

**SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY**

**NEWSLETTERS**

**1978**



110 Glen Argyle Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21212

## NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Bronson Feldman, Ph. D.  
Chairman, Research Committee, Shakespeare Oxford Society

The French title Comte is equivalent to the English Earl. The following excerpt is from the Memoirs of Comte Alexandre de Tilly (1761-1816) where he reports how in youth he wished to become a dramatist:

"I had scribbled three acts of a play in verse from one of Marmontel's tales... The Prince d'Hénin, a man not entirely devoid of wit though on one side rather stupid, was present at the reading and found my play 'dsslightful,' the character sketch 'in the best of taste,' and predicted that I was a young man of 'great promiss.'

"We have shaken off," he added, "those absurd and barbarous prejudices against a taste for fine literature; only blockheads without talent defame it in their helplessness and believe that to be of noble birth one should be downright ignorant and a fool. Peresvere, monsieur, persevere; enter freely upon the career to which you are distinctly called. Francie I wrote verses..." (Page 72 of Franchoise de Lisle's translation; London, 1933)

"The Queen (Marie Antoinette) heard of my play; she expressed the wish to read it ... I went up to the palace (afterward). She honoured me by saying: 'M. de Tilly, here is what belongs to you. I beg of you, I even enjoin you, if such means are necessary, not to have this comedy put on the stage.'

"And as I was seeking a reply she added: 'How can anyone with your taste for poetry, and your facility in expressing virtuous sentiments, be guilty of such ill behaviour?'

"Halted in my first steps toward a dramatist's career, I quickly found consolation; impressions are seldom lasting at that age. However, I made bold to ask the Queen, some time later, if she persisted in the orders she had given me.

"Certainly. Does that surprise you?"

"Yes, madame. Is it so bad to put a play on the stage?"

"Bad, no: but it is not becoming. No man of birth, and at your age, should expose himself to public view." (Page 74.)

The Count was nearly 18 when he wrote Laurette or Virtue Crowned by Love at Versailles, 1779; four years later a valet burnt his play by mistake. "I saw her sses and did not give them a tear." Living on the eve of the French Revolution, "young Tilly's wild life was so notorious that some people at Le Mane thought him capable of anything," Havelock Ellis declared. They were not surprised when the nobleman published at Paris and Amsterdam a collection of trifles in verse and prose, the Oeuvres mêlées du Comte Alexandre de Tilly. After his death, the far more important Memoirs appeared, praised by Stendhal for its truth: "Unfortunately so handsome a man did not know how to write and yet he prided himself on being a man of letters."

In view of the revelation of aristocracy striving toward glory by way of ink-stains which is given here, we can imagine how the nobility of Britons would have felt two hundred years before, if

the young and barely tamed Earl of Oxford had dared to publish the comedies he had created by 1579, with the blazon of his real name.

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A TROJAN HORSE AT THE  
S.O.S. NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Oxfordian cause was dealt another blow by the Fourth Estate at our October national conference. Mr. William Ryan, a free-lance reporter, wrote an article subsequently published by The Rosslyn Review, a weekly newspaper which circulates principally in the Arlington, Virginia area where our conference was held. Mr. Ryan's article, which purported to cover our proceedings, was so full of incomprehension, misleading statements, and errors of inference that our Society members can only be grateful that The Rosslyn Review's significance in either the world of journalism or of scholarship is best compared with, in Eleanor Roosevelt's words, "a grain on the horizon."

Ryan assumed that the conference was being held to prove the Oxfordian theory of Shakespeare's authorship to an outsider like himself. He admits in his article that he was unfamiliar with the literature on the authorship issue--in other words, that he hadn't done his homework. The significance of the vast amount of new findings presented at the conference by our guest lecturer, the forensic expert Joseph English, and others utterly escaped him, although its importance was readily apparent to the attending members.

It is ironic that Ryan criticized those presentations at our conference that emphasized the scientific bases in our assault on orthodoxy (he suggests in his article that he had little taste for such an approach), inasmuch as an alleged "lack of objectivity" is the charge most leveled against anti-Stratfordians in general! Ryan also seems to feel that our conference presentations should have been geared to the level of dull-witted students, who

in order to learn must be "turned on" by pedagogic gimmickry.

Of course, individual members may vary in their opinions of Mr. Ryan's value, perhaps feeling that at least publicity was at last being accorded our cause. But this is the very type of publicity we do not need and should avoid at all costs in our future public meetings.

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THE BARD NOW ACCESSIBLE  
TO SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY MEMBERS

It is hoped that our Society's members who have wanted to join the Shakespearean Authorship Society, the English organization, have been successful in their efforts by this time. As noted in the Newsletter, Summer 1977, complaints received at the Shakespeare Oxford Society Office led to communication between the two societies, which in turn resulted in clarification of the required dues for American members (\$8.50) and the proper address: c/o Mr. John Silberrad, 11 Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, London WC2, ENGLAND. (For English members of our Society the dues would be L3.)

From time to time we will repeat this information in subsequent newsletters for the benefit of new readers.

ARE YOU A MEMBER  
OF THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY?

Student member/\$2.00 per annum  
Regular member/\$10.00 per annum  
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or more

Write to:

SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY  
110 Glen Argyle Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21212

## THE BORN DESCENDANT

Harold W. Patience  
Secretary, English Chapter, Shakespeare Oxford Society

Writing around seventy years ago, Walt Whitman commented on Shakespeare's history plays as follows:

"The English historical plays are to me not only most eminent as dramatic performances...but form, as we get it all, the chief in a complexity of puzzle. Conceived out of the fullest heat and pulse of European feudalism, personifying in unparallel'd ways the mediaeval aristocracy, its towering spirit of ruthless and gigantic caste, its own peculiar air and arrogance (no mere imitation) — only one of the 'wolfish earls' so plentiful in the plays themselves or some born descendant and knower might seem to be the true author of those amazing works."

In order to write his extraordinary sequences of history plays Shakespeare must have studied Hall's and Holinshed's Chronicles. Would the commoner from Stratford-on-Avon, burdened with family responsibilities at the early age of twenty, have found the time for such taxing preparatory studies? We must remember that even his primary education is still a matter of conjecture.

A further point never explained by orthodox scholars is why Shakespeare obviously singles out the 13th Earl of Oxford for special praise in Henry VI, Part 3. These examples speak for themselves:

"And thou, brave Oxford, wondrous well beloved..." (IV, viii, 17)  
 "Where is the post that came from valiant Oxford?" (V, i, 1)  
 "O cheerful colours! See where Oxford comes..." (V, i, 58)  
 "O, welcome, Oxford! for we want thy help..." (V, i, 66)

Shakespeare was obviously impressed by the part played by Oxford in support of the Lancastrian cause in the Wars of the Roses; indeed, the lineal descent of the great family of de Vere seems to have been indelibly engraved on the mind of the playwright:

Warwick: "Can Oxford, that did ever fence the right,  
 Now buckler falsehood with a pedigree?  
 For a shame! Leave Henry, and call Edward king"  
 Oxford: "Call him my king by whose injurious doom  
 My elder brother, the Lord Aubrey Vere,  
 Was done to death; and more than so, my father,  
 Even in the downfall of his mellow'd years,  
 When nature brought him to the door of death?  
 No, Warwick, no; while life upholds this arm,  
 This arm upholds the house of Lancaster" (III, iii, 98-107)

Following the battle of Barnet, Edward IV and the Yorkist dynasty were firmly in power: a statue quo that was to last until the battle of Bosworth, fourteen years later. The 13th Earl of Oxford played an important part in both battles. Barnet, however, was a disaster for the Lancastrians. In a thick mist, part of the Lancastrian army confused the cognizance of the silver star (borne by Oxford's man) with the 'sun in splendour' symbol of Edward IV. Chaos and demoralization of the Lancastrian forces followed: Ox-

ford and his men fled the field and Warwick ('the Kingmaker') was killed.

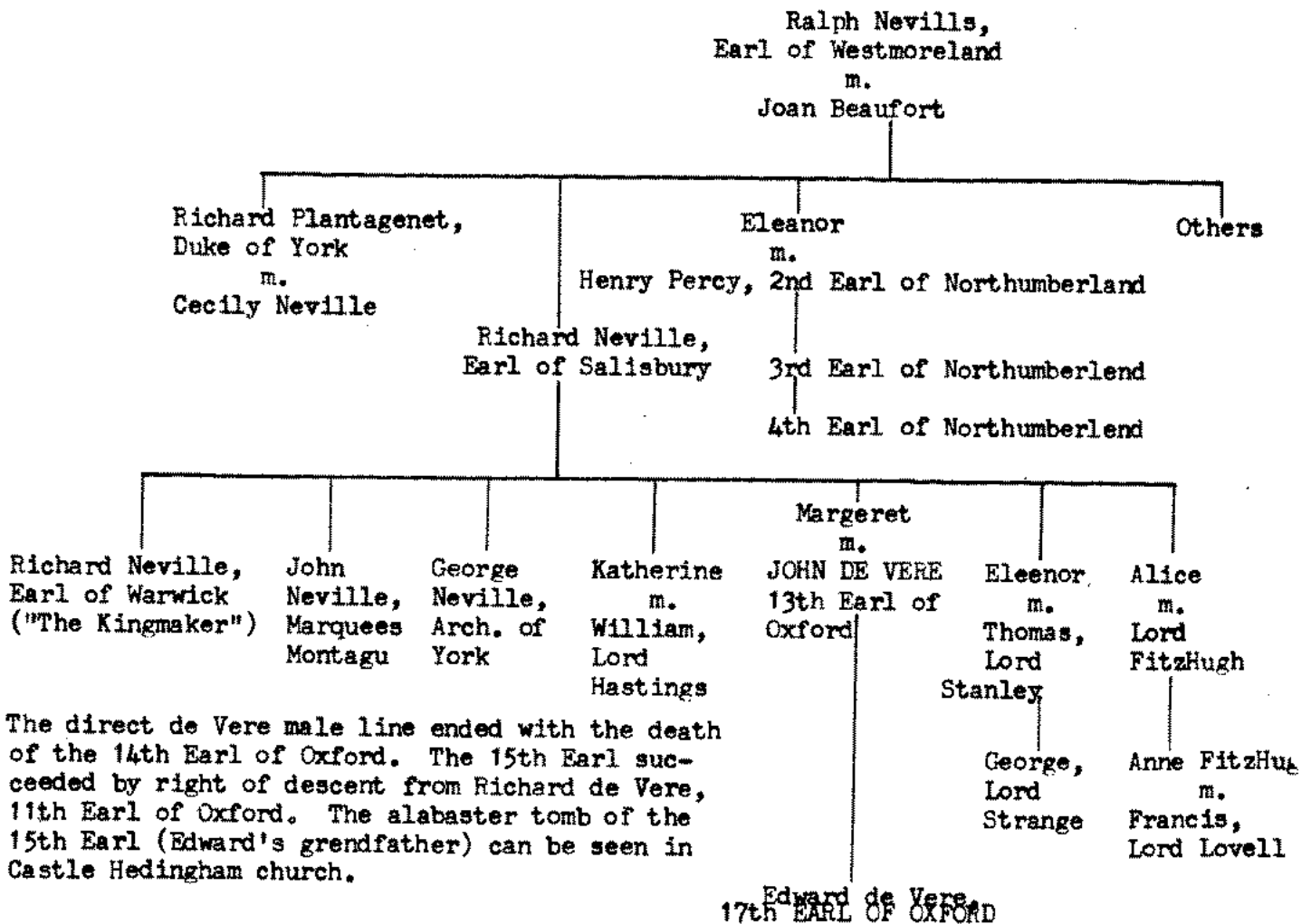
Oxford made his way to Scotland and from there to France where he assembled ships for privateering against the followers of the White Rose of York. On 30 September 1473 he seized St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall and withstood a long siege. Forced eventually to surrender, on promise of his life, he was imprisoned in the fortress of Hammes, near Calais. Shakespeare, in Henry VI, Part 3, obviously fascinated by the adventurous life of the 13th Earl of Oxford, decided that even this detail must be fully documented:

King Edward: "Away with Oxford to Hammes Castle straight..." (V,v,2)

In 1485 the earl was named with other "traitors" in the proclamation of King Richard III against the Welsh "usurper", Henry Tudor—the future King Henry VII. Incredibly, however, Oxford managed to persuade the governor of Hammes Castle to go over to the Lancastrian side and was thus able to effect an escape and eventually join the invading army of the Tudor. Then came the battle of Bosworth, with the destruction of the Yorkists. These rewards were well and truly earned!

The 13th Earl of Oxford died at Hedingham Castle in March, 1513, at the ripe old age (for those days) of 71 years and was buried at Colne Priory.

The following pattern of lineal descent shows that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, was certainly, as in Whitman's words, a "born descendant and knower".



## THE HARVARD CASE: PART II

by Gordon Cyr

Members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society of three or more years' standing will recall the exchange on the Oxfordian theory appearing in the Harvard Magazine (from November 1974 with the appearance of Honorary President Cheriton Ogburn's article, "The Man Who Shakespeare Wee Not...", to the summer of 1975), which included an attempted rebuttal by Professors Gwynne Evans and Henry Levin of Harvard in the February 1975 issue and a good deal of correspondence pro and con.

In my own reply to Profs. Evans and Levin ("An Oxfordian Reply to Two Harvard Professors," Newsletter, Summer 1975), I had been unable to answer fully three points by which these two orthodox commentators set much store: 1) Their claim that Ogburn had misattributed "heresy" to historian Hugh Trevor-Roper (p. 40); 2) likewise to Henry James (p. 40); and 3) an implication that scholars as a whole except a portion of the manuscript play Sir Thomas More as "Shakespeare's" holograph (p. 41).

At the time of my reply, I knew of certain information that would have made my rebuttal more complete, but because of deadline pressures for that issue, I was unable to devote the time to consulting my sources down. Last fall, however, I had acquired all the necessary information, and penned a letter to Profs. Evans and Levin, along with a copy of my original reply.

In my letter, as to 1) I cited Prof. Hugh Trevor-Roper in his November 1962 article published in Réalités: "Armies of scholars, formidably equipped, have examined all the documents which could possibly contain at least a mention of his 'Shakespeare's' name. One hundredth part of this labour applied to one of his insignificant contemporaries would be sufficient to produce a substantial biography. And yet the greatest of all Englishmen, after this tremen-

dous inquisition, still remain so close a mystery that even his identity can still be doubted...During his lifetime nobody claimed to know him. Not a single tribute was paid to him at his death. As far as the records go, he was uneducated, had no literary friends, possessed at his death no books, and could not write. It is true, six of his signatures have been found, all spelt differently; but they are so ill-formed that some graphologists suppose the hand to have been guided. Except for these signatures, no syllable of writing by Shakespeare has been identified...Such is the best the historians can do. Clearly it is not enough. It may be the shell: it is not the man. To find the man we must look elsewhere, not at the historical fragments but at the authentic deposit of his mind: at his conscious, undisputed work." Not much here to suggest Prof. Trevor-Roper's "orthodoxy" on the author's identity!

On the second point, I found that Henry James had further corresponded with Mrs. Violet Hunt (Letters of Henry James, Macmillan, 1920, vol. 1, p. 432), the recipient of his more famous lines about the "Divine Willism" as a "fraud" (which Evans and Levin insist are not anti-Stratfordian!). In his later letters to Mrs. Hunt, James says that The Shakespeare Problem Restated by "a fellow called Greenwood" best expressed his views on the authorship question, going on to write: "an extremely erudite, fair, and discriminating piece of work," which he thereupon lends Mrs. Hunt to read. Oxfordians and other anti-Stratfordians do not need to be reminded that the "fellow called Greenwood" whose book James praises so highly made the most devastating case against the traditional view of Shakespearean authorship that has been made before or since the 1908 treatise which so impressed the American author. Surely not much here to suggest Henry James's orthodoxy!

On the final point, I had already cited Samuel Tannenbaum in the original reply to Evans and Levin as one prominent or-

thodox commentator who had demurred to Sir Edward Maunde Thompeon's theory of Sir Thomae More. To his well-considered views can be added Sir Sidney Lee's in his Life of Shakespeare, 1922, Preface, p. xiii): "One could wish that the old dream of discovering some fragment of Shakespearean drama in his own autograph had at length come true. Yet I fear Sir Edward's inference cannot rank above attractive conjecture. The proofs are manifestly incomplete. The extant authentic signatures of Shakespearean penmanship consist solely of six signatures...This material is too scanty to offer positive marks of identification...In the absence of trustworthy external testimony, doubt attaches to any purely palaeographical deduction."

As mentioned above, all this new material plus the original reply was dispatched to the two Harvard professors (Levin, it turns out, is now apparently ex-Harvard), with a statement: "If you are of the opinion that I have stated anything unfairly or untruthfully therein, I should be happy to hear from you. If I have done so, I would correct it in the next issue of our Newsletter, in addition to publishing any remarks you would care to add."

The reply from Prof. Gwynne Evans must set some kind of record for the shortest rejoinder in a scholarly dispute. After a sentence thanking me for sending him the materials, Prof. Evans says, "I am afraid that I find your arguments no more cogent or acceptable than those of Charlton Ogburn." End of letter!

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#### SHAKESPEARE'S GARDENER

From S.O.S. Trustee Morse Johnson of Cincinnati we have received an extremely interesting article from the November 1977 issue of Horticulture magazine. Entitled "Stalking the Long Purple," the article is written by Jules Janick, a professor of horticulture at Purdue University and ed-

itor of the professional journal Hort-Scienca. The article's subheading states: "Two centuries of horticultural scholarship has not ended the debate over a weed in Ophelia's garland."

Prof. Janick is among the many specialists who conclude that the author of Shakespeare's plays must have been intimately conversant with the technical language of his or her particular trade: "Shakespeare's allusions to gardens, gardening, botany, and plant lore are abundant and it seems obvious that he was an expert gardener. His works contain references to almost 200 different plants and include descriptions of horticultural practices from grafting to plant breeding. The point is inescapable that Shakespeare knew his apples. The long purple must indeed exist."

There are, of course, many Shakespeare scholars who try to account for the botanical expertise found by Janick and others as a result of the author's rural background--indeed, putting the cart before the horse (as an appropriate metaphor), these commentators allege that such knowledge proves Shakespeare's rustic antecedents. But this view confuses agriculture with horticulture (each of whose terminology has little in common with the other) and especially overlooks the fact that many large gardens in Elizabeth's time existed within London (or within a short distance, in estates that are now part of the metropolitan area).

When Janick comes to citing possible literary sources for Shakespeare's reference to the long purple, the name of John Gerard should cause Oxfordians to sit up and take notice. For the article's author himself notes that this Elizabethan horticulturalist (whose most famous volume is The Herball or General History of Plants, published in 1597) was gardener to none other than Burghley!

In one parenthetical paragraph, Prof. Janick states: "And finally, those who believe that Shakespeare was really Ed-

ward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, will quickly point out that Gerard was Gardener to William Cecil Burghley, Chief Minister to Queen Elizabeth and guardian and later father-in-law to Oxford. But this is another story."

Oxfordians would only add to this candid admission by one of the top horticulturalists in the United States that if Oxford is indeed the author of Hamlet, he would not have had to wait until the 1597 publication of Gerard's book to find this in-

formation before writing that play in 1600—which Janick infers elsewhere in the article as the date of Hamlet's composition. Members of our Society mostly believe in a much earlier date for Hamlet than that conceded by most Stratfordians. If such be the case, Shakespeare could have got this horticultural information from Burghley's Gardener first hand—well in advance of its appearance in a book!

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#### IRS LETTER

After nearly three-quarters of a year of travail that included correspondence plus two visits to the local Internal Revenue Service office, the long-sought-after replacement copy of the lost IRS letter recognizing the Shakespeare Oxford Society as tax-exempt has at last been received. Apparently the reason for the delay was the need to have the Society's IRS file transferred from the New York (Manhattan) office to the Baltimore office, at which the filing system was currently undergoing reorganization.

It should be noted that, according to the IRS, referral to the letter is totally unnecessary for tax deduction purposes. The appearance of the Society's name in the directory of tax-exempt organizations, published by the IRS, is sufficient to verify claimed deductions. However, we are duplicating the letter in the Newsletter to satisfy some members' requests.

(typewritten duplicate  
of original)

#### U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

District Director  
Lower Manhattan - 245 West Houston Street  
New York 14, N. Y.

In Replying Refer to:  
AU:F:PEO: (blurred, illegible)      September 11, 1959  
LN-EO-59-66

The Shakespeare Oxford Society, Inc.  
51st Floor, 40 Wall Street  
New York 5, New York

Gentlemen:

It is the opinion of this office, based upon the evidence presented, that you are exempt from Federal income tax under the provisions of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as it is shown that you are organized and operated exclusively for literary and educational purposes.



Accordingly, you are not required to file income tax returns unless you change the character of your organization, the purpose for which you were organized, or your method of operation. Any such change should be reported immediately to this office, Attention: PEO, in order that their effect upon your exempt status may be determined.

You are required, however, to file an information return, Form 990-A, annually, so long as this exemption remains in effect. This form may be obtained at this office and is required to be filed on or before the 15th day of the fifth month following the close of your annual accounting period.

Contributions made to you are deductible by the donors in computing their taxable net income in the manner and to the extent provided by section 170(b)(1) and (2) of the Code.

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In the event you have not filed a waiver of exemption certificate in accordance with the provisions of section 3121(k) of the Code, no liability is incurred by you for the taxes imposed under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act. Tax liability is not incurred by you under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act by virtue of the provisions of section 3306(c)(8) of such Act.

Your attention is called to the provisions of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 under which the exemption hereby granted will be revoked if any substantial part of your activities consists of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, or if you participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Very truly yours,

Raphael Meisels,  
District Director

## IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we report the death of LOUIS E. M. ALEXIS of Sevenoaks, Kent on November 20, 1977. Born Alexis Dawson, he changed his name by "deed poll" in 1974. The cause of Mr. Alexis's death is unknown to us at the time of this writing. He taught Greek and Latin at the Sevenoaks School, his own knowledge of those languages having been demonstrated in two articles published in the Neweletter (Winter-Spring 1975) and Summer 1975), in which he argued persuasively for Shakespeare's familiarity with Greek, not only in the sense commonly understood (i.e., a reading knowledge), but in the many ways thought constructions peculiar to that language appear in English equivalents in many of the plays. Mr. Alexis's scholarship was also demonstrated in an impressive book he published, School of Nero, comprising an exegesis of early Christian poetry. Under his original name, Alexis wrote articles for the Shakespearean Authorship Review, principally "Master Apis Lapis" (No. 23, Summer 1970), a commentary on Thomas Nash's Epistle Dedicatorie to Strange News. Apparently, Alexis was working on two volumes of critical commentary on De Vere's "Hamlet", the first of which was listed on the back cover of School of Nero as "coming shortly." He is survived by his brother, J. C. Dawson, Headmaster of More House School in Surrey, to whom we have sent a letter of sympathy. With the passing of Louis Alexis the Oxfordian cause sustains a profound loss.

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 MORE ON THE "ASHBOURNE" PEDIGREE

We are indebted to Miss Gwynneth M. Bowen of the Shakespearean Authorship Society in England, who has corresponded with us since the October national conference in response to our questions about her portrait pedigree hypothesis. Miss Bowen has also kindly forwarded a facsimile of

Gersld H. Rendall's invaluable pamphlet, "Ashbourne" Portrait of Shakespeare. Canon Rendall was in his long lifetime one of the most formidable scholars of the Oxfordian persuasion on either side of the Atlantic to have graced the Shakespearean authorship debate. His book on the Sonnets impressed Sigmund Freud, who had inclined toward de Vere's candidacy ever since reading J. T. Looney's "Shakespeare Identified". Rendall's study of the "Ashbourne" portrait, written as a result of Charles Wisner Barrell's published findings, is, as far as we have been able to determine, unavailable in this country (at least, it is not listed in the Library of Congress catalog).

Readers of our Fall 1977 Newsletter will recall Helen Cyr's report on Miss Bowen's "conjectural pedigree" for both the "Ashbourne" and the "Janssen" paintings. Rendall's discussion fills in some of the gaps in the story. (Perhaps at this point, an error appearing in our last issue should be corrected: Barrell's references to old "country" family should read old "county" family.) Most importantly, Rendall summarily dismisses Kingston's story about the "London shop purchase," noting that "there is no record of any sale or transfer." Thus he assumes that the painting came into Kingston's possession in the vicinity of Ashbourne Hall, and Rendall attempts on this assumption to account for its prior possession.

However, Canon Rendall seemed to feel that the painting was passed to Elizabeth Trentham's brother, Sir Francis, arguing that the Countesses of Oxford's will shows that she had parted with a lot of household items to her son, the 18th Earl of Oxford, and that she had been indebted to Sir Francis for her maintenance after this disposition. Sir Francis Trentham occupied Rochester Abbey, only five miles from Ashbourne Hall. Rendall traces the painting's probable descent through Sir Francis's daughter Elizabeth, who married Brian Cockayne (the future Viscount Cullen). Then follows a combination of circumstances, too complex to be discussed here, which

Rendall believes accounts for its transfer from Rocester Abbey to the Rev. C. U. Kingston's stewardship at the Ashbourns Grammar School.

Miss Bowen's hypothesis corrects Rendall's at some crucial points, and commends itself to us by virtue of its greater simplicity and the fact that it harmonizes with her other findings, particularly on the "Janssen" portrait. First of all, she does not assume, along with Canon Rendall, that the "Ashbourne" painting went to Sir Francis's keeping at Rocester Abbey. (Rendall's reasoning on this point does seem a little flimsy, especially when he tries to hang on it a statement such as "there can be little doubt"!)

Miss Bowen contends, on the contrary, that the painting could well have gone to the Countess of Oxford's sister Dorothy, wife of Sir John Stanhope of Elvaston, Derbyshire. Dorothy's daughter Anne (the Countess's niece) married Thomas Cockayne of Ashbourne Hall, whose son Sir Aston Cockayne inherited the Ashbourne property.

At this point in the narrative, we may pause to note the fact that Miss Bowen's theory does not necessitate the transfer of a painting five miles from Rocester Abbey in order to hang in the improbable location of a grammar school! (It is also of interest that two nieces of the Countess should end up marrying Cockaynes.)

But what is of especial interest in Miss Bowen's accounting is Sir Aston's place, not only in the disposition of Ashbourne Hall to the Boothby family, but in the similar transfer of Pooley Hall (which Sir Aston also owned) to the Jennens family, whose descendant Charles Jennens (as mentioned in our previous issue) reproduced an engraving of the "Janssen" portrait in his own edition of King Lear—thus presenting an image of "the Bard" that had never been heard of before!

Charles Jennens went to his grave with lips sealed against any questions as to the origin of his "Shakespeare" portrait. He resolutely refused to divulge any information on how or under what circumstances he had acquired it. But in the light of the later "discovery" of the painting at Ashbourne Grammar School and the connections of Sir Aston Cockayne with the Boothby and Jennens families and with the 17th Earl of Oxford (plus the high degree of probability that both these portraits are overpaintings of Edward de Vere), are we not justified in assuming, as does Gwynneth Bowen, that all these pieces may provide a good part of the answer to where these paintings come from?

Gerald Rendall, in the pamphlet cited above, gives the reader an intriguing notion about the skull's presence in the "Ashbourne" portrait. He notes that the "customary suit of solemn black" worn by the subject connotes not only Court dress of an Elizabethan nobleman, but by stage tradition has always been associated with that of Hamlet. Dr. Rendall says that the skull could be a reference to "Hamlet's memorable anastrophe to the skull of 'Poor Yorick, the King's Jester!'" On any other explanation, surely the skull is, as Rendall says, "an unusual and macabre token of identification."

#### WELCOME TO THE AMPHLETTS

The Shakespeare Oxford Society wishes to welcome two new members into the English Chapter of our Society: Hilda Amphlett, author of Who Was Shakespeare? (Heinemann, 1955) and her sister Mollie Amphlett.

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110 Glen Argyle Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21212

F A M O U S P E O P L E C O M M E N T . . .

Over the years many famous people have expressed their doubts concerning the Shakespearean authorship. Some of the most interesting of these statements have been published recently by the Shakespeare Oxford Society for the packets of literature given to inquirers and are repeated here for the general membership.

"Armies of scholars, formidably equipped, have examined all the documents which could possibly contain at least a mention of his [Shakespeare's] name. One hundredth part of this labour applied to one of his insignificant contemporaries would be sufficient to produce a substantial biography. And yet the greatest of all Englishmen, after this tremendous inquisition, still remains so close a mystery that even his identity can still be doubted...During his lifetime nobody claimed to know him. Not a single tribute was paid to him at his death. As far as the records go, he was uneducated, had no literary friends, possessed at his death no books, and could not write. It is true, six of his signatures have been found, all spelt differently; but they are so ill-formed that some graphologists suppose the hand to have been guided. Except for these signatures, no syllable of writing by Shakespeare has been identified...Such is the best the historians can do. Clearly it is not enough. It may be the shell: it is not the man."

--Hugh Trevor-Roper  
Noted historian; professor, Oxford University  
(Realités, November, 1962)

"I am 'a sort of' haunted by the conviction that the divine William is the biggest and most successful fraud ever practiced on a patient world. The more I turn him round and round the more he so affects me."

--Henry James  
American novelist  
(Letter to Miss Violet Hunt, August 26, 1903)

"My only conviction...is that the man born in Stratford on Avon in 1564 and who died there in 1616 had nothing to do with them [Shakespeare's plays] at all..."

--The Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell  
British Member of Parliament  
(Anglia TV Times, September 11, 1976)

"Am I trying to convince anybody that Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare's Works? Ah, now, what do you take me for? Would I be so soft as that, after having known the human race familiarly for nearly seventy-four years? No-no, I am aware that

when even the brightest mind in our world has been trained up from childhood in a superstition of any kind, it will never be possible for that mind, in its maturity, to examine sincerely, dispassionately, and conscientiously any evidence or any circumstance which will seem to cast a doubt upon the validity of that superstition..."

--Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)  
American author and humorist  
(Is Shakespeare Dead? 1909)

"I no longer believe that William Shakespeare the actor from Stratford was the author of the works that have been ascribed to him. Since reading Shakespeare Identified, by J. T. Looney, I am almost convinced that the assumed name conceals the personality of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford."

--Sigmund Freud  
Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis  
(Autobiographical Study. 1927)

"The name 'William Shakespeare' is most probably a pseudonym behind which there lies a great unknown."

--Sigmund Freud  
(Outline of Psychoanalysis. 1940)

"Whether Bacon wrote the wonderful plays or not, I am quite sure the man Shakespeare neither did nor could."

--John Greenleaf Whittier  
American poet, 1807-1892

"Any man that believes that William Shakespeare of Stratford wrote Hamlet or Lear is a fool."

--John Bright  
British statesman; Member of Parliament; 1811-1889

"I am one of the many who have never been able to bring the life of William Shakespeare and the plays of Shakespeare within planetary space of each other. Are there any two things in the world more incongruous?"

--Dr. W. B. Furness  
Eminent American scholar and father of the editor of the  
Variorum Edition of Shakespeare's Works  
(Letter to Nathaniel Bolles, October 29, 1866)

"The Egyptian verdict of the Shakespeare Societies comes to mind that be Shakespeare was a jovial actor and manager. I cannot marry this fact to his verse."

--Ralph Waldo Emerson  
American essayist and poet  
(Representative Men. 1850)

"Conceiv'd out of the fullest heat and pulse of European feudalism--personifying in unparallel'd ways the mediaeval aristocracy, its towering spirit of ruthlessness and gigantic caste, with its own peculiar air of arrogance (no mere imitation)--only one of these "wolfish earls" so plentiful in the plays [Shakespeare's historical plays] themselves, or some born descendant and knower, might seem to be the true author of those amazing works--works in some respects greater than anything else in recorded literature."

--Walt Whitman  
American poet  
(Complete Prose. 1892)

"We are not quite certain of the identity of Shakespeare's father; we are no means certain of the identity of his wife...; we do not know when he began his dramatic career...Almost all the commonly received stuff of his life-story is shreds and patches of tradition, if not positive dream-work. We do not know whether he ever went to school. The early journey to London is first heard of a hundred years after date..."

--George Saintsbury  
British literary critic and historian  
(The Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. V, p. 165. 1910)

#### THE CASE FOR EDWARD DE VERE IN THE CLASSROOM

by Deborah Kelly Kloepper

As a recent convert to Oxfordianism and a new member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, it was with both anticipation and trepidation that I accepted a job teaching British literature, a sizeable unit of which would deal with Shakespeare. Although my focus is primarily textual and "literary," I felt nonetheless compelled to offer an historical perspective on the authorship question. To the end of feeding intellectual curiosity and encouraging common sense, I invited John G. Kloepper, a local Oxfordian and a lay scholar in his own right, to speak to my class. As a consequence to department skepticism and to the principle of equal time, figuring if given enough rope people in error will hang themselves, I also invited a local professor of Elizabethan literature, who also happened to be the father of one of my students.

The "opposition" came first, hearing six dittoed pages of well-organized albeit specious arguments. The gist of his presentation was that there is no reason not to trust tradition and that if the Anti-Stratfordians can't prove why William Shakespeare (sic) of Stratford must be rejected, then the world is "justified in rejecting their theories no matter how plausible." For some reason, Stratfordians seem to be exempt from this demand for proof and are permitted to rely on tradition. The speaker resorted to refuting Oxfordians by shredding such sources as Mrs. Dowden (ignoring dealing with all others), and citing such scholars as Woody Allen.

A few days later, John Kloepper (who happens to be my father-in-law) took the floor. A committed man of complete integrity, he was witty, informative and enlightening to twenty students who sat intent on his revelations. He operated not through refutation, but through simple presentation of historical facts and paradoxes and through an appeal to what makes sense. While his predecessor seemed to have some kind of desperate stake in the promulgation of the man from Stratford

as author, Klopfer was refreshingly relaxed and exuded the spirit of an unqualified search for truth. He distributed Shakespeare Oxford Society publications, some of which I had the kids read in advance, such as the "History of Doubts Surrounding the Stratfordian Attribution," "The Case for Edward De Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford as 'Shakespeare'," a comparison between Looney's characteristics of the author of the works of Shakespeare and the article on De Vere in the Dictionary of National Biography, a reading list, and a fact sheet on the Shakespeare Oxford Society. The class took to him like a divining rod to water, intuiting the logic of what he said.

My students were, perhaps for the first time, intrigued and excited by scholarly debate and conviction, thinking about issues and methods they never thought of before. I don't know how many of them were rendered "born again Oxfordians," but it was an incredible and important experience for them to see living scholarship and to have the pleasure of meeting John Klopfer, an outstanding member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

### PREJUDICE AND SHAKESPEARE

by Warren Hope  
 Pennsylvania State University  
 Delaware County Campus

Professors of English first reacted to the theory that Shakespeare's works were written by the 17th Earl of Oxford with silence, then with ridicule ("The man who hatched that scheme was a Looney --bs, hs.") and, most recently, with attacks: they charge, for instance, that to believe a nobleman wrote the plays and poems is anti-democratic.

Professor J. Mitchell Morse, in the first chapter of his enlightening and entertaining book, Prejudice and Literature (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976, p. 7; originally published

as "Race, Class, and Metaphor" in College English, February 1974, p. 547) recklessly charges that belief in the Oxford theory is an irresponsibility based on the maliciously mistaken belief that literary culture is literally a matter of "cultural heritage," a matter of blood and genes, rather than a matter of attainment.

I believe that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote the works of Shakespeare (or Shakespeare)--the plays and poems for too long misattributed to William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, the man Henry James considered to be "the biggest and most successful fraud ever practiced on a patient world." I am also a democrat. These positions are not contradictory.

No documentary evidence clearly showing who wrote Shakespeare's works exists. If you accept any of the individuals proposed as solutions to the Shakespeare authorship problem, you must do so on faith. I choose to accept the solution to the problem which strains reason the least--the solution, in fact, which insists on literary culture being a matter of "attainment," not a matter of "cultural heritage" or any other superstition.

All of the biographies of Shakespeare are filled with conjecture. As Mark Twain long ago pointed out, Shakespeare's biography is the way Cuvier did when he imaginatively reconstructed a prehistoric animal from a bit of tail bone. Let's examine the flaking vestiges of coccyx on which the Stratford theory rests.

First, no contemporary document or reference identifies William Shakespeare of Stratford as an author.

Second, no contemporary document or reference describes the author of the Shakespearean works as a Stratford man.

Third, no contemporary document or reference describes Shakespeare as an actor: gossip spread after his death states that he played bit parts; according to a family legend, he held the horses of gentlemen outside a London theater.

Fourth, in an age of eulogies and elegies, none appeared when Shakspeare died in Stratford.

Fifth, though William Camden, the Elizabethan and Jacobean chronicler, praises the author Shakespeare in his book, Remaine, he fails to mention the passing of Shakspeare in his Annals for 1616 or anywhere else.

Sixth, Shakspeare's parents were illiterate. There is no evidence that he ever crossed the threshold of a school. His daughter, Judith, was an illiterate.

Seventh, after his "retirement" to Stratford, his main interests were dealing in malt and real estate and pressing suits for petty debts.

Eighth, in a Last Will and Testament famous for the specific bequest of a second-best bed (an afterthought), there is no mention of books or manuscripts.

And finally, the only specimens we have of Will Shakspeare's writings are six barely legible signatures, all dating from the last four years of his life, and all on documents concerning real estate or legal matters. The first syllable of the last name in all six signatures is spelled as it was pronounced, "Shack" or "Shak," not "Shake."

What facts are there to support the Oxford theory? I will take the space here to mention only some of the more important ones. The argument is fully developed and documented in J. Thomas Looney's "Shakespeare Identified," recently edited and expanded to two volumes by Ruth Loyd Miller and issued by the Kannikat Press.

First, contemporary references establish Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as a dramatist of outstanding achievement--"the heste among us for Comedie." No play known to have been written by him survives under his own name.

Second, he was a gifted lyric poet. Some specimens survive--but too few to justify the references to him as a pro-

lific writer of poetry, and the praise heaped on him by Elizabethan writers.

Third, in his youth de Vere patronized and took an active interest in the Euphuistic movement.

Fourth, two of the books with the greatest influence on Shakespeare were Ovid's Metamorphoses and Chaucer's poems: de Vere was tutored by his uncle, Arthur Golding, at the time Golding was translating the Metamorphoses; a contemporary document shows that de Vere purchased a Chaucer.

Fifth, de Vere studied in and received degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge Universities; he also studied law at Gray's Inn.

Sixth, de Vere traveled widely in Europe and felt a special attraction for Italy--the keenly portrayed scene of many Shakespearean plays.

Seventh, de Vere was a lease-holder of the Blackfriars Theater and financed at least two theatrical companies of men and boys.

Eighth, de Vere patronized Thomas Nash, George Peele, Robert Grean, Anthony Munday, John Davies, Nicholas Hill, William Byrd, and other Elizabethan writers, poets, playwrights, musicians, and scientists; John Lyly was for a time his private secretary; verses by him were bound with those of Thomas Watson, the poet, playwright, and friend of Christopher Marlowe. In short, he was associated with every Elizabethan writer whom, according to the believers in the Stratford theory, Shakespeare learned from, rewrote, and plagiarized.

Ninth, de Vere wrote an introduction to, and financed the publication of, Thomas Bedingfield's translation of Cardanus Comfort--a source for Hamlet which some Shakespearean scholars consider to be "Hamlet's book," the book Hamlet carried with him on stage.

Tenth, Polonius has been identified by scholars as a caricature of William Cecil, Lord Burghley--de Vere's father-in-law. (For anyone familiar with de Vere's life, Hamlet reads like autobiography. It was his study of this play which caused Freud to favor the Oxford theory. For a recent and thorough



analysis of Hamlet as a literary product of de Vere's life, see Bronson Feldman's Hamlet Himself.)

Finally, Thomas Nash referred to de Vere as "Gentle Master William"; de Vere has been recognized as the live model for Willie in Edmund Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar. De Vere was known at court as "Spear-shaker"; his boyhood crest, as Viscount Bulbec, displays a lion shaking a spear.

But to summarize the case for Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as the author of Shakespeare's works, I could not do better than to quote from the first chapter of J. Mitchell Morse's book, merely replacing Professor Moree's reference to Nabokov with Shakespeare, and inserting the names of some of Shakespeare's plays where he lists titles by Nabokov:

Given Shakespeare's obviously superior intelligence, it is quite possible that he would have written something even if he had not grown up under such superior conditions; but it is inconceivable that such complex jewels as Antony and Cleopatra, Hamlet, and King Lear could have been made by a monolingual man trained not in literature but in bookkeeping; and all the evidence indicates that an illiterate man, however great his native intelligence, could have written nothing. It is embarrassing to point out something so obvious, but alas...it is necessary.

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

The tardiness of this issue of the Newsletter is a result of the usual complaint: extreme preoccupation in the careers of both Executive Vice-President (who also doubles as editor of S.O.S.'s official organ) and the Secretary-Treasurer (who has had to assume the burden of editorship of this issue!). As we keep telling the Board of Trustees at each year's annual conference, S.O.S. members must take their chances if they insist on our continuance at the helm! Our livelihoods depend on

many other things which take priority over answering correspondence promptly, mailing out materials to new members promptly, or even getting out a Newsletter within the time frame indicated on our masthead. So don't be alarmed, please, if we fail as "pen pals." Be assured we are not dead, just overworked.

In the Newsletter of Fall-Winter 1975-76, there appears an article on pages 2 and 3 attributed to the Society's late president, Richard C. Horne, Jr. The article, entitled James Wilmot, an Early Doubter, was found in typewritten form among Mr. Horne's research papers shortly before his unfortunate passing in March 1976. From certain remarks Mr. Horne made at the time, the Newsletter editor was led to believe that this typescript, like others in the same file folder, was of Mr. Horne's authorship.

Our ever-alert Honorary President Chalton Oghurn, Jr. brought to our attention earlier this year that the real author of this article appears to have been Professor Samuel Schoenbaum, who described Wilmot's career in his book Shakespeare's Lives (Oxford, 1970). We checked our copy and, to our dismay, found that Schoenbaum was indeed the author (pp. 544-547), a fact which never would have occurred to us, so gentle was Professor Schoenbaum with his subject--in contrast with the characteristic snidery meted out to other doubters of the Stratford mythos, living or dead.

The Editor of the Newsletter regrets this inadvertent "cribbing" of Professor Schoenbaum's material, and offers this belated apology to him and his publisher, Oxford.

Two errors appear in our Fall, 1977 Newsletter. The first, on page 2, second column, lines 15-16, should read "E. James Steio, a recent Ph. D. in Theater," etc. The second, on page 10, line 11, should read "...cannot be earlier than Harsnett's Declaration (1603)."

--Gordon C. Cyr, Editor

The Society's thanks go to Vice-Presidents S. Colum Gilfillan and Dr. Francis Horce for their generous contributions to aid research.



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THE QUEST FOR SHAKESPEARE'S MANUSCRIPTS

Charlton Ogburn  
Honorary President, Shakespeare Oxford Society

In June 1972 Harper's Magazine carried an article of mine advancing the theory that the inscription on the monument to "Shakespeare" in the Stratford church seemed to be telling us that Shakespeare's manuscripts were concealed within--an interpretation with which other circumstances seemed to fit. (The essence of the theory had been published ten years before in a small magazine put out by Francis Carr in London.) However, as I reported in the article, Levi Fox, director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, was not interested in seeing what I had to say since he would not in any way agree to an examination of the monument.

Now, the proposition that a priceless literary treasure was cached in the Stratford monument seems fantastic, even absurd. I should certainly hate to stake my life on its proving correct. But equally I should hate to stake my life on its proving wrong. Many if not all of Shakespeare's plays were printed without the manuscripts' being available to the publisher, and it is difficult to believe that anyone would have discarded these in the absence of accurate copies. And if the inscription on the monument does not mean what I read it to mean, no one in three and a half centuries has been able to explain it.

The articles brought many letters urging a search of the monument, some with an offer to contribute to the costs, and several were printed in the August Harper's. Since the English professors could evidently find no critical flaw in the theory one might have hoped that they would have supported such a search on the grounds that nothing was lost by looking into the monument and that

no possibility of uncovering the manuscripts, however slight, should be neglected. But apart from one vituperative professor at Temple University, who showed how wrong my key assertions were by the simple expedient of misquoting them, the professoriate remained silent as Shakespeare's tomb.

Several months later I received a telephone call from Byron Rogers of the Daily Telegraph in London. He told me that the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust had no authority over the monument and that if I were interested in following up my theory I should submit a Petition for Faculty to the Diocesan Registrar of Coventry asking permission to open the putative repository; then, if significant opposition to the request were voiced, a consistory court would be called to decide the matter. From the Registrar, S. L. Penn, who anticipated that so many persons would wish to be heard, including "high-powered" ones, that the court's usual quarters would be inadequate, I learned that the costs of the hearing could be assessed at the court's discretion. With the full weight of the Shakespeare establishment against me, I could see myself turned down and stuck with the full costs. I could not assume an open-ended obligation that might run to thousands of dollars.

Meanwhile, Byron Rogers had come out with an article on my quest in the Daily Telegraph Magazine of January 26, 1973, under the amusing title of Bard Thou Never Wert?, in which he reported the views he had solicited from interested persons. A local mason said there would be no difficulty in opening the monument and Peter Quannell and

Ivor Brown derided my theory, without having troubled to read my exposition of it. The article was reprinted from Athene and Durban, South Africa, to Boston, Chicago, and Cleveland. The English faculties remained mute.

Thus the matter rested until September 24, 1973, when the press reported a news conference at which John Luther, a journalist with the Mutual Broadcasting System, had propounded his own theory, based on a "cipher rhyme-schema," that the inscription on the monument told of the manuscript's presence within. A week later the press reported that the Stratford church had been broken into by unknown persons, who had pried the bust loose from the monument and "attacked the stone plinth in which they thought documents might be hidden." The superintendent of police said it had required three large detectives to restore the bust to its place --with difficulty.

So it appeared that at least three hefty men had invaded a church which the vicar had told Byron Rogers "we weren't leave unoccupied because of souvenir hunters" and busied themselves with lowering a 300- or 400-pound sculpture from its niche, subsequently chiseling into the base. In all this they were undetected and had no fear of detection, for it seems that they swept up after themselves! No photograph showing the damage was published. No vow to apprehend the miscreants was heard, no help from Scotland Yard sought. But the authorities were now in the happy position of being able to reject any plea for an examination of the monument on the grounds that one had been made and, as Dr. Fox stressed, had shown that there was no cavity or hiding-places.

It was by no means clear to me, however, that the excavation--a matter of inches, it was reported--had established any such thing. I expressed my misgivings to Louis Marder of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle when he asked me what information I could supply on the break-in. The result was that in an article in his Shakespeare Newsletter on this subject Professor Marder took occasion to misrepresent my views on several issues for the purpose of subject-

ing me to ridicule. My protest was neither printed nor acknowledged and my appeal for honesty to the acting dean of his college, Richard M. Johnson, was similarly unheeded. But that was to have been expected.

From this start, it has been repeatedly suggested that an electronic device might be available to identify a hollow within the monument. However, as I wrote in the August 1972 Harpur's, "on the outside chance that the manuscripts, if they were once cached in the monument, have been removed and the chamber filled, I should rather hold out for a more thorough examination." In any case, efforts to locate a device equal to the job proved futile.

This spring, however, I had a letter from a member of a highly respected research organization who wrote that he and his associates were applying high-technology methods to archaeology and felt that the Shakespeare manuscripts were worthy of a substantial effort. By that time I was ready to welcome even an electronic plumbing of the monument and responded with eagerness. This was whetted by further correspondence. But there arose the matter of cost. To send a technician to England with "one or two foot-locks" of equipment and to maintain him there long enough to do his work, \$2500 seemed to me ample. The organization's figure, however, was \$10,000, "an arbitrary one to some extent in that processing smaller proposals causes internal problems." For me such an amount is out of the question. Moreover, even if a positive reading resulted, permission to open the monument would still have to be obtained--though surely the prospect would be much improved if a cavity had been detected. (I am assuming, perhaps unwarrantably, that the church authorities could hardly object to pointing a sounding device at the monument.) Accordingly I have proposed that the project be put on ice until the end of next year. By then I hope that present undertakings by members of the Society will have given the Stratford man the coup de grace and that many new doors will have opened up for us.

Meanwhile, those inclined to an ironic view of human affairs may be amused by the double spectacle of the English professors afraid to lift a finger to encourage a follow-up of the Harper's article theory lest it lead to the discovery of the manuscripts and the collapse of Shakespearean orthodoxy and of society standing by sheep-like, so benumbed by the conventionality of its thought (so-called) that it will not brush opposition aside and direct a man to perform a few hours' work to determine if a literary cache of matchless worth is within its grasp.

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#### NEW BOOKS OF INTEREST TO OXFORDIANS

by H. W. Patience  
Secretary, English Chapter,  
Shakespeare Oxford Society

SHAKESPEARE THE ELIZABETHAN - by A.L. Rowee.  
Usual 'orthodox' approach, profusely illustrated.

VAUX OF HARROWDEN - (Contains the poems of Lord Vaux). J. Thomas Looney, in Shakespeare Identified, claims that Lord Oxford, in his earliest poetic efforts, "built upon the foundations that Lord Vaux had laid" and points out that "Shakespeare" adapted one of the Vaux poems for the use of the gravedigger in Hamlet.

SHADOWS ON A THRONE - A novel by J. L. Dymoke. This is Macbeth in the form of a novel. (Recommended).

PROUD NORTHERN LADY - The lives of the Clifford family of Northumberland. (See King Henry VI, Part 2, for Lord Clifford and "Young Clifford").

LIVES OF THE TUDOR AGE, 1485-1603 by Ann Hoffman (1977).

This handsome volume contains 308 short biographies of men and women who were prominent in the Tudor age. The book is illustrated with 89 contemporaneous portraits and contains accounts of individuals who were

active during the years between the accession of King Henry VII and the death of Queen Elizabeth I. In its pages we find accounts of such statesmen as Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, Francis Bacon and William and Robert Cecil. There are lives of churchmen and martyrs like Thomas Cranmer, Edmund Campion, Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Wolsey; seamen and adventurers like Drake, Cabot, Frobisher and Raleigh; poets and dramatists such as 'Shakespeare', Sidney, Spenser, Marlowe and Drayton.

Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, is allocated a complete short chapter. Although it is interesting to find him described as a dramatist, the usual orthodox epithets are conjured up for an appraisal of his character - "neurotic", "wayward", "unstable but talented", etc.

"The earl was best known to his contemporaries as a courtier and for his patronage of men of letters such as Lyly. Only in the twentieth century has he emerged as a strong (sic) contender for the authorship, or part-authorship, of Shakespeare's plays".

We are also informed that none of Oxford's drama has survived, but some twenty-three lyrics have been identified as his.

There follows a short list of 'Oxfordian' literatures, including Shakespeare Identified by J. Thomas Looney and Who Was Shakespeare? by Society member Hilda Amphlett.

There is also an account of the life of Sir Francis Vere, but, curiously, no mention of Lord Oxford's other famous cousin - Sir Horatio Vere.

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#### PREJUDICE AND SHAKESPEARE—CONTINUED

by Gordon C. Cyr

We have had considerable reader response to Warren Hope's articles published in our last Newsletter. Mr. Hope's helpful little digest of the arguments against Shakespeare's (of Stratford) and in favor of Edward de

Verse's authorship of Shakespeare's works was originally intended as a contribution to College English, officially described in its letterhead as "an Official Journal of the National Council of Teachers of English."

Our readers should find the following correspondence of interest in that it shows how much work remains to be done to achieve even those beginnings of "detente" with the orthodox academicians, so hopefully broached by Helen Cyr at our last annual conference. We print below both College English editor Richard Ohmann's letter of rejection (complete with revealing footnote) and Warren Hope's response, which, in our opinion, is unanswerable.

Dear Contributor:

We are sorry that we cannot use your manuscript in COLLEGE ENGLISH, and we are returning it herewith.

Thank you for letting us consider it. Please try us again when you have something that might be suitable for COLLEGE ENGLISH.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Ohmann

Dear Professor Hope:

We see this note not primarily as a response to what was after all a kind of an aside in Morse's article (and that article is now almost four years old), but as an attempt to reopen the Shakespeare authorship controversy, after it has been virtually dead within the academy for many decades. It's possible that the controversy should be reopened, but if so, it will need to be reopened with new evidence, or with a full-scale argument showing why the establishment has erred in dismissing the existing evidence.

R. O.

Dear Professor Ohmann:

Thank you for considering for publication and commenting on my note, Prejudice

and Shakespeare. I'd like to respond to the objections to it which you raise. Of course I intended to open the Shakespeare-Oxford debate "within the academy." (We really can't speak of reopening a debate which has never been held. If you can direct me to the writings of any academician which show the facts of the Oxford case to be false, or the reasoning applied to those facts faulty, I'd appreciate that information. So far as I've been able to determine, the Oxford argument has been ignored, ridiculed, and attacked, but never answered.) But I would argue that airing the debate, in brief, was the only fair way to respond to Professor Morse.

I also realize that Professor Morse's false description of the motives of Oxfordians represents little more than an aside. But that aside is of importance for his entire theme: because of his professional prejudice he falsely assigns class prejudice to others—including me. This brings us to your suggestion that there is a need for a "full-scale argument showing why the establishment has erred in dismissing the existing evidence." Surely Professor Morse's book provides the answer: prejudice, as defined by Skeat, "a prejudgement, an ill opinion formed beforehand." Professor Morse elaborates:

In attitude and belief it is not necessarily a matter of being wrong about matters of fact—i.e., of being uninformed or misinformed or simply fallible; it is rather a matter of being inflexible: of being unable to conceive that any other attitude or belief is possible except as an aberration or a perversity.

The establishment has not so much erred in dismissing the existing evidence as it has, by and large, pretended that the evidence does not exist. If you would be interested in an article—a full-scale argument—examining the treatment of the Oxford argument by academicians and the academic press, please let me know. I'd be happy to prepare one for you.

I see no need for new evidence until "the academy" deals with the evidence which has been gathered over the past sixty years. Nonetheless, I mention two recent works

which contain such evidences in my note.

I recognize and in my note state that Professor Morae's article appeared in Colleges English almost four years ago. But the falas charge he made then was recently re-issued in book form. That is what I wished to answer. I turned to your pagea for the opportunity to answer because the statement first appeared in them. But ia timeliness to the point? What was timely about Professor Morae's unsupported accusation four years ago? What compelled him to beat a theoretical horse which "has been virtually dead within the academy for decades" with the stick of class prejudice?

Yours,

Warren Hope

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#### OXFORDIANA FROM MENSA

We were pleased to receive from E. Jimmie Stein of New York a copy of her recent article in the March 1978 issue of Mphasis "the newsletter of Greater New York Mensa, Inc.," which featured her story with a cover illustration of what the incomparable Sir George Greenwood described as the "hydrocephalous Droeshout signboard."

Dr. Stein's four-page essay, entitled "To Believe or Not to Believe," represents a compendium of the arguments, familiar to S.O.S. members, which support the case for Edward de Vere's candidacy as "Shakespeare."

In dealing with the contention of many that the authorship does not matter (since "we have the plays"), Dr. Stein delivers a telling blow to such orthodox complacency by quoting Samuel Terrien's critique of Job. "But structure is not the only consideration to which the would-be student must give himself if he would dig at all below its surface. He must familiarize himself also with the historical situation out of which the poem sprang. All of the great classics...speak in the name of the age... that speaks best to all ages which best

speaks to its own age. Of what it speaks is one thing; to what it speaks is of scarcely less importance. Lift it out of its moment in the march of the years, and its voice grows relatively muffled and indistinct."

"Thus," Dr. Stein concludes, "with Shakespeare's plays, to have them in their entirety, we must know of what they speak, to whom they were spoken, and, above all, by whom they were spoken."

We regret that we must enter a small quibble over one of Dr. Stein's inferences in an otherwise impeccable presentation. The inclusion of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Dickens, and Nathaniel Hawthorne in a list of "those who doubted that the man from Stratford wrote the Shakespeare canon" cannot be maintained on the strength of these men's published statements, although some of these do indicate (in Emerson's case particularly) some degree of doubt about the Stratfordian mythology.

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#### LOOK NOT ON HIS PICTURE

We do not propose to enter the fray created by one of Dr. Leslie Hotson's latest mare's nests, Shakespeare by Hilliard--A Portrait Deciphered, (Chatto & Windus, 1977). Dr. Hotson has always seemed to us a bellwether only to the more desperate Stratfordians--anxious for any possible holy relic, no matter how ephemeral, that would leap the unbridgeable chasm separating the Stratford maltster from our Immortal Poet. (Shakespearean scholars who have been so quick to ridicule the Baconian and other anti-Stratfordian cryptogram seekers must have cringed at Hotson's 1964 opus, Mr. W. H., in which the author finds an elaborate code in the Sonnets, proving to his own satisfaction that his particular candidate is the one and only possible Mr. W. H.!)

Leslie Hotson's most recent wild goose chase is expended on yet another ambiguously titled Hilliard miniature, "Portrait

of a man clasping a hand from a cloud," which Hoteon fondly hopes is a hitherto unacknowledged presentation of "Shakespeare's" visage. This sort of wishful thinking has been going on at least as long as James Friswell's hopelessly muddled investigation of another Hilliard—"Portrait of a young man leaning against a tree"—and contains as little evidence to sustain it.

Mr. Harold Patience, the Secretary of our English chapter, has sent us his thoughts from time to time about the possibility of Lord Oxford being the subject of Hilliard's painting. But our advice to Oxfordians—on both sides of the Atlantic—is to forget it. Just consider the source, as well as Dr. Hoteon's previous track record!

Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that Stratfordians seeking portraits of the great playwright seem inevitably drawn to subjects wearing the lace ruffs of the Elizabethan aristocracy. As Charles W. Barrrell reminded us long ago, laws regulating the dress of various social classes were enforced in Tudor times, a fact which rules out Hotson's hypothesis that Shakspeare of Stratford could be Hilliard's subject in this instance.

#### COMMON SENSE ABOUT "SHAKE-SPEARE"

by Louis E. M. Alexis

[As members will recall, the death of Louis E. M. Alexis, an English member of S.O.S., occasional contributor to our Newsletter, and teacher at Sevenoaks School in Kent, was noted in the Winter, 1978 issue of the Newsletter. The following article—written by Mr. Alexis for student readers of Sevenoaks School's publication, Cry, A Magazine of Thought—was discovered recently by the S.O.S. editorial staff.]

There are many paths the student not content to be a sheep can follow, to find out the truth about the authorship of the Shakespearian works. One is to go to the town library and get out "Who Was Shakespeare?" by Hilda Amphlett, the book which

at approximately 3 p.m. on Saturday 12th August 1967 in the reading room of the British Museum gave me my Damascus Road experience, altering my entire perspective. Another way is to look at the name "Shakespeare" itself. The word was so spelt in most of its appearances from 1593 onward, and the hyphen is of the utmost importance. Among the Elizabethans it was the recognized way of signalling a pseudonym. The Puritan pamphleteer "Martin Mar-prelate" was using the same device at about the same period, and everybody knew it meant "The monkey (Martin was the regular appellation of such creatures) who is roughing up the bishop". Nobody supposed that the man's baptismal name was Marprelate, or anything like it. In fact we still don't know for certain who he was. Similarly "Shake-speare" meant the jousting or the wielder of the spear, and the man's real name cannot have resembled this in any way, otherwise there was no point in using a pseudonym and the hyphenation then becomes inexplicable. This rules out William Shaksper of Stratford straight away: his real name is far too close to the pseudonym.

"But" say some people "even if we accept the argument so far, how does Edward de Vere come into it? Could not the author have been some Elizabethan nobleman, not otherwise known to history, indifferent to fame, content merely to pour out of the cornucopia of his genius those marvellous intellectual treasures?" No, he could not. The author is very anxious that we should know his name. He was evidently FORCED, by the queen presumably or by Lord Burghley, to publish under a pseudonym, but he took a mischievous delight in beating the censure by ciphering in his name and title wherever he saw a chance. Our suspicions should have been aroused by sonnet 76, line 3:

Every word doth almost as<sup>l</sup> my name.

Why was it necessary for his name to be "sold" or "betrayed"? Was it being hidden? The name "William Shakespeare" appears boldly on the title page. THAT was not being hidden. ERGO, it was a false name and the real one was different. How then does "every word" ALMOST betray it? It is an anagram of "Edward Ver" which is ALMOST "Edward Ver", a spelling often used by the esrl. A mere

coincidence, you say. But if we look at the words "ever" and "avery" as they are used in the works it is remarkable how often such coincidences occur. Take Hamlet 1 5 189:

O cursed epeite, That ever I was born  
to set it right.

This could mean "that I, E Ver, was born..." and the interjection "O" in the near vicinity helps out the suggestion. Or take Hamlet 1 2 80, where the prince (the earl's fullest autobiographical portrait) says it is not his actor's trappings

That can denote me truly.

But "truly" in Latin is VERE. So the earl is telling the queen (for whom, ultimately, all his plays were written) that there is much more in him, the edition of the "fighting Veres", than a mere player.

There are scores and scores of such ambiguities, all playing on the name or titles of the Earl of Oxford and of nobody else, least of all Shaxper of Stratford. And the argument about "coincidences" gets weaker and weaker with every discovery.

Just as Edward de Vere is seen peeping out all over the place in the Shakspearean text, so he peps out from beneath another kind of Shakspearean overlay in that pretentious shrine of Stratfordian idolatry, the Folger Library in Washington. In 1597 a portrait of the earl was painted holding a book "bound richly up and strung with crimson strings". It now appears in the Folger library - but as a portrait of William Shaxper of Stratford! How was this achieved? Very simply: by overpainting, that is, by forgery. This piece of impudence was unmasked in 1940 by C. W. Barrell, a photographer using x-ray and other techniques, who proved that the forehead had been raised to produce an impression of beldness, the nobleman's ruff painted over to look like a commoner's neckpiece, the coat-of-arms of Oxford's wife blanked out, the Vere boar on the signet ring clumsily obscured, and the date altered to fit Shaxper's age at 47, i.e. 1597 altered to 1611. Barrell's masterly

research, bring the cold, dispassionate eye of science to bear on this emotive question, proved three things: that one man had been allowed to steal the identity of another, that this thief was Shaxper of Stratford, and that the victim was the 17th Earl of Oxford.

Giles Dawson of the Folger library suggested that Barrell had "doctored" the photographs but when Barrell sued him for libel, he apologized and withdrew his allegation. The Stratford attribution is therefore a lie, buttressed by crime, taught to the naive by the foolish. Vere had predicted this:

But I, once gone, to all the world must  
dis.

So he sighed in a sonnet. Perhaps it will be the glory of our generation (much in need of glory) to have reurrected him.

[In the 1609 Quarto, the word appears as "sel," in which the "s" has the same f-like character (common in older English typography) as in the preceding word "almost."  
[Ed. note]

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the last issue of the Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter of which I (or, on occasion, Mrs. Cyr) will be editor. The Society's Honorary President, Charlton Ogburn, Jr., has kindly consented to assume the editorship. As our members know, Mr. Ogburn's qualifications for this burden are of the highest order, inasmuch as he has enjoyed a long career as a professional writer. I will retain the post of Executive Vice-President, and material submitted for the Newsletter may either be sent to me or to Mr. Ogburn at his home address.

This weekend of October 13 - 15 is scheduled for our third annual conference, to be held in Philadelphia. Further details will follow in early September.

Gordon C. Cyr, Editor



## PHILIP PLATT'S LIBRARY

A while ago, we received a communication from S.O.S. member Philip Platt of Mystic, Connecticut inquiring about college or university libraries to whom he could donate his ample collection of books, circulars, pamphlets, and S.O.S. Newsletters dealing with the Shakespeare-Oxford question. Before we could effectively answer him, we were pleased to receive a second card from Mr. Platt, informing us that his collection had gone to the Elizabeth Club of Yale University, whose members (over 3000) will now have easy access to valuable Oxfordiana.

## MILLERIANA

In the process of filing some recent correspondence, we came across a letter -- almost two years old -- that is typical of some of the interesting tidbits we receive from time to time from Ruth Loyd Miller. Since this letter contains material Mrs. Miller discovered after publishing J.T. Looney's essay on "The Sidney-Cecil-Oxford Triangle" in her 1975 edition of Shakespeare Identified -- and since this material has not, as far as we know, been published -- members will be interested, we are certain, in some of Mrs. Miller's comments.

She writes, "I have focused some attention on the most interesting exchange of letters between Lord Wentworth and Lord Burghley when they were negotiating the marriage of Wentworth's son William and Burghley's daughter Elizabeth, circa 1581." Mrs. Miller then finds many parallels to the 1569 Sidney-Burghley negotiations for the hand of the older daughter, Anne Cecil. Noting that Anne's and Oxford's marriage contract has not yet come to light, Mrs. Miller adopts Looney's supposition that Oxford probably negotiated it himself, to his own disadvantage. She infers, from the comparisons of Burghley's correspondence with Sidney and Wentworth, that Burghley most probably struck some hard bargains with his noble ward.

"It was Anne's unwavering obedience to her parents," Mrs. Miller writes, "which seemed

to be at the root of the Oxfords' marital troubles, an obedience made easier and reinforced by Burghley keeping the young couple under constant surveillance in his own residences. Both the Sidney and Wentworth documents contain the proviso: the young couple shall for a period of time make their home with the Burghley's. Not a condition particularly conducive to marital happiness in that day or this." In this connection, Mrs. Miller recalls the lines of Rosalind in As You Like It (IV, i, 54 - 59):

Ay, of a snail; for though he comes slowly, he carries his house on his head; a better jointure, I think, than you make a woman; besides, he brings his destiny with him.

Mrs. Miller concludes with a suggestion for research: not only further exploration of the Wentworth and Sidney papers, but documents relating to the marriage of Elizabeth de Vere (Oxford's daughter) to the Earl of Derby, "as Burghley apparently negotiated the terms of this alliance...!" A marital busybody was this Burghley! Is it really any wonder, pace Conyere Read and others, that Oxford's exasperation with this upstart intruder should find its ultimate expression in Shakespeare's Polonius?

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## CRAIG HUSTON: A TRIBUTE

by Warren Hope  
Trustee, Shakespeare Oxford Society

Craig Huston, a long-standing and active member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, author of The Shakespeare Authorship Question: Evidence for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford and, more recently, a pamphlet bearing the same title, died on November 15, 1978, in Philadelphia.

I met Craig Huston in 1972. Charles Wiener Barrell first told me of a Philadelphia lawyer named Huston who was an Oxfordian and suggested that I look him up. When I telephoned Mr. Huston to introduce myself he responded with unhashed disbelief, saying repeatedly, "Let me get this straight. You mean you believe the Earl of Oxford was Shakespeare?" After I insisted for the third time that that was exactly what I meant, he said, "Well, let's get together." This phrase was characteristic of him, displaying a sense of sociability and hospitality which ran deep.

Soon after this conversation we met at the Union League in Philadelphia, of which Craig was a member. He approached me, through the ornate gloom of that building's lobby, dressed in a dark, veeted, pin-striped suit, offset by a colorful tie, bowing slightly, and shaking hands, and stammering my name, punctuated with a question mark. We lunched in the Sherman Room on Scotch, talk, and eventually, scrambled eggs with sausage--a choice reached following what I was to learn was Craig's perennial question when faced with a menu, "Can you find something edible?"

He attended German Town Academy and Princeton, studied law, and became a member of the bar. Except for his time in the Navy, he spent his life practicing law. When I met him he practiced on his own, specializing in estate work. The files of his spartanly furnished office office hulged with Oxfordiana. But he had started out with a large Philadelphia law firm. He told me that he had tried only one case. His innate reticence, his reserve, his dislike--almost loathing--of theatrical behavior, were his undoing. Craig withdrew from the courtroom to use his fastidious intelligence, his honesty, and his legal knowledge in less public ways.

He had been raised in the social style of Philadelphia Society at the turn of the century. Born in 1904, he was active, in his retiring way, in the so-called roaring twenties. He'd talk of Princeton football games followed by dances with debutantes, of train trips to lodges in the Poconos, of parties at the Jersey shore, with a sense of joy, not nostalgia. He did not romanticize the past but spoke of it with realism and humor. He once recalled the result of a convivial evening sponsored by his father, a distinguished architect, in their Germantown home. A leading and tipsy Philadelphia politician stumbled in the dark as he walked down the path to the street. Despite the fact that the Huston home was situated on a private road, a crew of City of Philadelphia workers was out the next day erecting street lights. Craig maintained this convivial and social way of life, but without the political connections and shenanigans. (He despised politicians and spoke of them with a fierceness which sprang from an unselfconscious sense of right.) When he learned I was to be married, he invited my wife-to-be and me for a hang-up dinner at the Philadelphia Cricket Club, where he frequently ate. Later, when we invited him to dinner at our apartment, he appeared

at the door with a hottle in one hand and flowers in the other. During and after dinner he talked about evarything from the Earl of Oxford's ewer to Boise Penrose and from the equal rights amendment to the eccentricities of his former clients. He made every occaeion a kind of celebration.

When he began to grow ill and physically weak, what seemed to concern him most was a half-joking fear that people would think him drunk rather than ill. He expressed the concern with e sly grin and eyes which for yeare had smiled et the antics of their owner and the human race.

I notice I've seid little here about Craig as an Oxfordian. I think that's all right. His book and pamphlet, his discovery of the Earl of Oxford's ewer in a Philedelphie museum, hie almoet constant stream of letters, phone conversations, and researches on behalf of the case for Edward de Vere, can speak for themselves. What I wanted to do hers was suggest the character of the man and the life which produced those works.

The last time I saw Craig Huston, in All Saints Hospital, it ssemed to me that he wished to retire to scrutinize his coming death in private, much as he had early in life rstired from the courtroom to privately apply his mind to legal questions and prohlems. He was, on the verge of his retirement, as always, extremely polite. "Please excuse me," he said, "I'm afraid I'm not vary entertaining." That statement seems to ms now a kind of key to Craig Huston. He thought the world should he entertsining. He did his best, always, to make it so. It will he less so without him.

#### A BOOK OF INTEREST TO OXFORDIANS

by Harold Patience

Secretary, S. O. S., English Chapter

ELIZABETHAN LIFE: WILLS OF ESSEX GENTRY AND MERCHANTS by F. G. Emmison (Published by the Essex Record Office, 1978).

Dr. Emmison's interesting volume contains the wills of 339 16th-century peers, knights, esquires, gentlemen and merchants, who were residents of Edward de Vere's native county.

De Vere's own will would have been included among them and would surely have made interesting reading had he not, it would appear, unfortunately died intestate. Several of the wills mention the Earl of Oxford, however, of which the following are example:

Henry Golding "of Little Birch, esquire, 20 March 1576"

"...to my executor to pay my debts and legacies the profits of my lease of Campes which I hold of the right honourable the Earl of Oxford for 10 years..."

John Harhottell "of Bradfield, esquire, 24 September 1575"

"...To Elizaheth...my part of Flatford Mill in (East) Bergholt which I hold (by copy of court roll) of the Earl of Oxford..."

Vincant Harrys "of Maldon, esquire, 21 April 1575"

"...the reat of my inheritance to dssend to my heir and to remain in accordance with my father's will, and I most humbly desire the Earl of Oxford to hs a patron and an especial protector, chisfly for payment of my debts and legacies and then for the prsservation of my leaees, to which my very good lord I give for his paina my hest gelding or horse of his choice".

John Turnor "of Crepping Hall in Wakes Colne, ssquire, 6 Octoher 1578"

"To my wife my lease of the manor of Crepping Hall in Wakes Colne, Great Tey, Fordham, Mount Bures, Wormingford and White Colne, which I hold of the right honourable the Earl of Oxford; if she die before the lease he expired, with like remainders. To Thomae Smyth of Blackmore, gentleman, and Margaret his wife, my daughter, my lease of the Ceetle of Campes (Camha.) and the demesnes and late parke hslonging, late holden of the Earl of Oxford, in Castls Cempa, Shudy Camps, Barton and Aehdon, on condition that they ehall discharge my excutors as well against the Queen'e Majesty as aginst the Earl of all covenants and payments to which I stand hound by the laase ..." "To the Earl of Oxford in that he shall he good to my wife and such poor friends ae I leave behind me £40, and, if he die before, the £40 to my Lady his wife..."

Thomas Armyger "of Leyer Marney, gentleman, 25 October 1583"

"...and the lease of the paronage inappropriate of Wickham (St. Paul?) which I hold by indenture of the Earl of Oxford..."

#### STRATFORDIAN THEATRES TO HAVE AN OXFORDIAN RIVAL

The Society has received the exciting news that an Oxford Theatre is to be established at Tanglewood, Massachusetts, adjoining the site of the famous Music Festivals. This has been made possible by the generosity and conviction of Dr. Sol Feinstone, Washington Crossings, Pennsylvania.

The Performing Artists Cultural Endeavors, Richard Kapp, Chairman, will renovate an existing building for the theatre and put on plays during the season--Shakespeare's and others. Lest there be any question as to the significance of the name Oxford Theatre, the building will fly the de Vere flag. Moreover, on every program the following statement will appear:

With many others I am convinced that only Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, could have written, and did write the "Shakespeare" plays and Sonnets.

--Dr. Sol Feinstone

In response to the appeal of Performing Artists Cultural Endeavors, Sol contributed \$12,000, enabling the organization to complete the acquisition of an estate of 286 acres, including a house that once was home to the novelist Edith Wharton. One of the most gratifying features of this most welcome and encouraging development is the plan to create an Oxford Library in the house. Such a repository for private collections of books and papers on Shakespeare and Edward de Vere, which up to now have always been in danger of dispersal or loss on the owner's death, has been a pressing need from the time when American converts to the theory of authorship put forth by J. Thomas Looney came together to organize.

Among the first of those in the United States to recognize the force of the case put forward in Looney's Shakespeare Identified was Sol Feinstone himself, in the 1930's. Sol, who came to the United States

as a boy seventy-six years ago, became acquainted with Shakespeare's plays on the stage as they were performed by the Yiddish Theatre in New York.

Members of the Society will recall that in 1977 Sol gave the Society \$10,000 to assist Judge Minos D. and Ruth Loyd Miller in their search of British manuscript collections for items relating to de Vere, to which they had devoted so much of their own resources. The gratitude of the Society, and assurances of its long memory, go out to Sol a second time.

Tanglewood is the scene of summer concerts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and of the Berkshire Music Festival. It is said to attract two million visitors a year.

As further news of the Oxford Theater and Library is received, members of the Society will be informed through the Newsletter.

#### S.O.S. THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A brief cold snap amidst an otherwise balmy fall in the middle Atlantic states ushered in the third conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, held in the Holiday Inn in downtown Philadelphia October 13 - 14. Attending the conference were Gordon Cyr, Executive Vice-President, who presided over the meeting; Charlton Oghurn, Jr., Honorary President, who was accompanied by his wife Vera; Mr. and Mrs. Vern Messner, Mr. and Mrs. David Hopkins, Dr. and Mrs. Bronson Feldman and their son, Morse Johnson, Warren Hope, Morris Kaplan, Margaret Sterhutzel, Richard Levy, Emmett Salzhurg, and William Hopkins. (Three prominent members were unable to attend, despite previous plans: Ruth Miller, Rose (Mrs. Sol) Feinstone, and Helen Cyr, Secretary-Treasurer.)

The conference began Friday evening with Dr. Cyr announcing several items of business: the sad news of Craig Huston's ill health (see Warren Hope's tribute above) and the death of Philip Platt, learned of just a few days prior to the conference; a progress report on the forensic study of

Shakspeare's six "signatures" by a prominent British document examiner (more details on this item in a future Newsletter); and acknowledgements to Vice-Presidents S. Colum Gilfillan and Dr. Francis Horne, and to members Morse Johnson and Philip Weld, for their generosity in making this handwriting study possible. Not strictly business, but news of interest, included the announcement of Gordon Cyr's recent award of the Maryland Arts Council Fellowship in musical composition, Ruth Loyd Miller's absence due to unexpected business of the Louisiana State University Board of Trustees, and Helen Cyr's absence due to her previous invitation to the Governor's Conference on Libraries (a pre-conference to the forthcoming White House conference in 1979). Charlton Ogburn announced the establishment of the Oxford Theater at Tanglewood, Massachusetts, by Sol Feinstone (see preceding article). The evening meeting was then adjourned.

Saturday morning's events included a reading by Rhoda Messner of her recent television script in twelve scenes and epilogue, The Spear-Sbaker -- which Mrs. Messner delivered in an animated style -- followed by a group discussion of the screenplay. Mrs. Miller's unfortunate absence was considerably alleviated by her pre-taped presentation, which discussed both the need and the conditions for research into Elizabethan manuscripts by Society members, her own recent findings with respect to the Earl of Oxford's correspondence, and her announcement of a television script competition for the best TV series on the 17th Earl of Oxford or the Oxfordian theory of authorship. In the first part of her talk, Mrs. Miller stressed the need for more research conducted by Oxfordians because of the greater amount of materials coming to repositories in this country (particularly the University of Texas) which could contain materials about Oxford that others might well overlook. She mentioned also that such Oxfordians who might have the time to undertake such research should become familiar with various handwriting styles of the period and with the 17th Earl's in particular, since many important documents may be extant in his hand but which are unsigned.

For her own research discussion, Mrs.

Miller had submitted facsimile exhibits of letters in Burleigh's hand, in the Earl of Oxford's hand, and documents in other hands, but signed by the Earl. The exhibits contained a sample letter of de Vere's "Cornwall tin-mining" correspondence, the body of which Mrs. Miller is transcribing in collaboration with S.O.S. member William Fowler. Mrs. Miller concluded her presentation by announcing the TV competition sponsored by the Deep South Writers' Conference, details of which she said would soon be forthcoming.

The afternoon's events began with a book review by Dr. Bronson Feldman of A.L. Rowse's The Annotated Shakespeare. In Dr. Feldman's usual scholarly but breezy style, the author was impeached, not only for shoddy scholarship, but of a flippant unconcern for simple accuracy. Pointing out that Rowse's lavish illustrations seldom support his text, Dr. Feldman demonstrated his central points with a few examples, such as Rowse's unabashed assertion that "there is no problem whatever with the dating of Macbeth," placing its composition in 1606, immediately following that of Othello -- "as if," Dr. Feldman reminded us, "anyone could be certain about either play," much less their relative chronological ordering! Dr. Rowse apparently still has no shame about his badly-demolished hypothesis that Emilia Lanier is the only possible Dark Lady of the Sonnets, and his evermore strident maintenance of this absurd position in the absence of any evidence is characteristic, Feldman stated. Discussion following Bronson Feldman's presentation allowed most of the members present to contribute his or her own particular "Rowse horror story." Dr. Feldman advised members to alert their local librarians and school textbook purchasing agents to be wary of A.L. Rowse's latest screed.

Following this was a round table discussion, chaired by Warren Hope, entitled "Why Are We Oxfordians?" Mr. Hope had circulated to conference participants an outline with three main categories, "Reasons for the Question," "Motives assigned by Critics," and "Motives Assigned by Oxfordians." Mr. Hope said that he wanted to concentrate on the question of motives, since this seemed to be an area that interested

those unacquainted with or hostile to the Oxfordian theory. Discussion centered on two questions, "are we chronic heretics" and "are we snobs?" Dr. Cyr mentioned that, for his own part, he was quite orthodox on most matters of authorship and so-called "conspiracy theories." He cited the example of J. S. Bach's Concerto in d minor for clavier and orchestra, of which many prominent scholars have doubted Bach's authorship. But he pointed out that the problem here was quite different from that of Shakespeare, inasmuch as anti-Stratfordians are not concerned with the assignment of one, two, or even a dozen works to this particular person, but of the whole body of Shakespeare's works, since contempt for the "common man" seems to abound therein. Other members mentioned that Tolstoy's and Charlie Chaplin's anti-Shakespearean sentiments appeared to stem from some such realization. Morse Johnson capped off the discussion with a bon mot: "Well, I happen to believe that a man who writes educated works needs to have been educated, and if that makes me snobbish, I plead guilty!"

The conference ended with a discussion by Honorary President Charlton Ogburn about his trip to England, where he had visited with such doughty Oxfordians of both the Shakespearean Authorship Society and the British chapter of the Shakespeare Oxford Society as Nan and Betty Loeely, Harold Patience, Col. and Mrs. Probert, Lt.-Col. Ian Kielan (Vice-President of the S.O.S. British chapter), Vice-Admiral Ian McKeogh, and Verily Anderson (with whom Mr. Ogburn lunched at London's impressive Athenaeum Club).

The gist of President Ogburn's remarks dealt with the stark contrast between the almost "frozen Elizabethan" environment of Castle Hedingham and the "Barnum and Bailey" aspects of Stratford-on-Avon. He felt that the Society should take steps to improve the "P.R." aspects of Oxford as Shakespeare, e.g. Earl of Oxford memorabilia at Castle Hedingham (admittedly a problem with the present ownership), a plaque placed on the site of the now run-down Bilton Manor, similar plaques at such Hsckney sites as the St. Augustine's Church (now St. John's) where Oxford was first buried, Brooke House

(now a school), etc. (Dr. Cyr mentioned that on his and Mrs. Cyr's 1971 visit to London, a wall from Brooke House was on display at a museum in Kensington Park.)

Mr. Ogburn's visit to Stratford consisted in the main of a visit with Dr. Peter Barnes, the vicar at Holy Trinity Church, and their discussion of both the alleged "burglary" of the Shakespeare Monument and Mr. Ogburn's desire to investigate this site as the possible repository for Shakespeare manuscripts. Morse Johnson asked Mr. Ogburn how he hoped to proceed and what he expected to find in such an investigation. Mr. Ogburn replied that he thought the inscription plate could be removed and then two things determined: whether there was room for concealment and whether, if this were so, papers had once been placed there. Discussion followed, without resolution, on the possible embarrassment to the Society if the investigation were fruitless, and on whether the Elizabethan and Jacobean mind would have entertained the deception Mr. Ogburn infers from the peculiar wording on the inscription plate.

Also without resolution was Mr. Ogburn's request to write Dr. O. B. Hardison, Jr., Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, concerning a new examination technique for paintings mentioned in a recent issue of the Smitheonian Magazine. Dr. Cyr and others felt more information would be needed about the technique, its cost, and its local availability.

The conference concluded with a motion put forward by Jeanette Feldman, proposing a \$2.00 conference fee for students. The motion was carried. After conference attendees had signed a message to the absent Craig Huston, the meeting was adjourned.

#### NOTE

Volume 14, Number 4 is the initial issue under Hon. Pres. Charlton Ogburn's editorship.

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