

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 29 April 1581 written to Count Philip Edward Fugger in Augsburg by a correspondent in England, and is one of many letters now included in volumes 8949 to 8975 in the Austrian National Library. For a discussion of the purpose of the letters and of their eventual transfer to the Austrian National Library, see pp. vii-xv of Klarwill, Victor von, ed., *The Fugger Newsletters, Second Series, Being a Further Selection from the Fugger Papers Specially Referring to Queen Elizabeth and Matters Relating to England During the Years 1568-1605, Here Published for the First Time*, (London: John Lane, 1926). The letter below is taken from pp. 55-6. For earlier letters on the same topic dated 1 January and 1 April 1581, see pp. 47, 53.

Count Fugger's correspondent states that Oxford's former friends, Lord Henry Howard, Charles Arundel and Francis Southwell, had been arrested four months earlier because they had been reconciled to the Catholic Church by agents of the Pope and were suspected of plotting against the Crown. According to Count Fugger's correspondent, Oxford too had been arrested four months ago, but quickly released. However after he had an illegitimate son by Anne Vavasour on 21 March 1581, Oxford was again imprisoned in the Tower. According to Count Fugger's correspondent, Anne Vavasour was also been imprisoned in the Tower for the same offence. It can be inferred from this letter and other documents that the affair involving Oxford, Howard, Arundel and Southwell was complicated by the fact that Howard and Arundel were known supporters of the marriage between Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Alencon, and the Queen's reluctance to punish them stemmed in part from the need to maintain good relations with France while these spurious marriage negotiations, with their concomitant political ramifications, were ongoing.

As Klarwill states in his introduction, the Fugger Newsletters:

*. . . have all the faults of modern journalism. False rumours are circumstantially repeated, exaggerations are greedily accepted . . . But on the whole, the Fugger correspondents were very well informed, and they worked rapidly and conscientiously.*

For numerous other documents, including HA13066 and TNA SP 12/151/51, ff. 111v, 112, concerning the incidents in 1580/1 referred to in the letter below involving Oxford, Lord Henry Howard, Charles Arundel, Francis Southwell and Anne Vavasour, see the Documents page of this website.

London, April 29, 1581

Since amongst other things you ask for information about what has been done to the prisoners arrested four months ago, you should know that the brother of the last Duke of Norfolk and two knights [sic] are still in prison. This because they have again become reconciled to the Roman Church, having been led thereto by certain agents instigated for the purpose by the Pope. This is taken very ill in the country. There is a suspicion too

---

that they have been plotting against the crown and realm of England. But, as hitherto nothing has been brought home to them, they remain in prison, simply because they are in bad odour. The Earl of Oxford, also arrested but soon set at liberty, is again in the Tower for forgetting himself with one of the Queen's Maids of Honour, who is in the Tower likewise. This in spite of his having a pretty wife, daughter of the Treasurer. But he will not live with her.

In Scotland Aubigny, a French gentleman of Royal blood and cousin of the young King, has usurped the government and thrown the old Regent, Earl Morton, into prison. On the pretext that the Regent caused the death of the King's father, he is trying to draw the people to himself. All Earl Morton's clan, the Douglas', have revolted against him, and called in English aid.

Some distinguished representatives of France, many nobles and some legal experts are here. What they are after is not yet clearly proven. The French give out that they are negotiating the marriage of the Queen with the Duke of Alencon. Others declare that they are here to effect a firm alliance between the French crown and the Low Countries to be under the direction of the Duke of Alencon. This would concern England too, as it could only be accomplished with the previous knowledge, good will and permission of the Queen. She has promised to lend the French £200,000 if they give her the town of Calais so that she may make use of it in the Low Countries War. The French are also to swear to preserve this alliance between the Queen and the Low Countries.

It is thought too that something could be arranged against the King of Spain to help Don Antonio who is living at Mazagan in Barbary. Don Antonio has despatched an envoy, a Count, in priest's clothes to the French court. He is to prepare ships to bring back Don Antonio. On the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. the Azores were still holding firm for Don Antonio and rumour went that these islands and the Calicut district of India could be captured if help were brought them betimes. So war must be looked for there also. In our Parliament no decision has yet been reached. Only some Portuguese business has been set in order.