing that is in hand, seeing it will not rise to £80, and the charges will be great.

What this matter of more value meaneth I cannot understand, but methinketh whatsoever the good would be, you are afraid of want of money. Good things in hand or near hand cannot choose but be worth money to bring to hand, and being assured, will, if need be, bring money in their mouths, there is no fear nor doubt.

If it be the rest of the tithes and the college houses and lands in our town you speak of, the one half were abundantly rich for us, and the other half to increase Sir Edward's rialties would both bear the charge and set him sure on, the which I take to be your meaning by the latter part of your letter where you write for a copy of the particulars, which also you shall have accordingly.

Oh how I fear when I see what Sir Edward can do, and how near it sitteth to himself, lest he shall think it too good for us and procure it for himself, as he served us the last time, for it seemeth by your own words there is some of it in your own conceit when you write 'If Sir Edward be as forward to do as to speak, it will be done', a doubt I assure you not without doubt to be made, whereof also you add, notwithstanding that doubt, no want but money. Somewhat must be to Sir Edward, and to each one that dealeth somewhat, and great reason. And methinketh you need not be afraid to promise that as fit for him, for all them, and for yourself. The thing obtained no doubt will pay all.

For present advice and encouragement you have by this time master bailie [=bailiff], and for money, when you certify what you have done and what you have spent, what you will do, and what you want, somewhat you know we have in hand, and God will provide that which shall be sufficient.

Be of good courage. Make fast Sir Edward by all means, or else all our hope and your travails be utterly disgraced. Consider and advise if Sir Edward will be fast for us, so that by his goodwill to us and his means for us these things be brought about. What were it for the fee-farm of his rialties, now not above 12 or £13, he were assured of the double when these things come to hand, or more, as the goodness of the thing procured proveth?

But why do I travail in these things when I know not certainly what you intend, neither what your means are, nor what are your difficulties precisely and by name, all which must be known by name, and specially with an estimate of the charge before anything can be added either for advice or supply.

I leave these matters therefore unto the Almighty's merciful disposition in your hand until a more near possibility or more leisure will encourage you or suffer you to write more plainly and particularly. But withal the chancel must not be forgotten, which also obtained would yield some pretty gob of money for your present business, as I think.

The particulars you write for shall this morning be dispatched, and sent as soon as may be.

All is well at home, all your payments made and dispatched. My sister saith if it be so that you cannot be provided for Mrs Pendlbur, she will, if you will, send you up £10 towards that by the next after, or if you take it up, pay it to whom you appoint.

William Walford sendeth order and money per William Court now coming, who hath some cause to fear for he was newly served with process on Tuesday last at Alcr. [=Alcester?] per Roger S.

Mr Parsons supposeth that Wenlock came the same day with master bailie that you writ your letter. He saith he supposeth you may use that £10 for our brewing matters. William Wiatt answered master bailie and us all that he would neither brew himself nor submit himself to the order, but by those very words make against it with all the strength he could possibly make, yet we do this day begin, Mr Bar. and myself, a little for assay.

My brother D.B. at Shrewsbury, or homeward from thence.

But now the bell hath rung; my time is spent. The Lord of all power, glory, mercy and grace and goodness make his great power and mercy known towards us in your [sic for 'our'?] weakness. Take heed of tobacco, whereof we hear per William Perri. Against any long journey you may undertake on foot of necessity, or wherein the exercise of your body must be employed, drink some good burned wine, or aqua vitae and ale strongly mingled, without bread for a toast, and above all, keep you warm.

Farewell, my dear heart, and the lord increase our loves and comforts one to another, that once it may be such as becometh Christianity, purity and sincerity, without stain or blemish. Fare ye well. All your and ours well. From Stratford, November 4th 1598.

Yours in all love in the best bond,

Abraham Sturlei.

Mrs Combe, when Gilbert Charnocke paid them their money, as he told me, said that if any but he had brought it, she would not receive it because she had not her gown, and that she would arrest you for it as soon as you come home, and much twattle, but at the end, so that you would pay £4 toward it, she would allow you 20s, and we shall hear at some leisure how fruits are, and hops, and such knacks.

At this point came William Sheldon, the silkman, with a warrant to serve William Walford again upon a trespass of £500.

Endorsed: To his most loving brother, Mr Richard Quinei, at the Bell in Carter Lane at London, give these. Paid 2d.