
SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Oxford in John Farmer's *Divers & Sundry Ways of Two Parts in One, to the Number of Forty, upon one Plainsong*, published in 1591.

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

It was mine exercise, right honourable and my singular good Lord, to make upon a plainsong not long ago forty several ways of 2 parts in one, with what commendation I shall then perceive when other shall have judged; with what study myself am privy, neither long nor serious. This poor conceit I have presumed of your honourable favour to present unto your Lordship, under coverture of whom, to the view of the world, not but that I knew it unworthy of so high a personage, but rather that it needed the more noble patronage the less is in it to recommend itself, which how little it is, I am greatly in fear. Hereunto, my good Lord, I was the rather emboldened for your Lordship's great affection to this noble science, hoping for the one you might pardon the other, & desirous to make known your inclination this way. For howsoever my skill be nothing such as in least part to express the dignity of the art, yet this I am sure of, if grave authors have rightly informed me, that the wisest men, as Pythagoras & Plato, have made it their study, and most honourable persons, as Hercules and Achilles, their earnest practice. Besides this, my good Lord, I bear this conceit, that not only myself am vowed to your commandment, but all that is in me is dedicated to your Lordship's service, so that albeit I am unable to make show of my duty in such sort as I wish, yet to transport to other what I owe to your Lordship I deemed not to fit with such a profession. Only if it shall please your honourable mind to measure my deed by my desire, it may happily seem somewhat, which of itself is less than nothing. Which beseeching your Lordship with all instancy, and as before hoping, so now most humbly craving, pardon of my presumption, I rest in prayer for the preservation of your Honour in long life and great happiness, in the one to match the oldest, in the other the blessedest.

Your Lordship's most bounden servant, and at all commandment most ready,
John Farmer