
SUMMARY: This letter to Sir Francis Walsingham written by Lord Henry Howard on 3 December 1581 suggests that Howard had been released from house arrest after his letter of apology to Leicester of 27 October 1581. However rumours had now reached him that fresh efforts were being made by unnamed persons to 'shake and undermine' his liberty. Howard is writing from his lodging at Ivy Bridge in the liberty of the Duchy of Lancaster. Stowe writes in 1598 that 'Ivy Bridge, in the high street, which had a way under it leading down to the Thames, the like as sometime had the Strand Bridge, is now taken down, but the lane remaineth as afore, or better, and parteth the liberty of the duchy and the city of Westminster on that south side'.

As your honourable favour toward me, good Mr Secretary, is the surest anchor of my trust and the strongest fence of my security, so am I humbly to request you by that virtue which your friends embrace with comfort, and that pity which myself have tasted in my trouble, to protect my loyalty from continual practice of my bitter enemies. God shall be my witness that I am not guilty of the least offence, as they that have most strictly sifted me can tell, and yet I hear by common voice of a fresh attempt to shake and undermine my liberty. Since my last waiting on you, I have been often menaced that rods were in preparing for me, notwithstanding all the labour of my friends, and now I find by proof that those words were not idle. Fain would I have waited on you, saving that you come not from the court, and therefore have I requested this bearer, mine assured friend, to make you privy to the matter as that only person in whom, next to God, I repose my greatest confidence. Time shall declare my dealings to be such as your Honour shall not have cause to repent your favour, and my care to love and honour you to be so great as you shall not condemn my disposition. In the meantime I will pray for your good estate as the surest pillar of my strength and rest, as careful to do you service as you have been favourable in the defence of mine innocency. From my lodging at Ivy Bridge this Sunday night.

Your Honour's most humbly and assuredly at commandment,
Henry Howard.

Addressed: To the right honourable Sir Francis Walsingham, Secretary to her Majesty,
and one of her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council

Endorsed: 3 December 1581, from the Lord Henry Howard.