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SUMMARY: The document below is a letter in French written by Oxford to Sir William Cecil on 19 August 1563 when Oxford was thirteen years of age and the Queen's ward. It is the earliest of Oxford's extant letters. The letter is in italic script. However the endorsement is in secretary hand, and may be the only surviving example of Oxford's use of the secretary hand.

The literal translation which follows is from William Plumer Fowler's *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Peter E. Randall, c.1986, pp. 1-2).

Monsieur treshonorable

Monsieur i'ay receu voz lettres, plaines d'humanite et courtoysie, & fort ressemblantes a vostre grand'amour et singuliere affection enuers moy. comme vrais enfans dueument procreez d'une telle mere. pour la quelle ie me trouue de iour en iour plus tenu a v. h. voz bons admonestemens pour l'obseruation du bon ordre selon voz appointemens, ie me delibere (dieu aidant) de garder en toute diligence comme chose que ie cognois et considere tendre especialement a mon propre bien et profit, vsant en cela l'aduis et autorite de ceux qui sont aupres de moy. la discretion desquels i'estime si grande (s'il me conuient parler quelque chose a leur aduange) [sic] qui non seulement ilz se porteront selon qu'un tel temps le requiert, ains que plus est seront tant que ie me gouuerne selon que vous aues ordonne et commande. Quant a l'ordre de mon estude pour ce que il requiert vn long discours a l'expliquer par le menu, et le temps est court a ceste heure, ie vous prie affectueusement m'en excuser pour le present. vous assurant que par le premier passant ie le vous ferai scauoir bien au long. Cependant ie prie a dieu vous donner sante.

Edward Oxinford

Endorsed: To my loving friend, Sir William Cecil, Knight, Principal Secretary to the Queen's Majesty

My very honorable Sir

Sir, I have received your letters, full of humanity and courtesy, and strongly resembling your great love and singular affection towards me, like true children duly procreated of such a mother, for whom I find myself from day to day more bound to your honor. Your good admonishments for the observance of good order according to your appointed rules, I am resolved (God aiding) to keep with all diligence, as a thing that I may know and consider to tend especially to my own good and profit, using therein the advice and

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authority of those who are near me, whose discretion I esteem so great (if it is convenient to me to say something to their advantage) that not only will they comport themselves according as a given time requires it, but will as well do what is more, as long as I govern myself as you have ordered and commanded. As to the order of my study, because it requires a long discourse to explain it in detail, and the time is short at this hour, I pray you affectionately to excuse me therefrom for the present, assuring you that by the first passer-by I shall make it known to you at full length. In the meantime, I pray to God to give you health. Edward Oxinford.