
SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Oxford in John Farmer's *The First Set of English Madrigals to Four Voices*, published in 1599.

To the right honourable my very good Lord and master Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, Viscount Bulbeck, Lord of Escales and Badlesmere, and Lord Great Chamberlain of England, John Farmer wisheth long life, health, and happiness, with increase of honour

Most honourable Lord, it cometh not within the compass of my power to express all the duty I owe, nor to pay the least part, so far have your honourable favours outstripped all means to manifest my humble affection that there is nothing left but praying and wondering. There is a cankerworm that breedeth in many minds, feeding only upon forgetfulness and bringing forth no birth but ingratitude. To show that I have not been bitten with that monster (for worms prove monsters in this age which never yet any painter could counterfeit to express the ugliness, nor any poet describe to decipher the height of their illness), I have presumed to tender these madrigals only as remembrances of my service and witnesses of your Lordship's liberal hand by which I have so long lived, and from your honourable mind that so much have loved all liberal sciences. In this I shall be most encouraged if your Lordship vouchsafe the protection of my first-fruits, for that both for your greatness you best can, and for your judgment in music best may, for without flattery be it spoken, those that know your Lordship know this, that using this science as a recreation your Lordship have overgone most of them that make it a profession. Right honourable Lord, I hope it shall not be distasteful to number you here amongst the favourers of music, and the practisers, no more than kings and emperors that have been desirous to be in the roll of astronomers, that being but a star fair, the other an angels' choir. Thus most humbly submitting myself, my labours, and whatever is or may be in me to your Lordship's censure & protection, I humbly end, wishing your Lordship as continual an increasing of health and honour as there is a daily increase of virtue, to come to happiness,

Your Honour's most dutiful servant to command,
John Farmer