

SUMMARY: In this letter of 11 October 1563 Oxford's mother, Margery Golding, thanks Sir William Cecil for his care of her son, and ends the letter with a blessing for Oxford. The purpose of her letter is to request Cecil's help in obtaining corn (that is, grain) for her household provision at Colne priory. Before coming to Colne priory she had been promised by the tenants that they would pay her the corn which was due to her as rent, but on her arrival the tenants were forbidden to do so by Robert Christmas' man on the orders of Lord Robert Dudley (later Earl of Leicester), who controlled most of Oxford's lands in Essex, including Colne priory, during Oxford's minority through a grant from the Queen. The letter gives a clear indication of the callous manner in which Margery Golding was treated once the 16th Earl was dead, and of the loss of favour her second husband Charles Tyrrell endured as well, despite the fact that he was one of the Queen's Gentlemen-Pensioners.

AFTER MY RIGHT hearty commendations, gentle master Secretary, with like thanks always for your gentleness and fatherly friendship towards my son, and therefore altogether unable any ways to recompense you & my Lady your bedfellow, only remaineth my goodwill to pleasure you or any of yours if ability served, and now less able than ever I was, without your present friendship. And only herein may your friendship stand me in stead, and the rather by your means to enjoy certain rent corn for the provision of my poor house, whereof I had promise of divers of my late Lord's farmers, and thereupon hoped, and of late, since my coming to house at this Michaelmas, there hath been commandment given to all those farmers that pay corn that they should not pay me any corn. And I having but one farmer that payeth me any corn, there hath been commandment given there to pay me no more, which was very much, to bar me of my own rent corn, & not much neither, in the whole but 10 semes. But how this terror cometh to the farmers of late I cannot tell, but the bruit goeth of Mr. Robert Christmas' man, and certain I am he was with my farmer & gave him commandment to pay no corn (and, as the farmer saith, in my Lord Robert's name), but sir, if it may be your pleasure that I may have but part of such corn as was commanded to be delivered to my late Lord & husband (whose soul God pardon) at his house of Hedingham, or Colne, where I now lie, it might do me such pleasure as without that help I stand at this time cleanly destitute of any provision of corn. And for that I could not conveniently tarry any longer where I sojourned, for the great years both in the gentleman & his wife, and perceiving some infection to draw near to those parts, I practised with the farmers beforehand & sent to them, & they promised me to serve me of such corn as would very near suffice me, and now since my coming to house hath bred such a misliking and stoundness among them that now stand I clean barren of any provision of any sort of corn, and like enow without your present help to be no ways salved, whereof I most heartily pray you. And for that you do right well understand (& we hear) that to travel any way almost is not very pleasant & altogether without surety, else would Mr. Tyrrell have travelled and have waited upon you himself, who cannot well travel any way from these parties towards the Court without some great misliking of his access into her Grace's presence, whereof we would be both very loath, and loathest of all to adventure anything whereof there might

right well rise just cause hereafter to repent us both. These things weighed, gentle master Secretary, I most humbly pray you so to consider of them as my necessity requireth to be holpen of you, and pray you herewith of some comfortable answer to be returned from you, and to that end I have sent one to be attendant of purpose. And loath to be too tedious, I most heartily pray you impart my like hearty commendations to my good Lady your bedfellow, and to my son with God's blessing & mine, & well to do to his life's end. At my poor house at Colne this 11th of October, 1563.

Yours right well assured in that she may any way pleasure you,
M. Oxenford

Endorsed: 11 Octobris 1563, Countess of Oxenford. She desires that she might have her rent corn for the use of her house which was ordered to be stopped.