

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter written by Sir Christopher Hatton (d.1540-1591) to Queen Elizabeth in 1573 when illness had forced him to travel to Spa, near Liege in what is now Belgium. Hatton speaks allegorically of the sheep and the boar, apparently alluding to himself and Oxford. See Nicolas, Harris, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton* (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), pp. 28-9.

The lack I feel doth make me know your greatest worth. I speak in the presence of God. I find my body & mind so far divided as yourself shall judge that melancholy, conceived by this unwonted absence, hath made myself forget myself. Your mutton is black. Scarcely will you know our own, so much hath this disease dashed me. I pray God you may believe my faith. It is the testament of your greatest excellencies. It might glad you (I speak without presumption) that you live so dearly loved with all sincerity of heart & singleness of choice. I love yourself. I cannot lack you. I am taught to prove it by the wish & desire I find to be with you. Believe it, most gracious lady, there is no illud mitius. You are the true felicity that in this world I know or find. God bless you forever. The branch of the sweetest bush I will wear & bear to my life's end. God doth witness I feign not. It is a gracious favour, most dear & welcome unto me. Reserve it to the sheep. He hath no tooth to bite where the boar's tush may both raze and tear. The branch of brass with your most notable word & sentence I desire exceedingly to have. But your judgment most pleaseth me that(?) you cannot esteem the untrue esteemer. Pardon me, most humbly on my knees I beseech you. The abundance of my heart carrieth me I know not to what purpose, but guess you, as the common proverb is, & I will grant. I guess by my servant you should not be well, which troubleth me greatly. I humbly pray you that I may know it, for then will I presently come, whatever befall me. Humbly on the knees of my soul I pray God bless you forever. Your slave and ever your own. C.H.