

SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Henry, Lord Compton (d.1589) in the first edition of *The Paradise of Dainty Devises, aptly furnished with sundry pithy and learned inventions devised and written for the most part by Mr Edwards, sometimes of her Majesty's Chapel, the rest by sundry learned gentlemen, both of honour and worship, viz., S. Barnarde, E.O., L. Vaux. D.S., Jasper Heywood, F.K., M. Bewe, R. Hill, M Yloop, with others*, published in 1576 by the printer Henry Disle. The *Paradise* was very popular, and was reprinted in 1577, 1578, 1580, 1583, 1590, 1596, 1600 and 1606. It contains eight songs by Oxford (the 'E.O.' of the title above), and since Disle says that everything in the *Paradise* was collected by Richard Edwards, who died in 1566, all eight songs were written before Oxford (born in 1550) was sixteen years of age. The first lines of the eight songs as they appear in the 1576 edition are:

1. Framed in the front of forlorn hope, past all recovery
2. The lively lark did stretch her wing
3. A crown of bays shall that man wear
4. If care or skill could conquer vain desire
5. The trickling tears that falls along my cheeks
6. I am not as I seem to be
7. Even as the wax doth melt, or dew consume away
8. My meaning is to work what wonders love hath wrought

To the right honourable Sir Henry Compton, knight, Lord Compton of Compton

Right honourable and my very good Lord, presuming upon your courtesy I am bold to present unto your Honour this small volume intituled *The Paradise of Dainty Devises*, being penned by divers learned gentlemen, and collected together through the travail of one both of worship and credit for his private use who not long since departed this life, which when I had perused over, not without the advice of sundry my friends, I determined by their good motion to set them in print, who thereunto greatly persuaded me with these and like words: The writers of them were both of honour and worship, besides that our own countrymen, and such as for their learning and gravity might be accounted of among the wisest. Furthermore the ditties both pithy and pleasant, as well for the invention as metre, and will yield a far greater delight, being as they are so aptly made to be set to any song in 5 parts, or sung to instrument. Which well considering, I purposed not to forsake so good an occasion, beseeching your Honour to accept it in good part, chiefly for the authors' sake, who though some of them are departed this life, yet their worthy doings shall continue forever, for like as the shadow followeth the body, so praise followeth virtue, and as the shadow goeth sometimes before and sometimes behind, so doth praise also to virtue, but the later it cometh the greater it is, and to be the better esteemed. Thus fearing to offend your Honour with these my rude speeches, I end, wishing your Lordship many years of joy.

Your good Lordship's wholly to command, H.D.