SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Dudley Carleton on 3 February 1600 [=1601], John Chamberlain mentions that Bridget, Dowager Countess of Bedford, has 'bequeathed the greatest part of her wealth' to Oxford's son-in-law, Francis Norris. For her will, see TNA PROB 11/97. The Countess was Francis Norris' grandmother, and it would appear from her correspondence that she arranged the match between Bridget de Vere and Francis Norris in 1599. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. I, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp. 114-18.

Good Master Carleton, till your letter came that brought Christmas commendations I looked daily for you, for so did the housekeeper of Puddle Wharf inform my man when he went to learn how I might send to you and found the letter I wrote before my going to Knebworth not sent away at my return from thence two or three days within the term, which did not quite discourage me, and made me presume that if I should write, you would keep your old wont, and meet it or miss it by the way, and I was the rather persuaded because in yours (otherwise stored with much good matter) you made no mention at all whether you meant to abide at The Hague or remove further or return, but now upon pause of seven or eight days after the receipt of your letter, seeing I hear no more, will defer no longer, but shoot one arrow after another and let them take their fortune. Sir Gerrard Harvey, with his lady, mother and sisters, kept their Christmas at Knebworth, where I had much good company of his brother John, and ran over many old stories of you and Ostend. Your cousin Lytton is in town, and tarries all or most part of the term. Your brother Carleton came yesterday, and your cousin Acton is looked for within two or three days to come and sojourn in Little Britain.

For matter of news I know not where to begin unless I should continue a petty chronicle from my last, which though it be somewhat laborious and perhaps will be unwelcome to send you cramben bis coctam, yet to punish myself for flattering my idleness and seeking to excuse it, I will make it my penance. Upon Twelfth Day the Queen feasted the Muscovy ambassador, who hath been since invited to divers other places, and taken his pleasure abroad in hunting. During the holidays here was the Duke of Bracciano (chief of the family of the Orsini by Rome) that came into France with the new Queen, his cousingerman. The Queen entertained him very graciously, and to show that she is not so old as some would have her, danced both measures and galliards in his presence. He was feasted by the Lord Burghley for some favour showed to William Cecil or his other sons at their being in Italy, and should have been by the Lord Treasurer and by Gray's Inn, that made preparation of shows to entertain him, but he made such haste away that they were disappointed. The Queen at his parting sent him a cup of gold of sixscore pound and a jewel, for the which he gave the bringer, Michael Stanhope, a chain of fourscore pound. He went hence to visit the Archduke and Infanta, leaving behind him a general report of a very courtlike and complete gentleman.

Somewhat more than three weeks since the Lord Grey and Earl of Southampton had a little bickering in the Strand on horseback, for the which the Lord Grey was committed to the Fleet, and hath lien there till yesterday that he was released, notwithstanding all the friends he could make. During his restraint the old Countess of Bedford died, and left him not above £300. The greatest part of her wealth she bequeathed to young Norris, and yet the world says by that he hath discharged her funerals and other legacies, there will not be £3000 left for his share. The Earl of Pembroke died a fortnight since, leaving his Lady as bare as he could, and bestowing all on the young Lord, even to her jewels. Michael Heneage died in Christmas, and his office of keeping the records in the Tower was promised to Dr. James of the court, but he followed him within a fortnight after, and now Lambarde of Lincoln's Inn hath the executing of it, but not the grant. In the absence of the Lord Chamberlain, Sir John Stanhope was appointed to serve as Vice-chamberlain, which most men interpret to be a good step to the place. One Rodney of Somersetshire, nephew to Sir Edward Dyer, was lately knighted, but whether he were overjoyed with that dignity or overawed with the love of Mistress Pranell (whom he wooed, and could not obtain), or, as some say, so doted upon a greater mistress, that his brains were not able to bear the burden, but have played bankrupt and left him raving.

We have great speech of building twelve galleys, four by the Queen, two by this city, two by Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincolnshire, two by Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, the rest by Somerset, Devonshire and Cornwall, for the speech is that the Spaniards are to bring more galleys along with them into the Low Countries, and we must learn to fight with them after their own fence. It was reported awhile that they were severed by tempest, and twelve or fifteen sail of them cast away on the coast of Ireland, but there is no great credit given to it. But we hear for certain that two Spanish frigates arrived at Sligo with powder, munition and money to furnish the rebels. The Lord Deputy hath done some pretty exploits of late upon some petty rebels about Dublin, and surprised the castle of one Phelim McFeagh and taken his children, but himself and his wife escaped very narrowly. He hath likewise defeated and slain the greatest part of the followers of Phelim McToole, another notable rascal, and taken him prisoner. Sir Richard Wingfield, the Marshal of Ireland, is lately dead there. We are here coining base money for Ireland, hoping thereby to hinder the rebels from providing their wants from aboard, but I pray God it work no worse effect, and some men begin to fear it is but a preparative to purge our own money of the best juice. The new fort at Plymouth was lately defaced and blown up with powder. The Dunkirkers are very busy all along that coast, and take prizes even in the very harbour. They stay thereabout to convoy the Spaniards that are coming for the Low Countries. Here be privy seals for £20,000 come among the strangers, which money is to be repaid by the States.

We have much speech of a new Master of the Rolls, and it is thought Sergeant Hele bids best for it, but Justice Gawdy, Secretary Herbert, Dr. Caesar, the Attorney of the Wards, the Attorney of the Duchy, and Thomas Spencer are in some consideration for it. The matter troubles the Lord Keeper very much, for he hath lately had some schooling about it, but it seems he cares not greatly who [+gets it], so Hele may miss it. The Queen hath made choice [+of our] Doctor for her physician, but he is not yet sworn. I doubt [+our] college will be dissolved, and some of us sent to seek our fortune. Dr. Dove, Dean of

Norwitch, is made Bishop of Peterborough. The Earl of Rutland and the Earl of Hertford stand in election whether shall be sent into France to congratulate with the new Queen.

Yesterday a son of Harry Butler's of Hertfordshire stabbed one Russell (a kinsman of my Lord of Bedford's that married Mistress Scudamore's sister) in my Lord's yard, and he died presently. Butler escaped through the Covent garden, and is not yet heard of. Your cousin Alford hath married one Mompesson, late husband to the old Lady Dudley. Our Lady Wallop is with child, to the no small joy of all the beholders. I remember nothing else but that the cross in Cheap is going up, for all your Vice-chancellor of Oxford and some other odd divines there have set down their censure against it. We have daily here many new experiments made, as the last week one came hopping from Charing Cross into Paul's bound in a sack, and this morning another carried up a horse and rode upon him on the top of Paul's steeple, with divers other such wagers, and among the rest Green, that was lately your cousin Lytton's man, hath set up a printed paper and doth challenge all comers at wrestling. When I was now bidding you farewell, your brother Carleton comes in and prays me to put in his commendations, and to tell you that your place in Oxford will tarry for you one year more. *Vive vale*. From London this third of February 1600 [=1601].

Yours most assuredly,

John Chamberlain

To my very good friend, Master Dudley Carleton, give these at The Hague or elsewhere.