

SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY

NEWSLETTERS

1970

The Shakespeare Oxford Society

March 31, 1970

918 "F" St., N.W., Room 612, Washington, D.C., 20004



Dear Fellow-Members Shakespeare Oxford Society:

This News-Letter contains a report on our progress in carrying out the purposes stated in our charter; a brief review of one of the Folger Library Booklets "The Authorship of Shakespeare" (1962) ostensibly by James G. McManaway and edited by Dr. Louis B. Wright, together with a more extensive review of a 1969 edition of Hamlet, edited by Dr. Wright. In addition there is an account of a very real and important discovery through recent research of your Society, showing the important position that the Earl of Oxford occupied in the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign. This effectually gives the lie, as it were, to the libels so assiduously spread and invented by present-day purveyors of the Aubrey-Stratford Mythos. Also a short account of 1969 developments at the "Shrine" of Stratford-on Avon, which so many equate with Shakespeare.

The rate of our progress in recent years toward gaining recognition of Lord Oxford as Shakespeare among the uncommitted and open-minded, can best be described as one small step forward, and two giant steps backwards. It has long been recognized that there would, and could, be no change in the attitude of those who have a vested interest in maintaining the Stratford Myth, both monetary, and a natural reluctance to admit crass credulity and gross gullibility. It was hoped, however, that open-, or at the least, unpoisoned, minds might be found among high, or secondary, school students, and, perhaps, their teachers who had not committed themselves publicly to a degree that would preclude examining facts and evidence without embarrassment or loss of face. That this hope was a vain and idle one, is putting it mildly, as will be only too apparent from one of the two reviews below.

Meanwhile Back at The "Shrine."

In 1969 the Shakespeare Birthplace business at Stratford-on-Avon had a banner year and, though flourishing financially, encountered a small fly in the ointment. A Mr. Francis Carr, a Baconian who once published a magazine, "Past and Future", formed an ad hoc committee around 1963, called the Shakespeare Action Committee, with four or five members, whose purpose was to try to get the "grave" and "monument" opened by the quater-centennial in 1964 to see if there was anything there that would throw any light upon whom the real author was. The Life Members of the Birthplace Trust took a dim view of this, justifiedly feeling that it would not be good for business. Mr. Carr and his Committee got exactly nowhere. While his magazine later suspended publication, Mr. Carr persisted: in fact seems to take an unholy delight in annoying the trustees and their Executive Director who he claims are operating a dishonest swindle upon unwary tourists, local and foreign. He does this upon every occasion that presents itself, and when one does not present itself, he does not hesitate to make an occasion. In the summer he told the Press that the operators were violating an English Statute designed to protect the public from such as they. Most of the newspapers wrote this up, with a semi-humorous approach. The following clipping is one sent us from England:
"Daily Mirror August 15, 1969" "Businessman Francis Carr is trying to prove that there is no difference between claims made about Shakespeare and the words writ-

ten on a tin of baked beans. He wants the people who run the Shakespeare tourist industry to be prosecuted under the Trade Descriptions Act. That is the act which says, for example, that a tin marked "baked beans" must actually contain baked beans. Mr. Carr, Chairman of the Action Committee, which is trying to get the bard's tomb opened, said yesterday: "The public is being charged to visit a house where Shakespeare is supposed to have been born. But there is no written evidence at all of where he was born, or even when. This, I believe, is a clear breach of the Trade Descriptions Act and I am asking that the Board of Trade investigate. The Shakespeare legend is being marketed to the public inaccurately." Millions of people have visited the house at 2s.6d. a time. Last night Dr. Levi Fox, director of the Shakespeare Trust said: "Shakespeare is not a piece of ironmongery or merchandise to come under this Act. The move of Mr. Carr to prosecute is quite ridiculous."

Elsewhere Mr. Levi Fox was quoted to the effect that the whole thing was preposterous; "Shakespeare is not Baked Beans. Shakespeare is not a piece of ironmongery, etc." (Note. Just who said he was is not clear, but if past experience is any guide, we can reasonably expect to hear from "professional historical scholars" that there is nothing to the Oxford theory of authorship, and that the Aubrey-Stratford Attribution is proved, because other ignoramuses claim that "Baked Beans" and "Lord Ironmongery" were the true authors.) The matter dragged along, mentioned in the press from time to time. The Director of Public Prosecutions declined to prosecute the trustees, so Mr. Carr filed a private complaint before a Stratford magistrate. (In England there is no system of D.A.'s, U.S. Attorneys etc. as we have over here. The D.P.P. can conduct a prosecution at public expense with a barrister retained for that particular trial and paid by the Treasury. It is not unusual at a particular Assize to find a barrister one day conducting a public prosecution of an alleged criminal, and the very next day defending one from whose solicitor he has accepted a brief. The law does provide that any citizen who feels that a law has been violated, may conduct, at his own expense, a prosecution on his own behalf, or of the general public.) This matter came up in October and, to the surprise of practically no one, the local magistrate experienced little difficulty in finding that the offense charged, while not denied, did not come within the intent and prohibitions covered by this particular Act.

There are several interesting, not to say, strange, things that attract attention in this episode which has necessarily been covered rather sketchily here. The Trustees were accused openly and in the press of knowingly obtaining money by false pretenses from other persons. This is a crime per se, and, if not true, the accusation is "actionable", and the accuser wide-open to a suit for heavy damages for libel and slander, and unless he could prove his charges, would be liable in damages and costs to his financial ruin. Mr. Carr was usually identified in the press as a "London business man". Now most people, here and in England, would naturally expect that honest and honorable men, when publicly accused of a crime at Common Law, involving moral turpitude, would react indignantly, deny the charge, demand an immediate retraction and apology, and, failing that, prosecute the libeler and slanderer to the full extent of the law for vindication. Did they do this? Did they say; "It's a malicious lie. 'Tis so the real Birthplace, etc.?" No. They did not deny that they were running a swindle and profiting thereby. Their defense was, in effect, what in law is known as a "plea in avoidance" which means that you admit the truth of the charge, but claim that the offense does not come within the provisions of the particular Act cited. The layman looks on this as hiding behind a technicality, or, as he sometimes calls it; "taking the Fifth". It is not suggested that they were not within their rights in this, nor can their business judgment in dodging the opportunity of proving their good faith, and honest belief, in the claims they were making, be faulted.

Are the Trustees and their Director embarrassed, crest-fallen, or downcast over this publicity more squeamish people might regard as unfavorable? Not at all. From all appearances they are "laughing all the way to the bank," no doubt reminding themselves of the sage observations of the 19th century Connecticut philosopher whose study, reflections, and findings on human nature have made him famous. "There's a sucker born every minute." "The public likes to be humbugged." Speaking of P.T. Barnum; perhaps some of you do not know closely he is connected with the "Stratford Shakespeare Racket". In the 1840's he was in England and noticed how gullible Americans were visiting Stratford, paying entrance fees, and buying "genuine souvenirs of Shakespeare" made from the inexhaustible wood of the mulberry tree, "planted by Shakespeare's own hand". Barnum offered to buy Shakespeare's "Birthplace", have it taken down and shipped to America, where it would be re-erected in his New York museum, and admission charged to the gullible. After negotiations had been completed and a price agreed upon, the Town Council met and "selected the most likely building." At one time there were two "genuine birthplaces" run by competitive beldames; Mrs. Court and Mrs. Hornby. (See Washington Irving's Sketchbook). Up to this time the town itself had not profited much from the legend; just the retailers and manufacturers of the fake relics. Second thoughts began to dawn upon the thrifty burghers. If the Yank can make money out of exhibiting a "Birthplace", why can't we, etc? News of the sale leaked out and people genuinely interested in Shakespeare because of his plays and poems, thought it would be a sacrilege to have his home taken down and shipped across seas. J.O. Halliwell, John Paine Collier, Cunningham, and others alerted the literary world of England to the danger. An active campaign to raise funds to buy it in at auction was put on. The locals had repudiated their contract with Barnum, and were putting up the "house" at auction to the highest bidder, Barnum, or anybody. At the auction in 1847, the "Birthplace" was bid in by the Shakespeare Birthplace Committee of London and Stratford for 3000 pounds, and Stratford was in business on a constantly increasing scale.

If there was any sense of fitness or appreciation in Stratford for the founders of its prosperity, they should have erected long ago, two huge statues at their gates, like Gog and Magog of London, to the two founders of their prosperity; David Garrick and Phineas T. Barnum. Both were prime examples of individual initiative, free enterprise, and imagination that never lost sight of personal material advantage. The first for associating and connecting in the mind of the fashionable and theatrical world of London, Shakespeare and the town of Stratford; and the second, eighty years later, with opening the eyes of the villagers to the vista of the steady flow of sucker money that would come in from exploiting a well-publicized fake. Barnum, though double-crossed by the yokels, more than made up for it twenty years later by exhibiting the "Cardiff Giant" at his museum in New York, to the credulous and gullible. He had done well with his "dog-faced boy", "wild man of Burneo", and "genuine mermaid", could spot a fake a mile away, and assess its money-making possibilities if properly exploited. By a curious co-incidence, the fake "Birthplace" and "Cardiff Giant" had two things in common. They belonged to someone else, and Barnum failed in purchasing them. With the "Giant" he made a quick recovery. When his offer to buy outright, or a substantial interest in, the petrified man was turned down by the original owners who had fabricated it out of gypsum, he had sketches made by an artist and shown to a tombstone maker. In a few weeks he had a duplicate on exhibition in his museum, billed as the original "Giant", and boldly claimed the up-state New York one to be a shabby imitation of his genuine original! He is said to have made more money out of it than did George Hull who conceived the hoax in the first place.

Our members will remember that in our last News-Letter we published a replica of the Elyer that is now furnished visitors to Holy Trinity Church at Stratford after they have paid the two shilling fee to get a closer view of the "grave" and "monument", and promised more on that subject in the next News-Letter. The writer has made three trips to Stratford-on-Avon. The first on his own to get a view of the scene and activities there at first hand, and the other two in the interests of the Society and some of its members. While no member of our Society, as far as known, believes the Stratford worthy was the author of the plays and poems of Shakespeare, nevertheless the propaganda put out by the members of the Birthplace Trust does affect us, indirectly and adversely. Some of our best and clearest thinkers, blessed with imaginative and analytical minds, plus some romanticists, feel that there may be manuscripts, documents, or a clue, or a "something" concealed somewhere in the "monument" that would throw light on the authorship. The theory is that the "monument" was caused to be carved and erected, with its enigmatic inscriptions in Latin and English, by those who were responsible for the publication of the First Folio, and the layers of the grounds for the "Stratford Hoax". This writer who, for the sake of brevity, and to protect the innocent, will hereinafter*referred *be to in the first person, does not for a minute believe Shaksper's family had anything whatever to do with the "monument", or could read the inscriptions thereon; will go along with this, and also concede that there is a remote possibility

there may have been at one time documents placed inside if there is or was a hollow space in it; but that there is anything in it now, is negatived by its history of being reconstructed, handled, and altered over the years. Nor do I believe the effigy we now see was in or on the original monument sketched by Dugdale circa 1632. The theory that something might now be found hidden therein, is based on the premise that the structure, or "Whatsit" on the top that bears the coat of arms, is a hollow box, not a solid stone. It could well be either, but outsiders are not allowed close enough to form a worthwhile opinion. It seems a reasonable assumption that if anything was ever inside and found to support the Stratford business, we would have heard of it long ago. If there was anything that could hurt or harm that business, it would have been destroyed by its custodians at once. While the church authorities have the final say as to permission to examine or take down the "monument", the commercial interest of the Birthplace Trustee, and now Holy Trinity's own interest in raising about a half-million dollars for the "Shrine" would, and do, preclude the mostest possibility of such permission being granted.

Now my speculation and belief that there is nothing in the "monument" now, bearing on the authorship, could be completely erroneous, and the others, right. But we are faced with an impasse. My principal interest now, and for the past several years, has been that of trying to locate original documents that could furnish proof of what we believe. In that attempt any educated and informed speculation as to likely places to look would be most helpful, and some might even be inspired. But as long as some cling to the belief that opening the "monument" should come first, before attention was turned to other possibilities, these good minds on this phase were idling in neutral and getting nowhere. I wanted to engage the gears for forward motion. Would there be a way of finding out, one way or another, without taking it down, and perhaps even at the initiative of the Vicar? My sole motive was to liberate potentially productive speculation that was now lying fallow. Mr. Calvin Hoffman (Marlovian) and Mr. Francis Carr (Baconian) as well as others not tabulated, were getting personal publicity by various schemes to force digging up and opening up, which were met with constantly hardening and resentful resistance from the authorities, though mischievously urged on by the Press.

Some may recall that several years ago the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City had a much admired statue of a bronze horse, of classic Greek design, so beautiful that the Museum had small replicas made and sold to collectors. One of the curators accidentally noticed a small line on it, hitherto undetected, which suggested a joint that did not belong in a classic casting made by the "melted wax" method. An electronic examination disclosed reinforcing inside, and the final determination was that it was made probably in the 20th century, and sold as an antique by an enterprising entrepreneur. It only took a little investigation to ascertain that there were now electronic methods that could pierce five feet of steel, and disclose a small flaw in a crystal. That there were many devices here and in England that could be directed at the "monument" in situ, or place, without affecting it in any way, which would immediately disclose to the eye, and on film, if there was a hollow space, if there was any foreign substance in that space, or trace of there having been. The Courtauld Institute had been recently permitted to subject the "Flower Portrait" of Shakespeare, which was claimed to be the original portrait Droeshout had before him, to electronic inspection, which showed it to be an original painting of the Madonna, Child, and St. John of probably the latter half of the 15th century, and the Shakespeare(?) painted over it no earlier than the 18th century. The X-ray films showing the Flower was just another fake, were being exhibited side by side with the portrait(?) in the Royal Shakespeare Gallery at Stratford.

It was rumored that there had been a change of vicars in Stratford, and there was an outside chance that the new man might resent the constant turmoil and agitation to have the "grave" and "monument" opened up, which was often treated irreverently in the newspapers. There was also a possibility that in him might reside some of the sturdy spirit of a predecessor, retired Vicar Frances Gastrell, who owned and lived in a house built in 1702 on the site of the original New Place, Shaksper's home. In 1758, irritated by tourists and local guides, he ordered the mulberry tree "planted by Shakepeare's own hand" cut down, and the next year had the entire building destroyed, to the outrage of the townsmen. With a half-formed idea of getting in touch with the new Vicar, learning his sentiments, and, if they were appropriate, proceeding further, I journeyed down from London to Stratford last October. I would present myself as a sort of voluntary amicus vicaris, with a passion for anonymity, who had a suggestion he could use to put an end to the annoyance, once and for all and leave him free to devote his time and attention to his religious and pastoral duties. But when I saw the functionary seated at the receipt of custom at the entrance to the choir, demanding and collecting the two shillings, and read the flyer handed out about the "Shrine", I realized that the church had gone over, "body, soul, and britches" to the crass commercialism of the Birthplace Trustees, and was even trying to out-Herod, Herod.

Recalling what Halliwell-Phillips said speaking of the death-bed of Shakespeare and the wretched sanitary conditions surrounding his residence: "If truth and not romance is to be invoked, were the woodbine and sweet honeysuckle within reach of the poet's deathbed, their fragrance would have been neutralized by the vicinity to middens, fetid water-courees",* a similar thought came to my mind. That if the odor of sanctity, which many believe is present at the death of a saint, and permeates a shrine, were present at this one, it was certainly undetectable; being neutralized or blanketed by the frowd of fraud, fakery, and false pretenses.

* and piggeries",

6
BOOK REVIEWS.

This feature of this News-Letter, while new, is not likely to be repeated in later issues because there are no recent orthodox books on the authorship problem later than Mr. Milward Martin's 'Was Shakespeare Shakespeare?' (1963), already touched on in our 1966 (Mar) News letter, and we know of no new Oxfordian ones since then in either England or the U.S. Its purpose here is to point a moral and adorn a tale, and it also seems a convenient means to direct the attention of our members to the methods of distinguished "professional historical scholars" in promoting and protecting their vested interest in supporting the Stratford Hoax.

The Folger Library Booklet, The Authorship of Shakespeare by James G. McManaway, edited by Louis B. Wright (1962) Copyrighted by The Folger Shakespeare Library. Paper-back, 50 pages with illustrations. On sale at the entrance of the Library; \$1.00 plus 4¢ D.C. Sales Tax, total \$1.04. While this reviewer has, at different times, bought four of these with his own money, and for his own reasons, he has yet to find anything in it for the general reader, to change his initial reaction from first reading, that it is over-priced by approximately 94¢. We do not recommend it, but will discuss one or two features therein.

"When we risk no contradiction, it prompts the tongue to deal in fiction."

While the above was said about 250 years ago by John Gay-the "Beggars Opera" author, it would still serve for a one sentence thumb-nail review for the booklet.

In 1962 or '63 I read in the Book Section of one of the Washington papers, an article on Mr. Charlton Ogburn, Jr. who lives in near-by Northern Virginia. The occasion was a favorable review of Shakespeare, the Man behind the Name by Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, Jr. In this article the Book-Editor said that when shown this Folger booklet, Mr. Ogburn sat down at his typewriter and dashed off a 20 page, single-speed criticism of it, pointing out approximately 80 errors and mis-statements. This was mimeographed. The editor either said in the article-or I was told about it later- that Dr. McManaway when asked if he would read this, said he saw no reason why he should. This is characteristic and in accordance with "party-line" tactics. I asked Mr. Ogburn for a copy of his exceptions for my own information. He told me that it was in the form of notes to marginal numbered references on his copy of the Booklet, but that if I had a copy of the booklet, he would mark it up with the numbers. I bought an extra copy for him to do so. His paper is entitled "An Examination of the Stratford Case as Presented in the Folger Booklet, The Authorship of Shakespeare, by James G. McManaway/ It is truly devastating, and I wish all of our members could see it. None of it will be repeated or quoted here. There are one or two statements in the Booklet that Mr. Ogburn either overlooked, or felt in the embarrassment of riches for dissent, he had done enough. These will be touched upon without transgressing on Mr. Ogburn's preserves. Following are some excerpts for the purpose of comment:

pg. 23, par. 3. "Within a few years of his death Shakespeare was bringing fame to Stratford.....par 5. et seq. In the year 1662 the Reverend John Ward, M.A. of Oxford in 1652, became rector of Holy Trinity Church. Upon leaving the university, Ward had taken lodgings in London near Barber Surgeons Hall so that he might attend lectures on anatomy, for he was*equally(*almost) interested in the cure of the body and the cure of souls/ His notebooks, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library, are filled with memoranda about medicine and theology and contain many references to events in his life and to people he met or heard about. They show that upon his arrival in Stratford he did what every prudent conscientious clergyman

doas; he inquired about the important parishionars. One family name would interest him, for whenever he went into the chancel of Holy Trinity Church there was the monument to William Shakespeare, and there were the burial places of Anne, his wife, Susanna, his elder daughter, and her husband the prominent physician Dr. John Hall. Hall, the physician, a selection from whose casabooks had been translated into English and published in 1657, Ward would know about. Hall's daughter Elizabeth's first husband, Thomas Nash, was also buried in the chancel; she was in 1662 the wife of Sir John Bernard of Abingdon. Elizabeth had inherited New Place, one of the finest houses in Stratford, and, as all Stratford remembered, she and her mother had been hostesses in 1643 to Queen Henrietta Maria and her attendants when they occupied New Place en route from London to join King Charles in the North. Ward's notebooks contain four entries about Shakespeare and his family.....The testimony of the Reverend Mr. John Ward is unimpeachable. The most famous names in recent Stratford history were Shakespeare and Hall. The most exciting event in recent memory was the visit of Queen Henrietta Maria. Shakespeare's daughter was now Lady Bernard, and the family house was one of the show places of the town. Of course the new actors must read Shakespeare's plays, so as not to show ignorance of them, for apparently they were part of the subject of conversation among the best people..... There are two authentic likenesses of Shakespeare. One of these is the engraving of Martin Droeshout, printed on the title page of the First Folio(1623). Since the artist was only about twenty-two when the book came from the press, he must have worked from a portrait; at the age of fifteen, as he was when the poet died, he was too young to have formed a trustworthy impression. The identity of the portrait he copied is unknown. Possibly it was that now in the National Portrait Gallery in London. (Note."The Charges")..... Whatever faults of execution Droeshout may have committed in his engraving, it is certain Shakespeare's friends provided him with an authentic portrait to copy.(end from page 25.) page 32, par. 2. "The second charge brought against Shakespeare is ignorance. He has been called, among other things, "the mean, drunken, ignorant and absolutely unlettered rustic of Stratford" who could neither read nor write a line. Some people, after trying to decipher the signatures to Shakespeare's will and other documents (*lagal) have, in their ignorance, called him illiterate. The usual hand written in England from about 1500 until long after Shakespeare's death bears the name of English or secretary. The "fine Italian hand" that Shakespeare mentions was introduced in the sixteenth century and by 1700 it had almost completely displaced the secretary hand. English or secretary letters resemble those used in German script, and most of them are totally different from the familiar italic letters of the modern cursive hand. Once the secretary form was learned, Elizabethan manuscripts are no more or less difficult to read than modern hands. It is just as proper to call Goethe illiterate for writing German script as to say that Shakespeare was illiterate because he wrote English or secretary script."(End.)

At the end of this booklet is a section titled "Suggested Reading". On page 42, quote: "The Anti-Shakespeare Industry and the Growth of Cults" by Louis B. Wright (Virginia Quarterly Review XXV (1959) 289-303) is a spirited attack upon faddist speculation." While Dr. McManaway is the nominal author of this booklet, there grounds for speculation that while the hand is that of Esau McManaway, the voice is Jacob Wright.

The following extracts and excerpts from published articles and introductions will give each reader an opportunity to form his own opinion.

I first read Dr. Wright's article in the *Va. Quarterly Review* in 1961. While others before him, in England and the U.S. had been out of patience and scornful of "Anti-Shakespeareans" long before this, none before, as far as I know, had gone out of his way to be as abusive of the Earl of Oxford and his advocates as that as it may, it certainly set the tone and tune for his imitators and stooges, whose name is legion in the academic world. Five years later (1964) the author looked upon his work, found it good, and repeated it almost word for word in a chapter of his "Shakespeare for Everyman", Washington Square Press, N.Y.C. The page references are to the latter publication

pg. 92. "perverted nonsense"

95. "knowing little about educational and social conditions of the 16th century, believe that only a nobleman with a degree from Oxford or Cambridge....."

95-96. Anti-Shakespeareans have no sense of humor. A fog of gloom envelops them. When a busy scholar would not argue with them, their pride is hurt. The preoccupation with this plot theory has developed a neurosis among anti-Shakespeareans, that may account for truculence, and sometimes makes them unwelcome in polite company. When a lawyer takes the case of the Earl of Oxford, for example, he is not deterred because there is no scrap of credible evidence to prove that Oxford ever wrote a single play, credited to Shakespeare. The techniques of the trial lawyer which are those used by the Anti-Shakespeareans are quite different from those practiced by professional historical scholars. The lawyer is out to win the case by his skill of persuasion regardless of the evidence. The historical scholar, on the contrary, is trained to analyze evidence, not to win cases. He must get at the truth by weighing the pros and cons of each piece of testimony regardless of whether it favors his particular thesis..... by suppressing evidence damaging to their clients, and by abusing the opposition, lawyerlike advocates sometime manage to present a persuasive case for, Oxford, Darby, or some other contender. All of this is legitimate in a court of law, if the attorney for the plaintiff can get away with it. But it is not sound scholarship.

101. Shakespeare had available one of the best grammar schools in England.

114. How does one acquire the skill to write anti-Shakespearean books. First one must develop the habit of willing suspension of disbelief. Then one must break the hampering bondage to accepted facts and recorded knowledge. After that the way is clear. All one then needs is the capacity to climb into a soap bubble and soar away into Cuckoo-Land." Above from Dr. Wright's Shakespeare for Everyman.

Now we come to 1969. "The Folger Library General Reader's Shakespeare. HAMLET, edited by Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. Lamar, \$4.50, 50c. Copyrighted 1959, Simon and Schuster, Inc. 1st printing, Dec. 1957, 29th printing, Oct. 1969. The preface is signed L.B.W and V.A.L. The editors are identified on the first page in the 29th printing edition as follows:

LOUIS B. WRIGHT, General Editor, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library from 1948 until his retirement in 1968, Dr. Wright has devoted over forty years to the study of the Shakespearean period. In 1926 he completed his doctoral thesis on "Vaudeville Elements in Elizabethan Drama" and subsequently published many articles on the stagecraft and theatre of Shakespeare's day. He is the author of Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England (1935), Religion and Empire (1942), The Elizabethan's America (1965), and many other books and essays on the history and literature of the Tudor and Stuart periods, including Shakespeare for Everyman (1964). Dr. Wright has taught at the universities of North Carolina, California at Los Angeles, Michigan, Minnesota, and other American institutions. From 1932 to 1948 he was instrumental in developing the research program of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. During his tenure as Director, the Folger Shakespeare Library became one of the leading research institutions of the world for the study of the backgrounds of Anglo-American civilization.

VIRGINIA A. LAMAR, Assistant Editor. A member of the staff of the Folger Shakespeare Library from 1946 until her death in 1968, Miss Lamar served as research assistant to the Director and as Executive Secretary...
Miss Lamar's part was probably the excellent arrangement of the notes, glossary, etc on the left-hand side of the pages opposite Shakespeare's text.

This edition contains much that is good, and much that is new. It is worth twice the cost, 50¢, of anybody's money and more than that to Shakespeare lovers and Oxfordians. It is highly recommended to our members. Some of it, especially the introductory matter, is of such interest to us Oxfordians, that the Society has ordered over a hundred copies from the publisher, half of the HAMLET, and half of the 1969 edition of Shakespeare's Poems (Sonnets not included) one of which will be mailed to each of our supporting members when they arrive. Both contain the valuable editorial matter. We had hoped to have them on hand to mail out with this News-Letter, but as they have not yet been received to be on hand for reference to our comments, we are appending the brief excerpt below. Its reference here is for the purpose of comment only, not to try to deprive Simon and Schuster, Inc. of their profit, or Dr. Wright of his royalties on each book.

At the foot of page xxiii of the introduction under the heading of THE AUTHOR, begin these excerpts, all of which are vintage L.B.W.

"To those acquainted with the history of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, it is incredible that anyone should be so naive or ignorant as to doubt the reality of Shakespeare as the author of the plays that bear his name. Yet so much nonsense has been written about other "candidates" for the plays that it is well to remind readers that no credible evidence that would stand up in a court of law has ever been adduced to prove ~~either~~ that Shakespeare did not write his plays or that anyone else wrote them. All of the theories offered for the authorship of Francis Bacon, The Earl of Derby, the Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Hertford, Christopher Marlowe, and a score of other candidates are mere conjectures spun from the active imaginations of persons who confuse hypothesis and conjecture with evidence. As Marc's statement of 1598 indicates, Shakespeare was already a popular playswright whose name carried weight at the box office. The obvious reputation of Shakespeare as early as 1598 makes the effort to prove him a myth one of the most absurd in the history of human perversity./Paragraph. The anti-Shakespeareans talk darkly about a plot of vested interests to maintain the authorship of Shakespeare. Nobody has any vested interest in Shakespeare, but every scholar is interested in the truth and in the quality of evidence advanced by special pleaders who set forth hypotheses in place of facts.

"The anti-Shakespeareans base their arguments upon a few simple premises, all of them false. These false premises are that Shakespeare was an unlettered yokel without any schooling, that nothing is known about Shakespeare, and that only a noble lord or the equivalent in background could have written the plays. The facts are that more is known about Shakespeare than about most dramatists of his day, and that he had a very good education, acquired in the Stratford Grammar School, that the plays show no evidence of profound book learning, and that the knowledge of kings and courts evident in the plays is no greater than any intelligent young man could have picked up at second hand. Most Anti-Shakespeareans are naive and betray an obvious snobbery. The author of their favorite plays, they imply, must have a college diploma framed and hung on the his study wall, like the one in their dentist's office, and obviously so greet a writer must have had a title or some equally significant evidence of exalted social background." END.

Back for a few brief comments on Mr. McManaway's Book.
 "Within a few years of his death, Shakespeare was bringing fame to Stratford".
 then citing a carefully excised extract from Lt. Hammond's "relation" as evidence.
 Some may remember we touched on this in our February 1969 News-Letter. Since
 then we have had an opportunity to read the complete text of this. MS Land-downe,
2:3. Legg's rendition (modern) 1634 trip, Stuart Scrier, edited 1904, F.E. Robin-
son, Co. publishers 1904. Legg was an antiquarian who added notes to the "relation".
 The original shows that the journey from Warwick to Worcester was made near the
 beginning, and not the end, as was implied the first time. Legg had a note which
 I think we can enjoy. "1.13 The church of Stratford is in itself a very fine four-
 teenth and fifteenth century church, but for most of its visitors it is a place
for a cult other than the founders of the church intended (my italics) its struct-
ure generally receives but scant notice." Look who is calling what a CULT in 1904!
 Looney's book was not published until 1920. At the end of his "relation" Lt. Ham-
 mond gives a list of shires, cities, corporations, and castles visited. Nowhere
 in his summary and resume of this journey and survey does the shrine of Stratford
 appear! How heedless and heartless of "Hadji" Hammond! But, to give the devil his
 due, how was he to know that after time had given the hierarchs of the Aubrey-
 Stratfordian Attribution-"the trained scientific historical scholars"-three hund-
 red and thirty years "leave to sacke up" proof that "within a few years of his death
 Shakespeare was bringing fame to Stratford", the only evidence they can cite is
 his account of his pilgrimage? It is as if a Moslem Hadji, in relating places he
 had seen, were to omit any mention of the Kaaba and Mecca; or a Chaucerian Canter-
 bury pilgrim when asked by home-folks upon his return where he had been, should
 content himself and his inquirer with: "Oh, down the road a piece".

The other extracts we have cited are full of Suggestio Falsi, and plain
 misstatements of historical facts, unworthy of an historical scholar who boasts
 of his expertise in 16th and 17th history. One is the attempt to create the im-
 pression, or suggest to unwary minds, that there was some sort of intimacy between
 Queen Henrietta Maria and Shakespeare's daughter, that they were on visiting terms,
 or, at the least, that the Queen in war-time felt that she felt she should pay a
 visit to the "Shrine". "Elizabeth and her mother had been hostesses in 1643 to
 Queen Henrietta Maria and her attendants when they occupied New Place en route
from London to join King Charles in the North. (my italics) Can't we just see the
 lovely "attendants" Maids of Honor, on their palfreys, awaiting with relief, and
 looking forward to the break while their Royal Mistress visits and chats with
 "Dear Susanna"? Who were her "Attendants"? Just 2000 foot (infantry), 1000 horse
 (cavalry), a train of artillery and a baggage train of one hundred waggons. The
 King was not in the North but at Oxford. The queen did not set out from London.
 She had been on the continent trying to raise funds and help for King Charles,
 from her fellow Roman Catholics. In February 1643 her ship ran the blockade of
 the Parliamentary navy, and she landed at Bridlington, Yorkshire, with a large
 sum of money, One Million to Two Million pounds, but no troops. She went to York,
 a Royalist stronghold, set out with the small army in June to join the King.
 Some time was spent at Newark, and arrangements were made by her to rendezvous with
 Prince Rupert and his cavalry in Stretford the first days of July, and then to
 proceed to Oxford. She referred to herself as "Her Majesty, She-Generalissima",
 ate with her troops in the field etc. All this is well known, even cursory readers
 of history of the Great Rebellion. That a "Historical scholar" specializing in
 this period should not be aware that in the 1640's there arose a misunderstanding
 between the Crown and Parliament, which led to hard feelings, and ultimately blood-
 shed, is incredible. Even more so is the ignorance of geography displayed, that
 on the way to Oxford from London, one passes through Stretford-on-Avon! If you

do not have access to a map of England, or have difficulty in visualizing it, an analogy based on United States geography may be helpful. Imagine a party setting out to march overland from Cleveland to St. Louis, but going by way of Bemidji, Minnesota to see the statue erected to Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, Babe, and be entertained at the home of Bunyan's daughter. The distances are relative, taking into account the size relations of England and the U.S.

Do I really think that the good doctor is ignorant of English history and geography? Of course not; it's just that he has said and written so often and long that we are, and heard the repetitions echo and parroted from his fellows, that he now may actually believe it; has become self-"brain-washed" as it were, and a victim of his own chicanery. In trying to promote and protect his own vested interest in furthering the Stratford Hoax, he feels now that anything goes, that we are such creatures that we ~~cannot~~ count not worth the hanging, outside the Geneva Convention, or laws, or out-patients of St. Elizabeth's. That he does not realize that among those who are reluctant to acknowledge his omniscience and infallibility on the subject of Shakespearean authorship, there may be one or two who do not have to take off their shoes to count to eleven, or "Certifiably Insane." A modern comparison of some of the stultifying statements cited is that it is like unto a press-agent promoting the movie "Gone With the Wind", before it was released, and not knowing what a success it would be, were to arrange to get inserted in a school-book bound to be read by adolescents, that General Sherman set out from Tennessee to Charleston S.C., where the "rebellion" began, had decided to go via Atlanta so that he could spend a few days at Tara; and that twenty years later, all Atlanta was still agog and talking about his "visit", and his hootea Scarlet O'Hara.

One more comment and we are done with the Booklet. "The 'fine Italian hand' that Shakespeare mentions was introduced in the sixteenth century etc, etc." Now when you pay One Dollar plus tax, for a booklet put out by the greatest and finest of Shakespearean libraries, edited and written by distinguished and respected "trained scientific historical scholars", who assure us they are dedicated to finding out and telling the truth, you have a right to rely on a positive statement made therein. The "fine Italian hand" is in quotation marks, and followed by; that Shakespeare mentions, is certainly intended to be taken as a true statement. In fact, putting it in quotes is an implied warranty from an author with any pretensions to literary integrity, that if questioned or challenged, he could and would cite book, page, and line for his quotation. Nowhere in any Quarto or Folio can there be found such a quotation! "Fine Italian hand" is an expression that has crept into our speech, but it has nothing whatever to do with hand-writing. It has a Machiavellian connotation of treachery, or hidden menace, booby-trap, or like discovering something in the fine print of a contract after it has been signed. In Twelfth Night Malvolio says "I think wado know the sweet Roman hand."

(Introductory remarks on THE AUTHOR by Dr. Wright in Plays and Poems.)
From the sample above, readers can see that DR. L.B. Wright does not stint his strictures on "Anti-Shakespeareans", whoever they are. We Oxfordians certainly do not so regard ourselves. We feel we are Pro-Shakespeareans, else we would not be interested in trying to find out who he was and all about him. To our minds, an Anti-Shakespearean is one that insists upon ascribing this supreme achievement in English Literature to William of Stratford, of whom Sir George Greenwood, K.C., M.P., says on page 277; "Is there a Shakespeare Problem?" (1916) "How is it possible, that this very common man, of whom not a single creditable act—still less a single generous or magnanimous act—has been handed down to us by tradition, or discovered by the indefatigable searches of relics and records, how is it possible that this man could be "Shakespeare the Poet?" To borrow from Ben Jonson! What could hurt him more?

When the leading Stratfordian uses the term, "Anti-Shakespeareans" it is all-inclusive; certainly the Earl of Oxford and his proponents occupy a prominent place, are ever in his mind. An examination of his writings and interviews on this subject, will show that he seems unable to keep him out of his mind, and that a direct, or indirect, railing or slur against him and/or Oxfordians is bound to bob up. Just why this is, is not for a layman to speculate. The term may mean to him any and all who do not agree 100 per cent with his dogma on the authorship, or, even more elemental, that simple semantics make it obvious that anyone who is anti-Wright is per se, automatically wrong; and, it follows as the night the day, they are naive, ignorant, perverse snobs, with paranoid tendencies, and unwelcome in polite company.

I hold no brief for the Baconians, Marlovians, etc. I do know the officers of the Francis Bacon Society in England, and the Francis Bacon Foundation, Inc. in the United States. They do not act, write, or speak like the description. Calvin Hoffman (Marlovian) does not write, nor is he so quoted in the Press, to fit the description. I do hold a brief, both figuratively, and literally, for the Oxfordians in the U.S. and am acquainted with many in England. Doubts naturally are raised in some minds as to whether L.B.W. actually knows, or has spoken to, and with, any Oxfordian. Certainly the published writings of these malefactors, give no indication of the beliefs and traits he has found and detected, and feels impelled to warn the public against. Is it possible that this knowledge comes from E.S.P.? Or has the truth been a direct revelation to him alone? Where are the activist, threatening, truculent, zealots now, that have disturbed and troubled the Director in the past? Are any of them Oxfordians? If so, this Society is most anxious to get in touch with them. We could use more zeal and activism, especially now.

Comments on the Introductory Matter on Authorship.

If your copy of HAMLET has not arrived with this News-Letter, than please refer to the half-page extract already given. Every declarative statement therein carries its own refutation to an informed reader, but not to the millions of high-school boys and girls, for whom it is intended, and is reaching in such numbers as to have reached a 29th printing by 1969. Neither they nor their teachers who are furnished these texts by State Departments of Education, School Boards, etc, have any reason to doubt the good faith or integrity of the editor. The fact is that they accept it as authoritative, true, and objective. This is their introduction to Shakespeare, not necessarily to Hamlet first, but ordinarily Julius Caesar, and later Macbeth. All of these additions contain the same poison in the introductions about the author, etc, etc, and they are required to study this and are examined upon it. Our English friends would say that this is "not cricket". Americans say "It's dirty pool." Laying aside all chauvinism and/or xenophobia, I prefer our expression as more fitting and descriptive. If you will reflect back upon your own life, you know how many and firm were the convictions you acquired in this period of your life and how they have persisted. To expect these students to have an open mind on who Shakespeare was, or not to regard those who cast doubt upon the Stratford Attribution as not being nuts and "kooks" is to fly in the face of all experience. There are laws against impairing the morals of a minor, and for contributing to the delinquency, etc. There should be one against those who, for pay, contribute to deprive him of an open mind on any question. The "pusher", or the one who profits by getting them "hooked", is universally despised by right-thinking persons. Let me quote Herbert Spencer.

"There is a principle which is a bar to all information, which is proof against all arguments, and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance; this principle is contempt prior to investigation."

THE EARL OF OXFORD AND THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

Based upon two MSS, Harleian# 4189, and Vincent #445 Herald's office; viz: (Edward de Vere, only son of John, born the 12th day of April 1550, Earl of Oxenford, High Chamberlain, Lord Bolbec, Sandforth and Badlesmere, Steward of the Forest of Essex, and of the Privy Council of the King's Majesty that now is, of whom I will only speak what all men's voices confirm: he was a man of mind and body absolutely accomplished with honorable endowments; he died at his house in Hackney in the month of June Anno 1604, and lies buried at Westminster.) Oxfordian scholars, writers and researchers have felt justified in drawing the obvious conclusion that King James, recognizing the worth of "Great Oxford", not only restored to him the Stewardship of the Forest of Essex, etc. and other rights of his that Elizabeth had "stalled" in restoring, not only continued his grant of One Thousand pounds a year out of the Treasury, but appointed him a member of his Privy Council, where he served during the last year of his life. No one can take exception to this logic, for the conclusion is almost inescapable. But recent research by, and on behalf of our Society, has turned up proof, that this reasoning is wrong. The documented facts contradict it.

E. Oxenforde, 17th Earle of Oxforde, was the fourth ranking member of Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council at the time of King James' ecceseion, and had been for an (as of now) undetermined number of years before. King James did not "appoint" him, as he did several Scots and a few favored Englishmen, but retained him on the Privy Council with the other heads of the P.C.; Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift, Lord Keeper Egerton, Lord High Treasurer Buckhurst, Lord Admiral Nottingham, Earls Shrewsbury, Worcester, Suseex, etc. together with Sirs Wm. Knollys, Ed Wotton, Francis Norriss (Oxford's son-in-law) Robt Cecil, Prin Secty. John Popham, Chief Justice etc etc. These men renewed their oaths as Privy Councillors and the oath of Supremacy to King James.

What was the Privy Council in England? It grew out of the old curie regia, and, during the time of the Tudors, was the Establishment, The Administration, the Bureaucracy, that ran the Kingdom in policy, and every-day administrative affairs. It had a continuity of sorts through different reigns, and while in theory subject to the Monarch and appointed by him, in practice it exercised a restraining influence on even Henry VIII. It was all-powerful, but operated in the name of the Monarch and the laws of England.

The following excerpt from Privy Council of England in 17th and 18th Centuries, Turner, Johns Hopkins Press 1927; will illustrate this. Vol. 1 pg. 33. "For the reign of Elizabeth there are, unfortunately, for the most part, no lists of members of the Council, so that the number has to be deduced from the lists of those that attended..... (pg.72) In the late years of Elizabeth the Council had been small. For 1599 there is a list of 11 members; in 1601, it had at least 13. In the next reign it grew rapidly, though for the first years detailed information is scanty. A fortnight after Elizabeth's death, 26 names were appended to a Council proclamation. (S.P.D. James I, lxxiii, 8 April 1603).....(pg. 83) The position of Privy Councillor was one of eminence and power..... Excepting for four Scots (said the Venetian Ambassador in 1607) the Council (which he said was composed of 25 members) consist of Englishmen, who were all of them, of the first and principal Lords of the realm, if not for nobility and ancient lineage, at least because they had been made great through the authority and favour of the King, being all of them, as it were, earls."

(Ed. Note. Most of the minutes and records of the Privy Council of late Elizabeth and early James' years, were, together with other valuable records, destroyed in a fire in Whitehall in 1613.)

The official minutes of the Privy Council during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, as well as other reigns, have been published by the British Government in large bound copies. The editor notes in the volume around 1600, that the official minutes were lost in the fire at Whitehall, and the only record we now have for several years of late Elizabeth and early James, has to be pieced out from a few original documents that have escaped destruction, or loss, over the years. In an appendix, several of these are given.

The official and correct way to refer to the Privy Council was "The Lords and others of Her/His Majesty's Privie Council". This was usually shortened to "The Lords and others". When a Councillor referred to the P.C. to a fellow member, he usually said "The Lords". As, for instance, during the Battle of the Armada in 1588, the English Commander, Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, wrote Sir Francis Walsingham, the Secretary (both of them being of the P.C.) "We durst not adventure to put in among them, their fleet being so strong". On July 23 after heavy firing had been heard, he sent an urgent message "praying Your Lordships to send us powder and shot forthwith".

Extant records show that Lord Oxford's name was fourth on the proclamation of the accession and succession of King James of Scotland to the English throne on the death of Queen Elizabeth, proclaimed by the Lord Mayor of London, and the Privy Council on March 24th 1603. Other Manuscripts show his signature coming fourth on an order and proclamation of the P.C. April 8th, 1603. Note: Privy Council orders according to custom, and perhaps by law, always lead off with the signatures of three ex officio officers; Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Keeper, and the Lord Treasurer, then the names of the Lords of the Council in order of their rank. Oxford's name always came next, immediately ahead of the Lord Admiral Charles Howard. Sir Robt. Cecil's name as Principal Secretary was sometimes as far down as 25th or 26th. The office of Principal Secretary was a powerful one in fact, if not de jure, for he was, in effect, what we now call Executive Secretary, or Exec. Director, preparing the agenda etc. etc., notifying "the Lords etc", and bringing up the matters to be acted upon. King James did not leave Edinburgh until Apr. 6th, and did not meet in person with the P.C. until May 4th at Theobalds. While he was making a leisurely progress toward London, the P.C. administered the affairs and business of the Kingdom. After Lord Oxford's death in 1604, a record shows the name of Ludovick Stuart, the cousin of King James, who was Duke of Lanox, following fourth after Canterbury et al. This suggests that a Duke or Marquis would have precedence on the Council, if such there were at any time.

The above statements are made categorically, and might be said to sound dogmatic. It would not be surprising that one or two of our readers, Oxfordian writers with published books, brochures etc., and scholars and researchers, were beginning to resent the tone and the effrontery of a non-scholar who has never authored a book or pamphlet on this subject or any other, to boldly claim that he had made a discovery that had escaped the notice of all other Oxfordian scholars from Looney and Ward, down to the present day. That there should be a rising tide of resentment against this Johnny-come-lately, is not only understandable, but human. Nevertheless, it would be well to let this tide reach slack-water, and ebb, for, to vary the metaphor, he has an ace in the hole. About a year ago, while looking for something else, a manuscript was found of an original P.C. order of Apr. 8, 1603, with Oxford's signature, along with twenty or more other signatures of "the Lords and others." The owner of this MS. kindly and generously allowed a xerostat to be made, which is now in the possession of the Society, and at hand as this is being written. If permission can be obtained from the owner, it is planned to reproduce it in a future News-Letter.

With incontestable proof in hand that Oxford was a member of Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council, it was natural to look around for additional evidence. It did not seem reasonable that this MS stood alone, even if its significance had escaped the notice of scholars. If he was on the P.C. in April, what about March when the Queen died? In several books by Oxfordians, it has been mentioned that Lord Oxford did sign something accepting King James as the rightful heir, but they either did not recognize what he signed was a proclamation of the Privy Council, according to law and custom, and he signed in a prominent place as a Privy Councillor, not as a member of the House of Lords, or a job-lot of worthies who wanted to be recorded on the right side by an incoming monarch, or overlooked its significance. Furthermore, additional proof has been under our noses, for forty years, and under this writer's nose for almost twenty, for it has been that long since Mr. Charles W. Barrell sent me a copy of Ward's Life of Edward de Vere, published in 1928. "If it had been a snake, it would have etc."

The following letter was found by Capt. Ward, and published in his book in 1928. It has been reproduced in others, notably "This Star of England" by Dorothy and Charlton Osburn (1952). The italics, or underlining, is mine for emphasis and the directing of attention.

Letter to Sir Robt. Cecil from Earl of Oxford; Hatfield MSS 99.150. Endorsed "25/27 April 1603, Earl of Oxford to my master"

"Sir, I have always found myself beholdan to you for your many kindnesses and courtesies; wherefore I am bold at this present, which giveth occasion of many considerations, to desire you as my very good friend and kind brother-in-law, to impart to me what course is devised by you of the Council and the rest of the Lords concerning our duties to the King's Majesty; whether you do expect any messenger before his coming to let us understand his pleasure, or else his personal arrival to be presently or very shortly. And if that be so, what order is resolved on amongst you either for attending or meeting His Majesty; for by reason of mine infirmity I cannot come among you as often as I wish, and by reason of my house is not so near that at every occasion I can be present -- were fit, either I do not hear at all from you or at least write the latest: as this other day it happened to me, receiving a letter at none of the clock not to fail at eight of the the same morning to be at Whitehall; which being impossible, yet I hastened so much as I came to follow you into Ludgate, though through press of people and horses I could not reach your company as I desired, but followed as I might.....(Here follows the paragraph we all know about the grief he feels in the loss of our Mistress, and how he has been left "without sail or anchor etc.etc) Wherefore I most earnestly desire you of this favour, as I have written before, that I may be informed from you, concerning those points. And thus recommending myself unto you, I take my leave.

Your assured friend and unfortunate brother-in-law.

E. Oxanford. "

With what we now know, it is plain as a pike-staff, that the "duties" he is talking about, have nothing to do with those of the Lord High Chamberlain at the Coronation, or his rights of "Every", but his duties as a Privy Councillor, and he is explaining to the Secretary of the Council why he is, and has been, unable to meet with the other Lords as often as he would have liked, and asking that he be kept informed of what particular duties are expected of the Councillors at this time etc.

16
THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY.

Nothing contained in this News-Letter, should be taken as criticism of, or as a reflection, direct or implied, upon, The Folger Shakespeare Library, its new Director, or any of its staff. The man who was once its Director is now retired, is no longer connected with it, and now in business for* as he tells us. Two "blurbs" on articles in the National Geographic read as follows: (1); Vol. 125, No. 5, May 1964, "The Brits in that Shakespeare Knew", by Louis B. Wright Ph.D. Director Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C. pg. 616, : "The Author. When National Geographic sought an outstanding authority to write an article marking Shakespeare's 400th birthday, the search ended not in Stratford on Avon, but in Washington D.C. Just two blocks from the U.S. Capitol stands the Folger Shakespeare Library, administered by the trustees of Amherst College. It contains the world's largest and finest collection of Shakespeareana. Director of the Folger, Dr. Louis B. Wright, a distinguished scholar and historian, has written or edited more than a score of books, among them Folger's own editions of Shakespeare's plays. His article draws on dozens of visits to Britain over the past 30 years, and most recently a tour of Shakespearean sites last fall". (Note. On page 620 in this article, which is most interesting and instructive; with beautiful pictures in color, the author says, "To understand Shakespeare's England, one should start with the poet's native town and county, Warwickshire, according to that Anglophile Henry James, 'is the core and centre of the English world; midmost England, unmitigated England'. For unmitigated gall, this is hard to beat. Despite its many excellencies, this article is one long "shill" for the Stratford Myth and Hoax, and yet he mentally thumbs his nose at us who know better, by quoting Henry James, the author of "The Birthplace" and who wrote in 1903; "I am a sort of' haunted by the conviction that the divine William is the biggest and most successful fraud ever practised upon a patient world." A gesture like this commands a reluctant admiration. Never underestimate this formidable opponent.)

(2). National Geographic Vol. 134, No.5, Nov.1968. "The World of Elizabeth I", by Louis B. Wright Ph.D., Former Director Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. pg. 673 THE AUTHOR: Dr. Louis B. Wright, a trustee of the National Geographic Society, is the type of "universal man" Elizabethans most admired. Author and editor of books on Shakespeare, Elizabethan and Stuart England, and Colonial America, he has had careers as professor, historian, librarian, journalist, and executive, acquiring 27 honorary degrees along the way. He retired last June after 20 years as Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, one of the most effective collections in the world for the study of Elizabethan history. He shared his vast knowledge with Geographic members in "The Brits in that Shakespeare Knew", May 1964. Now, at 69, Dr. Wright is beginning another career, as a full-time author."

(Ed. Note. If you do not have these copies of the National Geographic in your library, you would do well to try and pick them up at a second-hand book store. They are particularly valuable to anyone interested in England and the scenes that the real Shakespeare knew.) *himself,

A number of Oxfordians look upon "the Folger" as an implacable enemy to Lord Oxford and his advocates. While understandable, it is unjust and un-called for. The Folger Shakespeare Library, with its collections, endowment, and building, belongs to the people of the United States. It was presented to them as a gift from Henry Clay Folger (1857-1930). President Herbert Hoover formally accepted

on behalf of the people, in 1932, on the completion of the magnificent building. Mr. Folger, once president of Standard Oil of New York, died shortly after the corner-stone was laid in 1930. He left his money for the endowment, and at his death in 1936, his wife Emily Jordan Folger, added her estate to the endowment fund. They had no children. The only strings upon this munificent gift to the people, was that it should be administered by the trustees of Amherst College, Mr. Folger's Alma Mater. It is a public institution like the Smithsonian, National Gallery of Art, etc, except that the endowment is large enough to place no burden upon the tax-payers for annual appropriations for maintenance and operation. Nor do the trustees have to be elected or appointed by either the President or Congress.

Miscellany, Omissions, and Oversights.

One of our members from California suggested that in the next News-Letter we give a definition of CHUTZPAH. (Ch has sound or "h") It is a Yiddish/Hebrew word which has worked its way in to our speech the last ten years or so, and has no equivalent in English. The same can be said for kosher, kibbitzer, etc. It means unmitigated gall, unparalleled effrontery, "cheek!" "nerve!" An example that I heard nearly seventy years ago, long before anybody here was saying "chutzpah", was that of a possible apocryphal criminal who had murdered both his father and mother with an axe for a few dollars they had. He had been caught, tried and found guilty. When the Judge asked if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him, he whined; "Judge, you wouldn't hang a poor "crfling", would you?" A more recent and current example is at hand in this News-Letter. Turn to the excerpts about the Author from the introduction to Hamlet, either in your copy, if you have it by now, or here, and read the four sentences beginning; "Hobody has any vested interest in Shakespeare etc...." In the above is also the statement, as a fact! "the plays show no evidence of profound book learning". If L.B.W. believes this, then we can only reflect, with a nod to Kipling; What could he know of Shakespeare, who only Shagsper know-5? You may also notice that L.B.W. says "All the theories offered for the authorship of Francis Bacon, the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Oxford, (he always tucks him inconspicuously inside, Note.), the Earl of Hertford, Christopher Marlowe etc". The EARL OF HERTFORD?? Exceeding peace has made L. B(en Abou) bold, He is slipping. Take my word for it; The Marquis de Carabas has better documentation as the author of Shake-speare, and of course more snob-appeal than the Earl of Hertford! For the benefit of some of us snobs, who do not know exactly what L.B.W. means, when he so tells us, here's a definition from O.E.D. and Merriam Webster, "origin uncertain. 4. A person who has an excessive and vulgar, or even regard for wealth and social standing, one who vulgarly affects the manners or station of those of superior rank, especially by a display of wealth." The example of what has been found out on the Privie Council is set out in this H. L. should convince that intelligent and persistent research for documentary proofs is the only way we can succeed in our aims, that it is suicidal to meet men like L.B.W. on their chosen field; we are too old and too few, are licked before we start.

Can, and will you support a campaign of research, or enlist the support of those of your friends who can? May we hear from you?

Sincerely yours for E.Ver.,
Shakespeare Oxford Society, by
Richard C. Horne, Jr. Pres.

Shakespeare portrait x-rayed

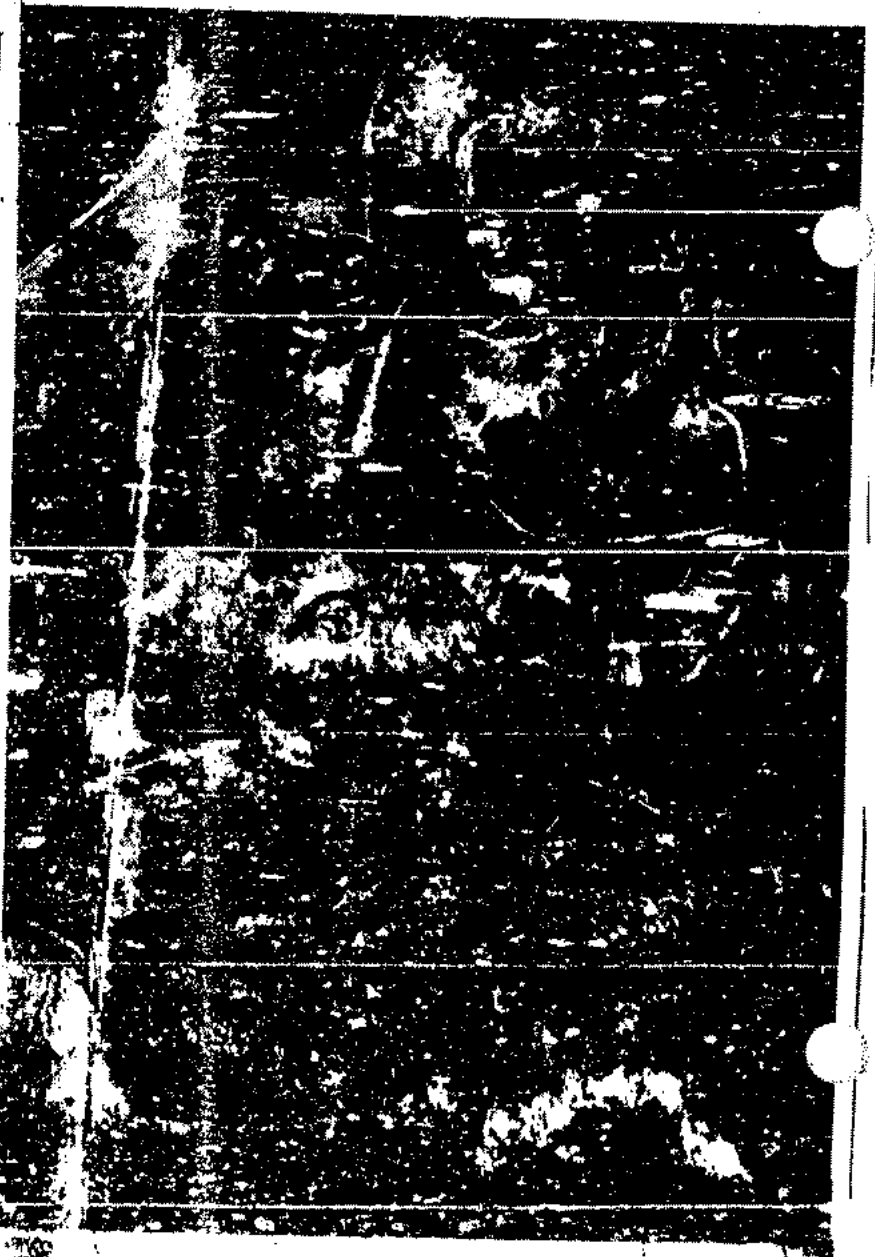


The portrait of Shakespeare bought by Mrs. Charles Flower in 1895 and presented to the Royal Shakespeare Picture Gallery.

The "Flower" portrait of Shakespeare—that fastidiously respectable frontispiece to so many collected editions of the plays—has now lost whatever remained of its claims to authenticity. It was at one time supposed that the portrait was the model for the Droeshout engraving; subsequent scholarship reversed this order of derivation, and the latest examination, besides confirming this view, has disclosed another painting under the portrait.

A recent X-ray investigation by the Courtauld Institute of Art reveals that it is executed over an Italian painting of the Madonna and Child and St. John. This painting, according to Major Paul Payne, curator of the Royal Shakespeare

Theatre Picture Gallery, has a severely damaged surface, but in technique it suggests the second half of the fifteenth century. The "Flower" portrait does not appear to have any pigments which would help in dating it, and its artist is unknown; but from the point of view of technique it seems to be no earlier than the eighteenth century. It has been suggested that the Madonna and Child may be of greater artistic value than the portrait which covers it—in which case there may be a question of sacrificing the "Flower" Shakespeare altogether. Both the portrait and the X-ray radiograph of the Italian painting are on view in the Royal Shakespeare Gallery at Stratford-on-Avon.



Stratfordians assert, and the uninformed believe, that First Folio says "S. of Stratford was the author. Not so. Only reference to Stratford is "Shakespeare," and Time dissolves the Stratford Monument. Time did just that, for by 1749, original figure of the grain-dealer, with a sack clutched to his middle, was replaced with present effigy holding a pen. Now Time, with an assist from X- and infra-red ray, has dissolved the authenticity of the "Flower." In an article in the "Scientific American", Jan. 1940, G. W. Barrall proved by X- and infra-red photo's, that Folger Library's prized "Ashbourne Shakespeare Portrait" was an altered and over-painted portrait of Oxford by G. Kneller. May we hope that now, after a quarter of a century, the curators of Folger will follow the example of Royal Gallery at Stratford, and place their X- and infra-red photographs side-by-side with "Ashbourne" so the public may know how Shakespeare really looked? Clipping to right courtesy of London Times.

The Shakespeare Oxford Society

June 30, 1970

918 "F" St., N.W., Room 612, Washington, D.C., 20004



Dear Fellow-Members Shakespeare Oxford Society:

As you can see from the enclosed, permission has been obtained from the owner of the Privy Council document of April 8, 1603, which was described in our N-L of Mar. 31st, to reproduce it. This is by the courtesy of Dr. O.B. Hardison, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, to whom all of us should be grateful.

The Folger Library General Reader's Shakespeare. Edited by Louis B. Wright.

"Hamlet!" "Shakespeare's Poems!" Simon & Schuster. New York. 1968-1969.

By now all of our members should have received a copy of one or the other of the above publications, mailed out with our latest News-Letter. If you have not, either one (indicate choice) will be mailed to you upon request. The reason they were sent was to give each of us a chance to see to what extremes a "professional historical scholar" who boasts of his integrity and objectivity, and publicly gives thanks that he is not as other men are, even such as we Oxfordian publicans, will go to vilify others, and to protect and promote his vested interest in the Stratfordian Authorship Attribution, and the business of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Of the Hamlet edition; we said it contained much that was good, and much that was new. After printing, we found we had neglected to finish the observation which we have borrowed from the comment long ago by a congressman of the opposition party on a recent Presidential Message. "but that which is good, is not new (Shakespeare's), and that which is new (Editor's Introduction) is not good."

A closer and more detailed examination of these "Introductions" shows some interesting innovations, or deviations, from the orthodox party-line. (a) "As Mere's statement of 1598 indicates, Shakespeare was already a popular playwright whose name carried weight at the box office." For how many years have we been assured that nobody in those times knew, or cared about, the names of playwrights or authors; that the public was only interested in the name of a well-known play, or some favorite actor who was playing a part? (b) "There is no evidence that the elder Shakespeare was a butcher, though the anti-Shakespeareans like to talk about the ignorant "butcher's boy of Stratford". Their only evidence is a statement by gossip John Aubrey, more than a century after William Shakespeare's birth, that young William followed his father's trade, and when he killed a calf "he would do it in high-style and make a speech". We would like to believe the story true, (why?) but Aubrey is not a very credible witness." As our members will recall, we Oxfordians have for some time, in a spirit of mischief- and maybe cruelty- been needling the Stratfordians with John Aubrey as their authority and Founding Father, and hanging him around their necks, albatross-like. Now we are told not only that he is not a very credible witness, but, mirabile dictu, by some strange sort of alchemy, he has been turned into our evidence, and our witness!! Again we doff our hats in admiration! (c) "At Stratford young Shakespeare would have acquired a familiarity with Latin and some little knowledge of Greek. He would have read Latin authors and become acquainted with the plays of Plautus and Terence." Now we have had the impression for a long time, that orthodox and heretic alike, were in agreement that there is no evidence extant as to who or what was taught in the grammar school in Stratford during this period. If the editor has recently discovered that Greek was taught to the youngsters there, it is most important, and we await anxiously the details and circumstances of his discovery.

Before we leave this comment on the statements by the editor, we should not overlook another salient one. This is not an innovation or deviation, but an often reiterated one, so much so as to have become a cachet of the professional historical scholar. "The anti-Shakespeareans base their arguments upon a few simple premises, all of them false. These false premises are that Shakespeare was an unlettered yokel without any schooling, that nothing is known about Shakespeare, and that only a noble lord, or the equivalent in background could have written the plays." Readers will note that the above are not given as theories, assumptions, conclusions, opinions, or beliefs of the writer, but as facts. They certainly imply that the writer knows what the premises of the anti-Shakespeareans are, else he could not, or rather should not, brand them as false. While we Oxfordians do not consider ourselves anti-Shakespeareans, au contraire, we have to recognize that in his mind we are included, and perhaps, the head and front of his offenders. What little knowledge and information I have about the proponents of "candidates" contradicts that their theories or arguments are based on the above premises, are limited to that small number, or that they are all false. We may, and often do, disagree with the conclusions drawn from certain premises, as do many with ours. Oxfordians most certainly have a case based on many more than three simple premises. If any of our premises are false, we would welcome having it pointed out, so we could abandon them and any conclusions based thereon. The same applies to any fallacies, that are yet to be found in our conclusions. Of the learned doctor's trilogy of premises, we repudiate and disclaim the third absolutely; and as to "Shakespeare the author of the Plays and Poems", (whoever he was) the first and second also. As to the Stratford Shaksper, or Shaxper, or Shagsper, we must plead nescience, though speaking as an individual, I would do my best to avoid taking the negative side, if forced into a debate. While I know of no Oxfordian writer who calls the "Stratford Shakespeare" an unlettered yokel, it is very likely that some of the Baconians, perhaps Edwards, have so designated him. This writer would never think of calling him "an unlettered yokel without any schooling". It would be unfair, unjust, and uncalled for. The evidence does not justify it, and common humanity forbids. On the assumption that the London so-called "signatures" are genuine products of Stratford's famous son; a man who, by the time he had reached approximately fifty years of age, could make, copy, or draw even if his hand was held or guided—the vowels a, e, and i, and the consonants h, k, p, s, and w, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, should not be called "unlettered". The English alphabet at that time consisted of 24 characters. Why, that is over 33%. Under-lettered? Perhaps. Un-lettered? Definitely, No. Lets be fair about this. Any man is entitled to the benefit of the doubt, and we would be the last to deny it to him. The Oxfordian case rests upon a firm foundation, so much so that we can put our trust in Investigation, instead of Invective directed against those who do not agree with us, or their "candidate" for the authorship of "Shakespeare's Works".

In the edition of "Shakespeare's Poems" which we sent out, we have just noticed a strange, but significant example of censorship. All standard editions of Shakespeare's Complete Works have, after the plays, the two long poems of Venus, and Lucrece, the Sonnets, and miscellaneous short poems under the headings "Passionate Pilgrim" and "Sonnets to Sundry Notes of music. Included in these are two with definite Oxford associations, as has been previously discussed in our News-Letters: "If music and sweet poetry agree...." and "Whenas thine eye hath chose the dame..." You will look in vain for them in Simon and Schusters, Inc. Edition. "By suppressing evidence damaging to their clients, and by abusing the opposition, lawyerlike advocates sometime manage to present a persuasive case for Oxford, Derby, or some other contender... but it is not sound scholarship". Guess who? I suppose we should feel flattered, coming from this source, if there is truth in the adage; Imitation is the sincerest form of etc.

The Earl of Hertford.

Some of our members may recall that in our March 31st News-Letter, a quotation from Dr. L.B. Wright's introduction on the subject of AUTHORSHIP in his 1968 and 1969 editions of Hamlet, and Poems of Shakespeare, to wit; "All the theories offered for the authorship of Francis Bacon, the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Hertford, Christopher Marlowe, etc." was followed by a mild editorial scoffing at the good doctor's inclusion of the Earl of Hertford. It has been suggested that an explanation, or amplification, would be helpful to some of our members.

In the Sixteenth Century(1500's) there were but two Earls of Hertford, both named Edward Seymour. The first was the brother of Queen Jane Seymour, the mother of Edward VI. He is better known as the Lord Protector of his nephew, and by a later title; Duke of Somerset. He was deposed by the Privy Council in 1549, and later tried and beheaded in 1552. His son, the second Earl of Hertford(c.1540-1621); is best known for having been secretly, but legally, betrothed and married to Lady Catherine Grey(Jane's sister) in 1560. Lady Catherine was a descendant of King Henry VII, and in the Suffolk(Protestant) line of succession to the English Crown. She confided her secret to Leicester, who with Wm.Cecil, was regarded as the head of the Protestant faction opposed to a Roman Catholic heir, Mary, Queen of Scots. He told Cecil, and their fate was sealed. Elizabeth promptly clapped both of them into the Tower. On the pretense that there had been no marriage, Hertford was fined 15,000 pounds by the Star Chamber. The Queen remitted 10,000 pounds of this enormous sum, but demanded that Hertford pay over to her 1,000 pounds immediately.. 1167 pounds was the total amount extorted from him. Lady Catherine died in prison in 1568, but Hertford was released from imprisonment a few years later, being no longer considered a threat. It might be noted here that his grandson, William Seymour, married Arabella Stuart in 1610. As soon as he learned of this marriage, King James I, imprisoned both of them. Seymour later escaped, but poor Arabella remained a prisoner until she died.

These facts are available in histories of that period, the D.N.B., and most encyclopedias. But the identity of the proponent of the theory that any Earl of Hertford was the author of Shakespeare's Works remains a mystery, as does the theory itself, unknown, and unmentioned in standard referencies. The indices of the British Museum, The Library of Congress, yea, even the extensive card index of the Folger Shakespeare Library lists him (the Earl) not; save as a cross-reference such as: "see Elvetham, Norriss' Progresses. 1591", or "see Grey, Lady Catherine." In 1962 Professors McMichael and Glenn published a reference hand-book on the Shakespearean Authorship Question titled: "Shakespeare and his Rivals." Odyssey Press, N.Y.C. On page 62, headed "Candidates for the Authorship of Shakespearean Works" they list alphabetically 57 varieties of names beginning with "Alexander, William, Earl of Stirling". down to Thomas (Cardinal) Wolsey (who died in 1530). Included are such far-out improbables as "the Jesuits", "Anne Whatley", and "the Rosicrucians." The only sour note sounded in this Heinzean number is the absence of "Hertford, Earl of," or "Seymour, Edward."

From any written reference to his theoretical authorship that would rank his candidacy with Bacon, Oxford, Derby, Marlowe, even Master ETGETERA, he seem as elusive, and illusive, as the Yeti-- the Abominable Snowman. Perhaps the National Geographic Society might organize and finance an expedition to look for the proponent of this mysterious theory. If they should contemplate such, and begin a search for "an outstanding authority" to conduct it; may I gratuitously, but nonetheless respectfully, suggest: CIRCUMSPICE!

Is a search for original "Shakespeare" Manuscripts Worthwhile?

In 1964, Lord Wilberforce, a judge of the highest court of England, handed down a decision, in a case brought by heirs, to upset a bequest of 8000 pounds to the Francis Bacon Society to search for original documents of Shakespeare's Poems and Plays. The bequest was upheld. Below are a few excerpts from this famous decision.

"Counsel for the next of kin, describe it as a wild-goose chase; but wild geese can, with good fortune be apprehended..... The authorship of Shakespeare's Plays, as one would expect, has been the subject of extensive enquiry over many years.....The orthodox opinion, which at the present time is unanimous, or nearly so, among scholars and experts in 16th and 17th century literature and history is that the plays were written by William Shakespeare of Stratford on Avon; actor. The evidence in favor of Shakespeare's authorship is quantitatively slight... There is a number of difficulties in the way of the traditional ascription.... What then of the practical possibility of discovering any manuscript "Shakespeare", "Bacon", or other authorship?... The evidence shows that the discovery of any manuscript of the plays is unlikely; but so are many discoveries before they are made, (One may think of the Codex Sinaiticus, the tomb of Tut Ankhamen, or the Dead Sea Scrolls). It would seem to me that a bequest for the purpose of search, or research, for the original manuscripts of England's greatest dramatist (whoever he was) would be well within the law's conception of charitable purposes. The discovery of such manuscripts, or one such manuscript, would be of the highest value to history and literature. It is objected against this, that as we already have the text of the plays from a contemporary date, that the discovery of a manuscript would add nothing worthwhile. This I utterly decline to accept. Without any undue ~~exercise of the~~ imagination, it would surely be a reasonable expectation, that ~~exercise of the~~ exercise of the

the revelation of a manuscript would contribute, probably decisively, to a solution of the authorship problem, and this alone is benefit enough. It might also lead to more accurate dating. This gift.....is in the same field, for the improving of our literary heritage, and my judgment is for upholding it".

RE Hopkins Will Trusts; 1964, Vol #3, All England Reports, pg.46. (Wilberforce, J.)

(Note. Oxfordians were not involved in this, but the orthodox Stratfordians were.

Two "expert authorities" Professors Muir and Snow, gave affidavits, and acted as consultants to counsel for the heirs. The judge did "not buy" their views. A book by one of these experts is recommended for reading by the editor of Hamlet, and Shakespeare's Poems. In 1967 we sent an abridgement of this case and decision to all of our members, as a supplement to a News-Letter. We have a few copies left over, which are available to members who have joined the Society since then, on request.)

J. Thomas Looney's Anniversaries.

We wish to remind our members again that this year, 1970 marks not only the semi-centennial of the publication of "Shakespeare Identified; in Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford" by J. Thomas Looney (1920); but also the centennial of his birth in 1870. Suggestions are invited from Oxfordians as to how the Society could most fittingly pay tribute to the memory of this great man and his epochal discovery of the identity of "Shakespeare". His sole surviving daughter thinks it could give her father, if alive, no higher pleasure than finding documentary proof, that the world would have to recognize.

Sincerely yours for E.Ver.
Shakespeare Oxford Society,
Richard C. Horne, Jr., President.

NOTE.

On the reverse side of this is a reproduction , slightly reduced in scale , of a Privie Council letter of April 8, 1603 about extra dispatch boats between Berwick and London, signed by the Lords and others of the Privie Council. The original is 13½ by 9½ inches. It has been folded twice (for convenience in filing) and bears on the back a notation re paying Mr. Thos. Miller the 150 pounds, authorized by Lord Treasurer Buckhurst. The catalog description of this MS is as follows:

Privy Councill Letter signed by Archbishop John Whitgift, Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Buckhurst, the Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Nottingham, the Earl of Sussex, the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Worcester, the Earl of Rutland, Lord Howard of Effingham, Bishop Richard Bancroft, Thomas la Warre, Ro. Riche, T. D'Arce, William Sandys, Lord Windsor, G. Chandos, Fran Norreys, Sir W. Knollys, Sir Edward Wotton, Sir Robert Cecil, and Sir John Popham. Whitehall 8 April, 1603, to Lord Buckhurst as Treasurer (with a note in his autograph addressed to V. Skinner) concerning postal service between Berwick and London.

From comparison of other official documents of this period in English history, it is evident that the custom was to sign in order of rank from left to right across the page, then to the line below; not in a vertical column on the left, and then to the right as at present. At one time, some owner or custodian of this MS, had made a pencilled notation of identification under some of the signatures. Tho. Egerton (Earl of Ellsmere); T. Buckhurst (Earl of Dorset); Ric. London (Richard Bancroft); W. Knollys (Viscount Wallingford).

Clues as to the existence of this MS with the signature of the Earl of Oxford as a Privy Councillor under Queen Elizabeth, were first discovered in England. In tracing its history it was found that it was now in the United States, and owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library. A Xerostat was secured in 1969, and shown to some of our members here and in England. After our last News-Letter of March 31, 1970, application was made to the Folger for permission to reproduce it in our next News-Letter, for the benefit of our members and readers. Dr. O. B. Hardison, the present Director, immediately and graciously granted the Shakespeare Oxford Society, the privilege of doing this , the only stipulation being that there should be a notation of permission by Folger Shakespeare Library, its present owner.

WARNING. This document is the property of the Folger Shakespeare Library, and no one has a right to reproduce our reproduction by electronic, photographic, or any other means, for any purpose whatever, without the written permission of the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C .

1864.1

X.d.
30
(42)

As a right party Comendants to yo^r good L: Wherof it is most necessary
in yo^r behalf of yourt oration to rest the strait of the Postmaster establishd
Berwick and London for the other and fixing downe of the quartett to and froe for the speciall
service of the Couraigne Lords the Kinge Ma^{tie} that order be taken to a better the said Post
master of the shurall stages to be downe sent supplied of for the hysprie and other of all
fall out oration of necessity by the nighte and byinge parties left to downe, And also
for the better downe of the Ma^{tie} Craign from Berwick to be appointed in
stages in such other places by the way of the Ma^{tie} shall please to take the journey
of night and under take yo^r strait, the same is made of Thomas Miller & others
Postmaster of all the yo^r and Rowland White gent Postmaster of the Ma^{tie} shurall
to yo^r good L: it is that allowance be made of the sum of one hundred and
fifty pounde by way of empynt, a shill for the other to be sent to the same journey
as to make any necessarye of the straite as for a shill. They are
expressed to paye and receive yo^r L: by order of the warrant and authority given to by
the Ma^{tie} by the late lawe of the 20th and 21st of Marche in the, to give by them in
all things necessarye for the Ma^{tie} service, to take order that the said sume of one
hundred and fifty pounde be paid out of the Ma^{tie} of the said Thomas Miller
the said Thomas Miller by way of empynt for the straite above mentioned. And so
with yo^r good L: they are to be done. Given the 15th of Marche of
Richard the third of April 1603

Jo. Cant & the. Exton. C. C. J. Buchart F. Oxenforde

Do. S. J. W. J. W. R. W. J. W.

R. L. W. J. W. J. W. J. W.

J. W. J. W. J. W. J. W.

The Shakespeare Oxford Society

December 30, 1970

918 "F" St., N.W., Room 612, Washington, D.C., 20004



Dear Fellow-Members of Shakespearean Oxford Society:

While this letter is dated the last of 1970, it may not reach you until some time in January 1971, because of pending negotiations and arrangements to reproduce, and include as a supplement, some of the fine contributions to knowledge of our subject made by Mr. Charles Wisner Barrail, Mrs. Eva Turner Clarke, Dean Randall and others, which were published in the "The Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly" under the able and scholarly editorship of Mr. Barrail, in the 1940's. That we are now in a position to do this, is because of the permission of Mr. Barrail, and the generosity and thoughtfulness of Miss Lois A. Book, who has turned over to the Society her file of these (now out of print) News-Letters, which can be unstapled and turned over to the printer for reproduction.

As you will remember, 1970 is the centenary of J. Thomas Looney's birth, and the semi-centenary of the publication of his great work, "Shakespeare Identified in Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford." Suggestions were invited from members as to how best this could ^{be done}. It was decided that to republish the account contained in the "Quarterly" in 1944, together with letters from Mr. Looney to American Oxfordians was the best within our limited financial resources. This same issue had another article and pictures on the portraits of the Earl of Oxford, a subject we hoped to cover at length in a later News-Letter, so its inclusion in effect makes a double News-Letter for 1970. More on the discoveries in this field by Mr. Barrail-- not covered in the Scientific American article in Jan 1940-- may be expected by our members in 1971.

Some of our readers may recall that in our May 1968 News-Letter, we said, in discussing a current pronouncement of a prominent pedantic pundit, that "the party line on Oxfordians and lesser breeds without the Law, viz; The Aubrey-Stratfordian Attribution of the Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays, is not now, NOR NEVER HAS BEEN DOUBTED OR CHALLENGED BY SANE, LITERATE OR INFORMED PERSONS." Some friends told me they thought that this was too sweeping, and did an injustice to the orthodox. I had come to this conclusion a number of years ago, and felt, and still feel, that it is a sensible and succinct statement of orthodox thinking. I am delighted, even if no one else is, to report that the correctness of this conclusion has received corroboration from the highest sources in December, 1970.

A mid-western friend, a fellow member, and a wide and attentive reader of current periodicals, from time to time sends us clippings mentioning Oxford or the authorship question. The most recent one was a marked item of a "letter from Readers" in the Book Forum page of the Saturday Review of Dec 12, 1970. It was signed Gordon C. Cyr, Berkeley, Calif. "William and Shakespeare". Benjamin de Mott attempts a typical trick of semantic obfuscation when he slurs those who are justifiably skeptical about the far from proved but widespread contention that William of Stratford is identical with Shakespeare of the Universe (SR, Nov. 70). He dumps the Baconians, Oxfordians, Freudians, cryptomaniaes, and seanceophiles into the same category of 'snobbery-ridden non-believers in Shakespears' as if it were the greatest writer in the English language who is the object of such non-belief, and not the matter of his identity. Just why is it "snobbery" to find something fishy in a claim for literary eminence for a man who does not mention books or manuscripts in a will burdened with the detailed disposition of household

goods, who didn't leave a scrap of writing behind him, except for six writer's-cramp'd signatures on legal and property documents, who showed absolutely no interest in the fate of his literary progeny, and indeed submitted, apparently, to wholesale piracy of his writings, while constantly hounding small debtors in the courts? A man whose biographical traces are to be found only in nonliterary surroundings, such as the Bellott-Mountjoy breach-of-promise suit, and whose name is not found in the places one would expect to find it: for example, the Southampton family records, Hanslowe's and Alleyn's diaries, Camden's Annals."

I did not know of Mr. Benjamin deMott, so I consulted the Nov 7, issue of S.R. and found that he was writing a review of Prof. Samuel Schoenbaum's "Shakespeare's Lives" (1970) of which I had heard, but not read. A brief excerpt from the review on page 31 will give an idea of what Mr. Cyr was objecting to.

"Or consider the endless succession of snobbery-ridden non-believers in Shakespeare- Laconians, Oxfordians and the like- a crew of that isn't limited to chuckle-making nakes like Looney, Schwucker, and Mrs. Gallup, but includes men as great as Freud..... The record isn't of course, solely one of fatuity, madness, meanness. Intermittently, from Edmund Malone in the eighteenth century to E.K. Chambers in the twentieth, the cause of fact has been served brilliantly and passionately by men whose longing for the truth of Shakespeare's life didn't derange them. Their sanity, balance, and sense of responsibility are islands of grace, and when Mr. Schoenbaum makes landfalls upon them, he permits himself an open, unprotected gesture of praise. His is a superbly informed, elegantly composed, intensely readable book."

I am completely uninformed as to Mr. deMott's qualifications and competence in the field of Shakespearean authorship, or whether we are justified in inferring that this characterization of such men as Looney, Greenwood, James, Ward, Barrell, Mrs. Clarke, the Allens, the Ogburns and all the others we know, is taken from Prof. Schoenbaum (we all know the source of the "Snobbery motif"), or that is his own. We do know he was the selection of the Editor of the Saturday Review (formerly Saturday Review of Literature) a highly respected journal, to review Prof. Schoenbaum's book, and that this review was printed, certainly with editorial approval. Yet, from what writers have told me, I have no doubt that an established writer would submit an article setting out the non-orthodox view of the Stratfordian Attribution, that it would be rejected as "too controversial."

As soon as I can get hold of a copy of Prof. Schoenbaum's book- from a library- I shall read it carefully and find out how "superbly informed" he is, and let our members know. It just happens that in November, I had an opportunity to see two courteous letters exchanged between a member of the Society, Cincinnati lawyer who was preparing a paper to read before the Literary Society there, and Prof. Schoenbaum of Northwestern University, Evanston. The professor was asked, 1. "Beyond the similarity of name (but note please, not identity) what fact recorded between the years 1604 (Oxford's death) and 1622 (year before the issuance of the First Folio) do you consider the most important in associating the works of Shakespeare with the man who was buried at Stratford?" No fact was cited (there are none) but he was referred to the allusions in Chambers Vol II (all to the literary product not the man) and publishing of T.&C. in 1609, Othello in 1622, Sonnets in 1609. Of course in none of these is there the slightest reference to Wm. of Stratford. Pending examination of "Shakespeare's Lives", it is suggested that "self-respecting scholarship" should consider the reviewer just another Tray, Blanche, or Sweetheart:

Look for another News Letter in six weeks.

Sincerely yours for E. Ver.
Shakespeare Oxford Society, Inc.
by Richard C. Horne, Jr.