

SUMMARY: The document below is a signed statement by Charles Arundel (d.1587) to the Lords of the Privy Council giving his version of his secret meeting with Oxford at court on the night of Sunday, 25 December 1580. The statement also survives in the State Papers in a much-amended and unsigned earlier draft in Arundel's hand, TNA SP 15/27/46, ff. 81-2.

According to Arundel's statement, Oxford had an interview with the Queen in which he allegedly confessed reconciliation to the Catholic Church, and was pardoned.

The fact that Arundel's signed statement below is to be found, not in the State Papers, but in Leicester's personal papers, suggests that Leicester was involved behind the scenes in the breach between Oxford and his former friends, Lord Henry Howard, Charles Arundel, and Francis Southwell. This conclusion is supported by other documentary evidence.

Arundel's signed statement is described in the Dudley Papers, DU/Vol. III, 1559-1601, No. 31, as follows:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=2238-du&cid=-1#-1>

*31. Deposition of Charles Arundell [2nd son of Sir Thomas Arundell of Wardour] as to a conversation with Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, "on Sundaye laste beinge Christmas daye", in which "he unfolded to me all his treacherie and what had passed betwene her Maiestie and him". Without date, but probably written at the end of 1580, in which year Christmas fell on a Sunday. See also the Cal. of State Papers, 1581-1590, under date 14 July, 1581, p.23, and pp.38-40. f.203. This paper probably belongs to the Dudley Collection.*

The two modern spelling transcripts below were prepared from microfilm copies of the originals. The first modern spelling transcript (images 100-1442/3) is Charles Arundel's signed statement. As noted above, Arundel had earlier prepared a draft, TNA SP 15/27/46, ff. 81-2, which contains many crossed-out and interlined passages. In several instances Arundel added interlineations to the draft without crossing out passages he apparently intended to replace, thus rendering it uncertain what he actually intended to say. As far as possible, the differences between Arundel's earlier unsigned draft and his revised and signed statement are indicated by italics in both the modern spelling transcripts below. Arundel's many revisions suggest how difficult it was for him, without incriminating himself, to provide the Privy Council with an account of his meeting with Oxford, and his own activities involving the priest, Stevens.

The second modern spelling transcript below (images 100-1440/1) appears to have been prepared by an archivist at an unspecified date, and was included when the author of this website ordered the microfilm copy of Arundel's signed statement. As with the first transcript, italics indicate, as far as possible, the ways in which it differs from Arundel's earlier unsigned draft, TNA SP 15/27/46, ff. 81-2.

The lineation of the originals has been preserved in the transcripts below.

For a detailed discussion of the events of late December 1580 and early January 1581 involving Oxford, Lord Henry Howard and Charles Arundel, see TN ASP 15/27/46, ff. 81-2, *supra*.

Arundel's Signed Statement:

[Image 100-1442] On Sunday last, being Christmas Day, the Earl of Oxenford desired secret conference with me as he had done the night before, whereunto I assenting, we met in the evening at the maids' chamber door, and after long speech[es?] in secret between him and my cousin Vavasour, who was the mean of our meeting, we departed thence to have gone to the garden, but the door being double-locked or bolted, we could not get in. Then we returned to the terrace, and there in the *farthest* part of the low gallery the said Earl used this speech unto [-me]. Charles, I have ever loved thee, and as you have already given your word to my mistress, so now I crave it to myself, and after some assurance given he unfolded to me all his treachery, *and what had passed between her Majesty and him*, using many cunning persuasions to make me an instrument of dishonest practice against my Lord Harry and Francis Southwell, with the proffer of one thousand pounds to affirm that they were reconciled by one Stevens, a priest. I so much misliked of this motion as I persuaded the [-said] Earl from so dishonourable a purpose, protesting before God, which is most true, I neither knew nor ever heard of any such thing. Well(?), Charles, said the Earl, Stevens is taken and racked, and hath confessed, and therefore I wish you as a friend to *take flight* and depart the realm if you have faulted as far [as] others, whereunto I answered *God I take to witness myself am free of such offence*, and so *am I* persuaded of others. You are deceived, said the Earl. Southwell hath bewrayed all, *and tomorrow, which is too long a time for you to abide, I will show you the (illegible)*. Therefore if you will be gone, which I wish for your safety, Litchfield, my man, shall shift you away, *and you shall remain for a time at a house of mine in Norfolk or Suffolk, I do not well remember whether,* [Image 100-1443] *but near the sea, and you shall have a thousand pounds either with you, or bills for so much, for as yet there remains more than that in the ambassador's of Spain's hands. He farther promised that if the sale of a hundred pound*

*land might do me good I should not want it, and he would find means to send unto me, still urging my going. I misliked so much of this unsound counsel as I utterly refused it. Then the Earl fell to a plainness, and told me that he had confessed to the Queen that he was reconciled, which I never heard before, that he had his pardon, and if I would be ruled by him to appeach my Lord Harry or Southwell, he would save me. I tanked [sic] the Earl much, but rejected his counsel. Then he concluded that there was not any man could do him harm but myself, whereunto I answered, That will I never if you touch me not with falsehood, but then will I touch you with truth. And having conceived his drift, which was that by my flight he might be freed of his monstrous dealing, and others brought to more suspicion, I did not utterly refuse to yield to his request, but prayed him I might think upon it, and thereupon departed and wrote an answer and delivered it to Poore, his boy, the copy whereof I exhibited to the Lords of the Council. Touching Stevens, as I confessed before your Honours, I will confirm it on my oath that a five year since the Earl, being grieved in conscience about killing of a man, desired conference with a learned man, whereupon I brought him to the Earl, and what after happened, without concealment of anything, I have plainly and truly disclosed to your Honours(?).*

*Charles Arundell*

Archivist's Transcript:

[Image 100-1440]

On Sunday last, being Christmas Day, the Earl of Oxenford desired secret conference with me as he had done the night before, whereunto I assenting, we met in the evening at the maids' chamber door, and after long speech [sic?] in secret between him & my cousin Vavasour (who was the mean of our meetings [sic?]) we departed thence to have gone to the garden, but the door being double-locked or bolted, we could not get in. Then we returned to the terrace, and there in the *farthest* part of the low gallery the said Earl used this speech unto me. "Charles, I have ever loved thee, and as you have already given your word to my mistress, so now I crave it to myself", and after some assurance given he unfolded to me all his treachery, *and what had passed between her Majesty & him*, using

many cunning persuasions to make me an instrument of dishonest practice against my Lord Harry & Francis Southwell, with the proffer of one thousand pounds to affirm that they were reconciled by one Stevens, a priest. I so much misliked of this motion as I persuaded the said Earl from so dishonourable a purpose, protesting before God, which is most true, I neither knew nor ever heard of any such thing, ned(?) [sic?]. "Charles, said the Earl, Stevens is taken and racked, and hath confessed, and therefore I wish you as a friend to *take flight* and depart the realm if you have (blank) others. Whereunto I answered, "*God I take to witness myself am free of such offence, and so I am persuaded of others*". "You are deceived", said the Earl. "Southwell hath betrayed all, *and tomorrow, which is too long a time for you to abide, I will show you the* (blank). Therefore if you will be gone, (which I wish for your safety), Litchfield, my man, shall shift you away, *and you shall remain for a time at a house of mine in Norfolk or Suffolk, I do not well remember whether,* [Image 100-1441] *but near the sea, and you shall have a thousand pounds either with you, or bills for so much, for as yet there remains more than that in the ambassador's of Spain's hands*". He farther promised that if the sale of a hundred pounds land might do me good, I should not want it, & he would find mean to send unto me, still urging my going. I misliked [sic?] so much of this unsound counsel as I utterly refused it. Then the Earl fell to a plainness, and told me that he had confessed to the Queen that he was reconciled, which I never heard before, and that he had his pardon, and if I would be ruled by him to appeach my Lord Harry or Southwell, he would save me. I tanked [sic] him [sic] much, but rejected his counsel. Then he concluded that there was not any man could do him harm but myself, whereunto I answered, That will I never if you touch me not with falsehood, but then will I touch you with truth, and having conceived his drift, which was that by my flight he might be freed of his monstrous dealing, and others brought to more suspicion, I did not utterly refuse to yield to his request, but prayed him I might think upon it, & thereupon departed and wrote an answer & delivered it to Poore, his boy, the copy whereof I exhibited to the Lords of the Council. Touching Stevens, as I confessed before your Honours, I will confirm it on my oath that a five year since the Earl, being grieved in conscience about killing of a man, desired conference with a learned man, whereupon I brought him to the Earl, and what after happened, without concealment of anything, I have plainly and truly disclosed to you [sic].

*Charles Arundell*