

SUMMARY: The document below is a scribal copy in Sir Francis Walsingham's files of an undated letter written by Charles Arundel to an unidentified recipient. Arundel addresses the unidentified recipient as 'Right Honourable'. It thus appears that the recipient was a highly-placed personage, perhaps Sir Christopher Hatton (c.1540-1591), or Arundel's kinsman, Thomas Radcliffe (1526/7-1583), 3rd Earl of Sussex, Lord Chamberlain of the Household.

Arundel states in the letter that a libel has recently been written concerning the recipient, and that Oxford had allegedly claimed that Arundel was the author of the libel, which Arundel denies, although he admits knowledge of the author's identity. Arundel refers to Oxford's 'coming out of trouble', apparently a reference to Oxford's recent release from house arrest, which would date Arundel's letter to July 1581, while Arundel was still under house arrest at Sutton in West Sussex.

Right Honourable, as my well-meaning hath always willed me, so doth necessity now enforce me to write you these.

My monstrous adversary Oxford, who would drink my blood rather than wine, as well as he loves it, as I am credibly informed hath said in open speech and in manner of a vaunt since his coming out of trouble that whereas I built my only trust on the friendship of your Honour, he had sped me to the purpose in bringing me in condemnation of a libel that should be written against you, whereunto a friend of mine, being present, doubting(?) whether I had written this indeed, Oxford answered with an oath that he could not tell, but he was very sure that it had given Charles his full payment.

Of this discovery I am to take knowledge, though restrained for the present to conceal the author for divers respects which, when time shall serve, I shall willingly impart for your better satisfaction and my most desire. In the mean, I humbly crave this favour, that as it [INTERLINED: the matter] is a mere supposal suggested by envy, uttered by malice and devised by others not unlike himself among knaves, as hereafter shall appear, so you will suspend judgment till truth shall deliver me from this improbable slander, and lay it on him that best deserves it, as I may guess.

But for the more assurance of yourself, and to show my clearness from the objected crime, I say that if he can but prove this one reproach to be true, I will confess all that he hath said of me, which may pleasure both him and his counsellors, but if they cannot, let him be sorry that reported it, and they ashamed, if they be not past all, that set him a-work, for God I take to witness, as I never wrate it, so did I never condescend or devise any such villainy against any, and this I hope shall serve for a sufficient answer to so insufficient an accusation, and that he hath lied in his throat I will make it good upon his body. Your knowledge of the man and of his manners as I have truly deciphered him can leave no impression, as I trust, of this matter, and my long known zeal and affection to

yourself, which is not unknown to those that you account of, shall easily put by all his lies poured out without certainty or ground of truth.

And if I thought you were otherwise persuaded than I have deserved, I could not seem so happy as I am, nor rest so well contented in my present condition, which expected all help and succour from yourself and other friends. I have not sought for my delivery, neither will I. Trial is all that I require, and trial shall acquit me, and hang the villain for sodomy that hath no proof of anything but the slander of his own blasphemous tongue etc. Of this last practice against myself, and others more monstrous, which stroke(?) the foundation whereon I built all hope, I shall one day tell you more, and make you to wonder at that is come to light. In the meantime I recommend myself, my cause and all to yourself, who can best judge of all, and here I pray for the Queen and my good friends, of which number you are chief, and so wishing for that opportunity wherein I [+may] you service, I commit you to that God that hitherto protected me.