

SUMMARY: The document below is an undated letter, endorsed 16 August 1597, from Mary (nee Sidney) Herbert (1561-1621), Countess of Pembroke, to Lord Burghley referring to a proposed match between Oxford's daughter, Bridget Vere (1584-1631), and the Countess' eldest son, William Herbert (1580-1630), later 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Pembroke.

For a letter to Lord Burghley dated 16 August 1597 concerning the proposed marriage written by the Countess' husband, Henry Herbert (c.1538-1601), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Pembroke, see TNA SP 12/264/84, f. 117.

For a letter dated 3 September 1597 from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Pembroke setting out the terms of the proposed marriage, see TNA SP 12/264/106.

Oxford expressed his favourable view of the match in a letter to Lord Burghley dated 8 September 1597. See TNA SP 12/264/111, f. 151.

The extant letters indicate that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Pembroke and the Countess initiated the negotiations, and that their son, William Herbert, was agreeable to the marriage. It appears Lord Burghley entertained doubts because of Bridget Vere's youth. In any event, the marriage did not take place, and shortly after 28 April 1599, Bridget Vere married Francis Norris (1579-1622), 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Berkshire. See TNA SP 12/270/91, f. 159 and TNA SP 12/270/101, f. 176.

The transcript below is taken from the facsimile and transcript in Young, Frances Berkeley, *Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke*, (London: David Nutt, 1912), pp. 62-3 at:

<https://archive.org/details/marysidneycounte00younuoft/page/62/mode/2up>

For the letter, see also:

'Queen Elizabeth - Volume 264: August 1597', in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1595-97*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1869), pp. 484-496. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/edw-eliz/1595-7/pp484-496> [accessed 25 May 2020].

My good Lord, what return to make for so many noble favours & kindness both to my son & myself I must needs be to seek, but I assure your Lordship what defect soever may be in my words is supplied in my heart, and my thankfulness is to be conceived far other than I can any way express.

Your Lordship's fine token is to me of infinite esteem, & no less in regard of the sender than the virtue in itself. It is indeed a cordial & precious present, not unlike to prove a special remedy of the sad spleen, for of like effect do I already find whatsoever is of likely success proceeding from the cause whence this proceeded, wherein I now may

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boldly promise to myself that hopeful comfort which, but thence I protest, I could expect so much to joy in as I do.

So farforth I find my son's best liking, affection and resolution to answer my desire herein as, if the late interview have mutually wrought, it is sufficient. Sure I am there needs no more to your assurance & satisfaction hence, wishing the same to your Lordship there, accompanied with as many comforts & best blessings of health & happiness as this earth may yield you.

God have you in his safekeeping according to my heartiest prayers. I rest,

Your Lordship's affectionately assured,

M. Pembroke

[Endorsed by Lord Burghley 16 August 1597  
Delivered by the hand of Arthur Massinger]