SUMMARY: Description of Oxford in lines 43-143 of Act III, Scene 4 of George Chapman's, The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois; A Tragedy, published in 1613 but thought to have been written much earlier. The lines from the play term Oxford 'valiant and learned and liberal as the sun', and a writer on both 'learned subjects' and politics. Chapman's knowledge of Bussy D'Ambois is difficult to explain. Lordi says, 'None of the many historical accounts of the historical Bussy were printed before Chapman wrote. Nevertheless his play reveals his intimate knowledge of the historical Bussy'. It is worth noting that Oxford mentions Bussy D'Ambois by name in PRO SP 12/151/42, ff. 96-96v. There are also historical underpinnings to the meeting between Oxford and the fictional Clermont D'Ambois. Oxford left Venice on 5 March 1576, and travelled via Milan and Lyons to Paris, where he arrived on 21 March 1576. For the entire month of March 1576 the two opposing armies in the fifth of France's religious wars, including Duke Casimir's forces, were camped at Moulins. It seems very likely that Oxford travelled to Paris via Moulins, passing very near Casimir's forces on the way, but refusing an offer to review Casimir's troops. It also seems likely that in the line I overtook, coming from Italy/In Germany a great and famous Earl/ Of England, 'Burgundy' should be substituted for 'Germany', since it would have been in Burgundy that the path of the fictional Clermont D'Ambois and Oxford's would have crossed, not in Germany.

Renel. You will then go?

Clermont. I am engaged both in my word and hand, But this is it that makes me thus retired, To call myself t' account how this affair Is to be managed if the worst should chance, With which I note how dangerous it is For any man to press beyond the place To which his birth or means or knowledge ties him. For my part, though of noble birth, my birthright Had little left it, and I know 'tis better To live with little, and to keep within A man's own strength still, and in man's true end, Than run a mixed course. Good and bad hold never Anything common; you can never find Things' outward care but you neglect your mind. God hath the whole world perfect made, and free; His part's to th' use of th' all. Men then that be Parts of that all must, as the general sway Of that importeth, willingly obey In everything without their power to change. He that, unpleased to hold his place, will range Can in no other be contained that's fit, And so, resisting th' all, is crushed with it,

But he that, knowing how divine a frame
The whole world is, and of it all can name
(Without self-flattery) no part so divine
As he himself, and therefore will confine
Freely his whole powers in his proper part,
Goes on most godlike. He that strives t' invert
The universal's course with his poor way
Not only dust-like shivers with the sway,
But crossing God in his great work, all earth
Bears not so cursed and so damned a birth.

Renel. Go on; I'll take no care what comes of you. Heaven will not see it ill, howe'er it show; But the pretext to see these battles ranged Is much your honour.

Clermont. As the world esteems it. But to decide that, you make me remember An accident of high and noble note, And fits the subject of my late discourse Of holding on our free and proper way. I overtook, coming from Italy, In Germany a great and famous Earl Of England, the most goodly-fashioned man I ever saw; from head to foot in form Rare and most absolute. He had a face Like one of the most ancient honoured Romans From whence his noblest family was derived: He was beside of spirit passing great, Valiant, and learned, and liberal as the sun. Spoke and writ sweetly, or of learned subjects Or of the discipline of public weals. And 'twas the Earl of Oxford. And being offered At that time by Duke Casimir the view Of his right royal army then in field, Refused it, and no foot was moved to stir Out of his own free fore-determined course. I, wondering at it, asked for it his reason, It being an offer so much for his honour. He, all acknowledging, said 'twas not fit To take those honours that one cannot quit.

Renel. 'Twas answered like the man you have described.

Clermont. And yet he cast it only in the way, To stay and serve the world. Nor did it fit

His own true estimate how much it weighed, For he despised it, and esteemed it freer To keep his own way straight, and swore that he Had rather make away his whole estate In things that crossed the vulgar, than he would Be frozen up stiff, like a Sir John Smith (His countryman) in common nobles' fashions, Affecting as the end of noblesse were Those servile observations.

Renel. It was strange.

Clermont. O, 'tis a vexing sight to see a man Out of his way, stalk proud, as he were in; Out of his way to be officious, Observant, wary, serious and grave, Fearful and passionate, insulting, raging, Labour with iron flails to thresh down feathers Flitting in air.

Renel. What one considers this Of all that are thus out, or once endeavours, Erring, to enter on man's right-hand path?

Clermont. You are too grave for brave wits: give them toys, Labour bestowed on these is harsh and thriftless. If you would consul be (says one) of Rome, You must be watching, starting out of sleeps, Every way whisking, glorifying plebeians, Kissing patricians' hands, rot at their doors, Speak and do basely, every day bestow Gifts and observance upon one or other. And what's th' event of all? Twelve rods before thee, Three or four times sit for the whole tribunal, Exhibit circene games, make public feasts, And for these idle outward things (says he) Would'st thou lay on such cost, toil, spend thy spirits? And to be void of perturbation, For constancy (sleep when thou would'st have sleep, Wake when thou would'st wake, fear nought, vex for nought), No pains wilt thou bestow? no cost? no thought?

Renel. What should I say? as good consort with you As with an angel; I could hear you ever.