

SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle, two acrostic verses, and Latin verses to Oxford in Anthony Munday's *Mirror of Mutability, or Principal Part of The Mirror for Magistrates*, published in 1579. Munday begins the epistle by terming Oxford his 'good lord and patron', and signs it in Italian as Oxford's 'vassal and servant' (Vasallo e Seruitore). The volume also contains commendatory verses by several individuals connected to Munday, including Claude de Sainliens (Claudius Holyband), author of *The French Littleton* (1583), who refers to Munday as his 'scholar', and Thomas Proctor, compiler of *The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578) who, like Munday, had apprenticed to the printer John Allde. The ambiguities in the long story Munday tells in his epistle to Oxford raise the question of whether Munday might have travelled to the continent as a secret agent for the English government posing as a potential candidate for the Catholic priesthood. If so, the further question arises as to why Munday chose an epistle to Oxford as a vehicle for clearing himself of suspicions aroused in England as a result of his actions while travelling in France and Italy.

[Verses below the de Vere crest]

A happy race God grant the worthy wight
 To whom this crest of honour doth pertain,
 To live in joy unto his heart's delight,
 And after death among the saints to reign.

To the right honourable his singular good lord & patron, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, Viscount Bulbeck, Lord of Escalles and Badlesmere, and Lord Great Chamberlain of England, Anthony Munday wisheth in this world a triumphant tranquility with continual increase of honourable dignity, and after this life a crown of everlasting felicity in the eternal hierarchy

After that I had delivered (right honourable) unto your courteous and gentle perusing my book intituled *Galien of France*, wherein having not so fully comprised such pithiness of style as one of a more riper invention could cunningly have carved, I rest, right honourable, on your clemency to amend my errors committed so unskilfully. But at that time being very desirous to attain to some understanding in the languages, considering in time to come I might reap thereby some commodity since as yet my web of youthful time was not fully woven and my wild oats required to be furrowed in a foreign ground, to satisfy the trifling toys that daily more and more frequented my busied brain, yielded myself to God and good fortune, taking on the habit of a traveller. And having sustained in the cold country of France divers contagious calamities and sundry sorts of mishaps, as first, being but newly arrived and not acquainted with the usage of the country, between Boulogne and Abbeville my companion and I were stripped into our shirts by soldiers, who (if rescue had not come) would have endamaged our lives also. Methought this was but an unfriendly welcome, considering before I thought that every man beyond the seas

was as frank as an emperor, and that a man might live there a gentleman's life and do nothing but walk at his pleasure, but finding it not so, I wished myself at home again, with sorrow to my sugared sops. But calling to mind that he which fainteth at the first assault would hardly endure to fight out the battle, took courage afresh, hoping my hap would prove better in the end since it had such a bitter beginning, and passed forward to Paris.

Being there arrived, to recompense my former mishaps I found the world well amended, for not only I obtained new garments, but divers gentlemen to be my friends also, some that had sustained as ill fortune as I, and therefore returned back again into England, and other some that were very glad of my coming, in hope I had been such a one as they looked for. But repelling such Satanical illusions, such golden proffers of preferment to advance me unto my larger contentment, I gave them the hearing of all their politic devises which (as they thought) had taken deep root at their first planting. And considering that I had enterprised this journey for my pleasure and in hope to attain to some knowledge in the French tongue, if that I should seem too scrupulous in their presence it might turn to my farther harm, for there no friends I had to help me, no wealth to maintain me, no succour near to save me, but if I denied, my new friends would disdain, persuaded myself in their presence to do as they bade me, but when they were absent, to do then as pleased me. By these means I obtained their lawful favour, insomuch that they therewith provided me for my journey to Rome, where for my more preferment likewise they delivered me divers letters to sundry persons (whose names I remit), that there I should be placed in the office of a priest. Well, my friend & I gave them a thousand thanks for their liberal expenses and friendly letters, and so we departed.

But when we had with an night's rest pondered of our journey, and considered the imminent dangers before our eyes, first how ready Satan stood to tempt us and prick us forward still to the eternal perdition of our souls. Secondly, that we should forsake so soon the title & name of a Christian, and yield our necks to the yoke and slavery of the Roman decretals, in that we, professing ourselves before faithful followers of our dear master Christ, should now so wilfully forsake him. Thirdly, unto all our friends (especially our parents) what an heart sorrow it would be to hear how their liberal expenses [sic?] bestowed on us in our youth in training us up in virtuous educations is now so lightly regarded, as able to cause the father to yield his breath for the sorrow conceived through the negligence of his son, and all in general lament our unnatural usages. Fourthly, from the servants of one eternal true God to come to be idolaters, worshippers of stocks and stones, and so forsake the fear of God, our duty to our sovereign prince, and our love to our parents and all affection to our friends. All these (being the principal points) thoroughly considered, withdrew my mind from my former intent, as having knowledge of my Lord the English ambassador then lying in Paris, to him we went & delivered our aforesaid letters, desiring the prudent counsel of his Honour therein. His Honour, perceiving our imbecility, and opening the letters, found therein whereof I have before certified your Honour, which when he had worthily balanced in the breast of a second Solon, said:

My dear and faithful countrymen (as I hope you are), not so glad of your welfare as sorry for your arrival in that you hazard yourselves on such a stayless state to become as friends to your enemies and foes to your country, here standing at the mercy of a ravening wolf who not only would devour you from your country, but both body and soul from heavenly felicity. Better therefore to abide the poverty of this your want and necessity than to sell yourselves wilfully into such perpetual slavery, and not only to your great ignomy, but to your friends' perpetual infamy, to your prince and famous county, if you leave your captain thus cowardly. Take heart afresh courageously, & dread no calamity; take patient all adversity, & God will assist ye.

The excellent discourse pronounced by so prudent a personage methought did demonstrate the excellency of true nobility. And then departing from his Honour, I journeyed into Italy, to Rome, Naples, Venice, Padua and divers other excellent cities. And now returned, remembering my bounden duty to your Honour, I present you with these my simple labours, desiring pardon for my bold attempt.

Faccio fine, e riuerentemente baccio le vostre valorose Mani.

Humilissimo e Diuotissimo e sempre Osseruandissimo Vasallo e Seruitore,
Anthony Munday

The Author's Commendation of the Right Honourable Earl of Oxenford

E xcept I should in friendship seem ingrate,
D enying duty whereto I am bound,
W ith letting slip your Honour's worthy state,
A t all assays which I have noble found,
R ight well I might refrain to handle pen,
D enouncing aye the company of men.

D own, dire despair, let courage come in place,
E xalt his fame whom honour doth embrace.

V irtue hath aye adorned your valiant heart,
E xampled by your deeds of lasting fame,
R egarding such as take god Mars his part,
E ach-where by proof in honour and in name.

E ach one doth know no fables I express,
A s though I should encroach for private gain,
R egard you may (at pleasure), I confess,
L etting that pass, I vouch to dread no pain,
E ach-where gainst such as can my faith distain,

O r once can say, he deals with flattery,
F orging his tales to please the fantasy.

O f mine intent your Honour judge I crave,
X ephirus blow your fame to Orient skies,
E xtol, I pray, this valiant Britain brave,
N ot seeming once Bellona to despise,
F or valiantness, behold young Caesar here,
O r Hannibal, lo Hercules in place,
R ing forth (I say), his fame both far and near,
D oubt not to say, de Vere will foes deface.

Verses Written by the Author upon his Lord's posy *Vero Nihil Verius*

V irtue displays the truth in every cause,
E ach vain attempt her puissance doth disprove,
R epelling falsehood, that doth seek each clause
O f dire debate Dame Truth for to remove.

N othing, we say, that truer is than truth,
I t folly is against the stream to strive,
H ard is the hap that unto such ensueth,
I n vain respects the truth for to deprive;
L et such take heed, for folly doth them drive.

V aunt not too much of thy vainglorious state,
E steem the truth, for she will guide thee right,
R efrain alway to trust to fickle fate,
I n end she fails, so simple is her might;
U se tried truth, so shalt thou never fall,
S weet is the yoke that shall abridge thy thrall.

FINIS

Ad Preclarvm et nobilissimum Virum E O

Nauta Mari medio vectus spumantibus vndis,
depositis portu, sperat reperire salutem:
Conscius extremo procumbens Carcere latro
sperat fortunam lucis sentire ministram.
Pallidus attonito vultu tardatur Amator
Finem tamen dominam confidit habere benignam.

A patrijs sperat Perigrinus finibus exul:
Orbe pererrato sibi, conciliare quietem.
Hac ratione meum vino visurus Alexin,
Tristitiaequae mea latas perstringere fines,
Speque re[c]reabor, medicum Fortuna resistat,
Donec opem ferat, et morbo medi[c]ator acerbo.
Non aliquando diem tantae peressere [sic] tenebrae,
quin redeat spargens glebis sua fulmina [sic?] Phoebus.
Aequora quando metam certam posuere furendi,
Gaudia securis ego sic possessa tenebo.
Mi formose vale, valeat tua grata voluntas,
Deprecor optata tutus potiaris arena.
Te, cunctosque tuos CHRISTO committo tuendos,
Donec praestentes [sic] sermone fruamur amico.

FINIS

Honos alit Artes