

SUMMARY: The document below is the edicatory epistle to Oxford in Thomas Bedingfield's *Cardanus' Comfort*, a translation from the Latin of *De consolatione libri tres* by the Italian mathematician and physician Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576).

The title page states that the book was published in 1573 at Oxford's command. Both Bedingfield's letter below and Oxford's dedicatory epistle suggest that the two men were personal friends who shared common interests in literature and military matters. Bedingfield also credits Oxford with being well versed in philosophy ('your knowledge in either great').

Thomas Bedingfield (d.1613), Gentleman Pensioner to Queen Elizabeth, was the son of Sir Henry Bedingfield (d. 22 August 1583) of Oxborough, Norfolk. For the will of Sir Henry Bedingfield, see TNA PROB 11/66/130.

Thomas Bedingfield and Oxford took part in a tournament at court together in 1571. See Segar 1590 on this website.

When Oxford travelled to the Low Countries without licence in the summer of 1574, Thomas Bedingfield was one of the Gentlemen Pensioners sent by the Queen to ensure his return to England.

Bedingfield published two other works: *The Art of Riding* in 1584, a translation of *Il Cavallarizzo* (1562) by Claudio Corte, and *The Florentine History* in 1595, a translation of *Istoria Fiorentino* (1525) by Niccolo Machiavelli. All three of Bedingfield's translations are considered to have influenced Shakespeare. Bedingfield is also credited with the poem or song *Rondeau Redouble*.

For Thomas Bedingfield's will, see TNA PROB 11/122/124.

To the right honourable and my good Lord the Earl of Oxford, Lord Great Chamberlain
of England

My good Lord, I can give nothing more agreeable to your mind and my fortune than the willing performance of such service as it shall please you to command me unto. And therefore, rather to obey than boast of my cunning, and as a new sign of mine old devotion, I do present the book your Lordship so long desired, with assured hope that howsoever you mislike or allow thereof, you will favourably conceal mine imperfections which to your Lordship alone I dare discover because most faithfully I honour and love you. My long discontinuance of study, or rather the lack of grounded knowledge, did many times discourage me, yet the pleasure I took in the matter did countervail all despair, and the rather by encouragement of your Lordship who (as you well remember) unwares to me found some part of this work and willed me in any wise to proceed therein. My meaning was not to have imparted my travail to any, but your Honour hath

power to countermand mine intention. Yet I most humbly beseech you either not to make any partakers thereof, or at the least wise those who for reverence to your Lordship or love to me will willingly bear with mine errors. A needless thing I know it is to comfort you, whom nature and fortune hath not only not injured, but rather upon whom they have bountifully bestowed their grace; notwithstanding, sith you delight to see others acquitted of cares, your Lordship shall not do amiss to read some part of Cardanus' counsel, wherein considering the manifold miseries of others you may the rather esteem your own happy estate, with increase of those noble and rare virtues which I know and rejoice to be in you. Sure I am it would have better beseeemed me to have taken this travail in some discourse of arms (being your Lordship's chief profession, & mine also) than in philosopher's skill to have thus busied myself, yet sith your pleasure was such, and your knowledge in either great, I do (as I will ever) most willingly obey you. And if any either through skill or curiosity do find fault with me, I trust notwithstanding for the respects aforesaid to be holden excused. From my lodging this first of January 1571 [=1572].

Your Lordship's always to command,
Thomas Bedingfield