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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Warren Hope's article on "Lear's Cordelia, Oxford's Susan, and Manningham's Diary" (ER 5:2) brought *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* to mind (Josephine A. Roberts, ed. Louisiana University Press, 1983).

Lady Mary was a good friend of Susan Vere, Countess Montgomery. One of the poems is called "The Countesse of Montgomery's Urania." In the preface of the book, there is a little epitaph written at the time of Lady Susan's death in 1629 by William Browne of Tavistock (the Dowager Countess of Pembroke was his patroness):

Though we trust the earth with thee,
We will not thy memory.
Mines of brass or marble shall
Speak nought of thy funeral,
They are verier dust than thee
And do beg a history.
In thy name there is a tomb
If the world can give it room,
 For a Vere and Herbert's wife
 Outspeaks all tombs, outlives all
 life.

Sincerely,
Isabel Holden
Northampton, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

I read with interest Dr. John Baker's comment (see ER 5:2) on my suggestion that the celebrated Monteagle letter, which gave the first official intimation to the English government of the Gunpowder Plot, "was almost certainly written by the Earl of Salisbury." As he says, Dr. Mark Nicholls "suspects that Thomas Percy wrote the letter," but Nicholls, a careful scholar, admits, "It was widely believed at the time that Percy had written the letter to Monteagle. Just why the conviction was so strong is now a little difficult to say, but we have seen how in King's Book, Monteagle no sooner heard Thomas Percy's name mentioned in connection with the Westminster vault than he suspected, by reason of Percy's 'backwardness in religion' and their old friendship that the letter had come from him" (*Investigating Gunpowder Plot*, p. 175).

There is no good reason for supposing that Percy wrote the letter; not if we take the handwriting of the letter into account, which is still extant in the Public Record Office in London, like most of the records in the case which have survived, or more correctly, been allowed to survive. The most lucid treatment of this subject first appeared on page 17 of the *Observer* magazine, a London-based Sunday newspaper, in its issue of November 5, 1967. The late Colin

Cross, the journalist primarily responsible, took along to the Record Office Joan Cambridge, a leading graphologist whose expertise is in the solution of legal problems arising from disputed handwriting and signatures. He insisted on my absence lest the conclusions of the lady be in any way prejudiced. Having no personal interest in the settlement of the problem, she was asked to compare the hands of the principal suspects as writers of the letter--Francis Tresham, Henry Garnet and Robert Cecil, all of whose hands bear a certain resemblance. Examples of the hands were given in the article together with an enlargement of two words, "frend" and "friends," taken from Cecil's normal writings and the Monteagle letter, respectively. One cannot reproduce here all her reasons, but Ms. Cambridge concluded, "examination of original documents written and signed by Robert Cecil shows that his natural graphic movement, normal pressure pattern and character of stroke allow of the possibility that he wrote the Monteagle letter. Further to this, examination of his spontaneous letter-forms, particularly "h," "s," and "e," indicate definite similarities with those in the Monteagle letter... So on aggregate there is sufficient evidence to support an opinion that in all probability Cecil himself wrote the Monteagle warning."

Nicholls indicated further candidates on page 214 of his book but does not take the evidence given here into consideration. When Cecil wrote his dispatch of November 9 to Sir Thomas Parry, English ambassador in

Paris, he admitted in what could only have been a moment of inadvertence that Monteagle's letter was written "in a hand disguised" (see F. Edwards, *Guy Fawkes, the Real Story of the Gunpowder Plot?*, London, 1969, 188; quoting from Winwood's *Memorials*, II, 171). So it was. But how could he know? There was no problem if he had written it himself. Cecil was very coy about references to whoever might have written it. When he gave the instructions to the Attorney General, Sir Edward Coke, as to how he should conduct the trial of the plotters, he warned him to stay away from any mention of the authorship of the letter. "Absolutely disclaim that any of these wrote it, though you leave the further judgement indefinite who else it should be" (*ibid*, 210; quoted from PRO, London, SP 14, vol. 19, f.222 r/v).

As for the assurance, "there is no need to accuse Salisbury of hypocrisy in these letters," I agree that hypocrisy is not perhaps the best or most precise word to use as a simple judgment in connection with the activity of either Cecil, William the father or Robert the son. The Cecils were completely and utterly sincere in their determination to keep their political ascendancy, and while they made a good thing for themselves out of this, it would be unjust to suppose they did not believe they were serving the country's interests as well. But to get rival influences out of the way, they would stop at nothing. So William Cecil got rid of the good Anglican Thomas Howard, fourth Duke of Norfolk, by implicating him in the Ridolfi Plot (see my *The Marvellous Chance*, London, 1968)

and son Robert did as much for Henry Percy, the ninth Earl of Northumberland, not as convinced in his Anglicanism as Howard, but certainly not a papist. (The sincerity of the Cecils was proved at its most savage, of course, in their treatment of papists, especially priests.)

On this and the whole subject, the work of an American scholar, George Blacker Morgan, deserves to be better known. Unfortunately for its wider dissemination, *The Great English Treason...* was printed privately in a limited edition at Oxford in two volumes in 1931 and 1932. Morgan thought the plot was genuine but his book was by no means a whitewash job. He comments on Robert Cecil, “although Salisbury completely suppressed that information about [Thomas] Percy’s embezzlement, yet he made a most cleverly unscrupulous and deadly use of that letter and of others which the earl wrote to his steward, in regard to the money, so that they formed, without being produced in any court, the earl’s chief condemnation in the Star Chamber: though Salisbury knew that the weak earl was as innocent as a child in the plot” (*op. cit.*, II, p. 34; cf. Stow, *Annals*, p. 884). And again, “Salisbury even brought it against the earl that he had a footman in his employment who had served Francis Tresham; although the earl showed that the man had left Tresham’s service two years before the plot” (*ibid.*, footnote 2).

The subject is vast and complicated and I am not satisfied with my own work on the subject so far, although the Tesimond narrative pub-

lished by the Folio Society can stand as a scholarly aid in its own right. Both Nicholls and Fraser made use of it. I have in preparation a larger work on the subject since nothing published so far is adequate, although I am not naive enough to suppose that anything I shall write will end all controversy. Too much of the evidence is missing for anyone ever to be able to claim absolute certainty—unless some dramatic discovery is made in the cellars of the solicitors or behind the paneling somewhere, as in the case of the Clarke-Thornhill manuscripts. This is sufficiently unlikely but the unlikely can happen. Nevertheless, many of the difficulties not resolved by Dr. Nicholls’s book, or for that matter the latest work on the subject by the Lady Antonia Fraser, have already been taken up in my article published in *Recusant History*, “Still Investigating The Gunpowder Plot” (vol. 21, pp. 305-346). Perhaps I should add by way of footnote that I enjoy good personal relations with both scholars, for nothing is more foolish or unprofessional than to entertain animosity toward those who disagree with one.

Joan Cambridge, I am sure, would hardly agree with Dr. Baker that “handwriting analysis is an art, not a science. It is not used forensically in the identification of persons, as are fingerprints.” But surely it is. To attempt to establish identity in the case of characters involved in the Gunpowder Plot does not entail dealing “with all the hands in Elizabethan England.” Nevertheless, it would be unfair to say that the objicant does not have a point.

The identification of hands is something of a minefield. I made a mistake myself in attempting to identify the writer of one letter in the course of *Guy Fawkes, the Real Story...?* This mistake has been acknowledged since in two or three places in print. But even after the caution acquired, one hopes, after another thirty years study of this and related problems, I am convinced that this is a fruitful and necessary field of endeavor. One can understand the reluctance of those who uphold the traditional story of the plot to make much of the importance of handwriting investigations. If we take the documents at their face value and presume that, if the author did not sign himself, or did not always sign himself the same way on every occasion, then we do not know whose it was from the handwriting, then it is much easier to believe the traditional account. But if we do keep our eyes open for resemblances and identity, then serious difficulties arise for those who accept the claim, for example, that Francis Tresham died of a strangury in the Tower. The indications are that, like Monteagle, Robert Catesby and Thomas Percy, he had a well-defined role to play, a role of which Robert Cecil was only too well aware. The man who wrote from the English embassy in Valladolid as Matthew Bruninge in 1606 and 1607, was beyond reasonable doubt, taken with other evidence, Francis Tresham. Joan Cambridge did a similar investigation for the Folio Society, when it contracted to publish the Tesimond narrative in translation from the manuscript kept at Stonyhurst. Once again,

I was not present when she made her examination of the Tresham and Bruninge letters in the Public Record Office. She published her findings in Appendix 3 to *The Gunpowder Plot*, Folio Society, London 1973, 250-254. The first appendix dealt with my thesis that Tresham escaped from the Tower (231-246). The second (247-249) dealt with the handwriting analysis of the Monteagle letter as it was published originally in the *Observer*.

Dr. David Kathman's letter in answer to mine (see ER 5:2) made some undoubtedly good points. However, some doubt remains about the earlier education of some of the playwrights mentioned as to whether they were at university or not. There seems to be no doubt that Henry Chettle and John Webster missed the Oxbridge experience. Chettle, in any case, was more successful as a printer than a playwright, although he put himself in the center of controversy by printing *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, which he tried to ward off in his preface to *Kind-Heart's Dream*. As a playwright he had rather less than genius since he produced no less than 48 plays in five years, but none of them brought him success or much money.

According to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Ben Jonson was certainly educated at Westminster School at William Camden's expense. It admits "the evidence is rather against his having attended either university," but Fuller, no mean authority, claimed that he was at St. John's College, Cambridge, for a time. As for George Chapman, "Wood is confident that Chapman was educated at Oxford, but

he gives no precise information. It is usually assumed that he spent some time at Oxford, and afterwards proceeded to Cambridge." This would account for his proficiency in Latin and Greek but since he did not, it seems, study logic or philosophy, this would also account for the fact that he took no degree.

There is less likelihood concerning Thomas Kyd, although he had the beginning in Merchant Taylors' School which might have taken him on to university. But perhaps what Nashe referred to as "the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse" and his addition to "tragedy of blood" which characterized his work and that of other populist playwrights, put him firmly in the second division, as it were; all in the time "before Shakespeare revolutionized public taste." Admittedly, no one, and certainly not Kyd himself, it seems, made any claim that he ever went to university. As for Michael Dayton, "there is no evidence to show whether he was a member of either university," although he himself claimed he was "nobly bred" and "well allied" and if so might have been expected to attend one of the universities. Thomas Dekker is something of a mystery man: like Melchisedech of old, he turned up rather suddenly and nobody knows where he came from. The fact that names of students do not always appear in the official list is not of course proof that they were never in attendance. It will be interesting to see what *The New Dictionary of National Biography* has to say about these worthies when it is reissued in the

early 2000's.

As to where the young Shakespeare of popular tradition could have gained his knowledge of the many things necessary for his plays, we emerge in our speculation from the relatively safety of port for the uncertainty of the high seas. There were certainly good libraries in London—Lord Montagu for example had one of them—but none were public or of easy accessibility in a modern sense, and it seems doubtful that anyone would have made his books—valuable items—available to someone up from the country and with the smell of horses still clinging to him from his day's work. But Richard Field is a good possibility. The more serious difficulty arises about the books that the young Shakespeare could have borrowed, especially for his first play or plays—he could hardly have afforded to buy them on the wages of a horse holder! It seems to be generally agreed that *Love's Labour's Lost* was the writer's earliest play. A. Gray says of it, "the play has all the marks of a first exercise in comedy. It has no progress or plot... In structural skill it is as inferior to the *Two Gentlemen* as it surpasses it in poetical fancy" (*A Chapter in the Early Life of Shakespeare*, Cambridge 1926, p. 50). But as I. Wilson noted, the play refers not only to recognizable characters in French court circles of the time—the King of Navarre, Berowne, Longaville and the Duke of Mayence recall names of known courtiers (*Shakespeare the Evidence*, London 1993, p 160)—but it also shows a knowledge of the court etiquette of the time which could not

have been lifted from a book before the early 19th century.

Although Ben Jonson against all likelihood seems to have passed through various trades and occupations he surely did not “become the greatest classical scholar in England while working as a bricklayer’s apprentice, soldier, and actor” while he was actually engaged in them? Shakespeare’s genius doubtless allowed him to make better and fuller use of his talents than most, and in these days of unemployment subsidized by state benefits, numerous free libraries and plentiful opportunities of bursaries and scholarships even in the present straitened times of England, William of Stratford might conceivably have risen above the disad-

vantages of his surroundings and circumstances, but it is difficult to believe that he could have done this in the world of the 16th century. Without at least a modicum of real evidence, which we do not have, it seems at least unlikely. So in the absence of real evidence on so much, we will all continue to speculate on what we take to be the strength of the probabilities supporting our own position and the unlikelihood of what is taken to uphold our adversaries.

Sincerely,
Francis Edwards, SJ
Fellow, Royal Historical Society
London

Occulist Influence on the Authorship Controversy

Roger Nyle Parisious

This monograph is dedicated with admiration
to John Price, an honest and passionate Oxfordian

It would be unprofitable and futile to engage any prominent public representative of the Tudor Rose (née Royal Birth) theory in further debate. It is now merely symptomatic of a larger social malaise and belongs in a history of sociology, advertising, or conspiracy theories, not literary scholarship.

The history of this Oxfordian sub-movement, since it is primarily a story of concepts derived from obsessive literary metaphor and personal emotion, must be told through the lives of its progenitors, as it has no other real life. Oxfordian critics have always maintained that the life becomes the work. And the lives of the original Tudor Rose proponents, Capt. B. M. Ward (son of Col. B. R. Ward), Percy Allen, and Dorothy Ogburn, explain their work on Tudor Rose theory, though both their writings and their lives offer us many finer hours. As these hours are too frequently unrecorded, the present author places himself in the difficult position of suddenly interjecting as defense counsel, while indicting friends to whom he owes much. We are scholars here, hopefully, dealing with documentary evidence, but documents are only part of the story that we will never see completely. Anyone is free to reject the memorial portion of this article. They do not affect the thrust of the argument.

Capt. Ward was a very brave man and his published work is of a high standard, while the Tudor Rose theory was merely a private Freudian aberration. Percy Allen remains a useful reference source and was, at his best, a

Archivist, translator and author, Roger Parisious is currently at work on three books—a history of the Shakespeare authorship controversy, Yeats and the Tarot, and royal birth claimants.

brilliantly perceptive critic, but he ruined his reputation in an only fleetingly successful search for creative renewal. Dorothy Ogburn was the present writer's genuinely loved friend, a literary lady well-versed in New School textual criticism. She gave Arthur Golding recitations which could have delighted Ezra Pound, but she had no sense of historical discipline and was too tender-minded to brook any criticism of a slowly evolving belief which increasingly sustained her through very difficult periods.

From a critical viewpoint, the basic distinction between the school of Looney and the school of Allen-Ogburn (Royal Birth theory apart) is that Looney is always governed by the concrete structure of a complete work, and Allen and Ogburn by the controlling metaphors. Looney does not "identify" Oxford as the protagonist of the Sonnets, Hamlet, Bertram, Prince Hal, and Othello, on the basis of common psychological characteristics, for such apparent characteristics are few. What he does find is a common juxtaposition between the material which is new and particular, and that which does not deviate from the known textual sources; he invariably discovered close and repeated structural resemblances to parallel historical documents pertaining to Edward de Vere. Looney never raised his argument beyond a maximum total of ten Shakespearean works, but in these instances, his postulations were repeatedly confirmed in his lifetime and as often after his death, a fact which was never properly appreciated by the Ogburns. We shall cite four excellent examples of Looney's historical objectivism, and a posthumous fifth, the Adon identification, in this article.

Percy Allen scored a number of similar successes in his published books (see his *Romeo and Juliet* parallel cited below), but he depended on Capt. Ward *files* for his history, and when Ward went into decline, Allen followed. Still, his basic Oxford—Hamlet—Chapman—D'Ambois metaphorical configuration may well stand the test of time, in which case it will more than redeem his errors.

As much cannot be said for the contemporary neo-Oxfordians, who exhibit all of the same emotional and intellectual fallibilities with scarcely any of their predecessors' more conspicuous redeeming virtues. In 1993, the writer called to the attention of three leading Tudor Rose theorists many of the imbroglis related below. One said she would never read a book like Hester Dowden's, though, if she had traced Dorothy Ogburn's sources, she could have spared herself numerous ludicrous errors exposed by Diana Price (*Elizabethan Review*, autumn 1996). Another said he did not object to psychic research and would hire his own medium when the time was right. And a much junior third likened the Tudor Rose methodology favorably to the logical method of Oxfordian founder J. Thomas Looney (see *The Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, Winter 1997). At this point, a bit of remedial education seems in order.

I

The modern post-1856 anti-Stratfordian movement was militantly rationalistic in its origins, and since then predominantly secularist in its presentation. As Geoffrey Ashe pointed out in the *Catholic World* during the early 50's, no conspicuous Roman Catholic anti-Stratfordian had yet emerged. He missed two eminent Dublin Jesuits, Fathers William Sutton (1904) and G. O'Neill (1909) who went for Bacon, but the statement is substantially correct.¹

Both 19th century Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians, whether rationalist or not, were primarily armchair textual critics—Justice Nathaniel Holmes's utilization of the then newly discovered Northumberland Manuscript, and Mrs. Constance Pott's decidedly amateurish but laborious edition of Bacon's *Promus* being the honorable early exceptions. The lady had a preface from academic specialist E. A. Abbott who understandably found her *Romeo and Juliet* parallels striking.² Agnostic Appleton Morgan's trail-blazing *The Shakespeare Myth* (1884), and a long series of Baconian books by legalist Edwin Reed (late-1880's to early 1900's) received widespread recognition through the United States and parts of Europe. Morgan went on to become president of the ultra-respectable Shakespeare Society of New York.

1887 saw the first (and still one of the two best) efforts to comprehensively re-interpret the Baconian theory against a broader background of Elizabethan literature by a still very young solicitor, E. J. Smithson.³ He was followed in 1903 by the eminent antiquarian Rev. Walter Begley's *Is It Shakespeare?* (London, 1903). Despite the prestigious imprimatur of Darwin's publisher, John Murray, Begley likewise found it expedient to mask his identity under the pseudonym "A Graduate of Cambridge." He garnered a mass of little-known historical information linking Bacon to theatrical and poetical activity of his time and also first published documents which implied Bacon's homosexuality, thereby becoming the first modern scholar (as distinct from the Swineburne-Wilde literary cliques) to argue that a rational interpretation of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* was dependent on this alleged fact. In so doing, Begley set aside, while for the first time calling attention to, the thesis of Samuel Smith Travers of Tasmania, who had argued in the early 1880's that the *Sonnets* were addressed to an illegitimate son.⁴

As in the case of Smithson, a projected greater work never appeared, due to the onset of Begley's terminal blindness. His three-volume *Bacon's Nova Resuscitatio* (1905) is essentially a useful compendium of raw notes for what might have proved a much finer book. One of the most tantalizing sections calls attention to the utterly unknown registration, October 22, 1593, of Thomas Edwards's *Cephalus and Proclus. Narcissus*. (The only surviving copy is dated 1595.)

Edwards introduced a series of his contemporary writers under the names of their recent creations, i.e. Leander, Marlowe; Amyntas, Watson; Colin Clout, Spenser; Adon, Shakespeare. It is the second oldest reference to *Venus*

and *Adonis*, and the first allusion to its author.⁵ Begley identified Adon as Francis Bacon, as he had earlier, and very successfully, identified Bacon as Labeo.⁶ However, he adds that “some” unnamed critics had identified Adon with Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. “Some,” on reference back to the Roxburghe edition, proves to be the great scholar Edward Dowden of Trinity, Dublin, in a letter to Furnivall of *OED* fame.⁷ Dowden, apparently realizing the consequences of his identification, did not care or dare to publish it himself.

Begley’s first work passed unreviewed by the Bacon Society. (The now matriarchal Mrs. Pott never forgave him for opening the question of Bacon’s homosexuality.) But his research formed a cornerstone of a freelance Baconian movement that included the late Chief Justice, Lord Penzance; Thomas Webb, Regius Professor of Law, Trinity; qualified academics in Holland and Germany; and the American scholar James Phinney Baxter, whose grandson would assume the presidency of Harvard. But the Bacon Society, having barred its collective doors to the historicism of Begley and Smithson, succumbed post-World War I to a perhaps inevitable occultist reaction.

The counter-current had been working since the late 1880’s, when Orville Owen, a well-known Detroit dentist and highly placed Mason, received a dream revelation from Francis Bacon. Owen was commanded to construct a great wheel on which were to be attached Bacon’s collected works, i.e., Shakespeare, Marlowe, parts of Greene and Peele, Spenser, and Robert Burton. Using the pre-computer technique entrusted to him, Owen would find the proof that Bacon and Essex were the sons of Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester, as well as proof of many other state secrets.⁸ Owen’s visitor neglected to tell him that he was also founder of the Rosicrucians as well as the Masons, but other Royal Birth enthusiasts were only too happy to provide the requisite revelations. In 1910, with financial backing from wealthy Massachusetts Masons, Owen opened a five-year archeological dig at varying locations under and along the River Wye. He failed to find either the sixty boxes of Bacon manuscripts or the Holy Grail which was buried with them. But the end of the Great War found his second-hand disciples a majority in the Bacon Society, the same Bacon Society which had, under sober leadership, formally condemned the CIPHER theories in 1900.⁹

In the meantime, neo-Baconianism had received an unexpected push from a calculating and uncaring ally, Mrs. Annie Besant, a former leftist free-thinker and, post-1909, the dictatorial head of the Theosophical Society, in Adyar, India. Until the 1930’s, she remained one of the most politically influential women in the world. Unfortunately, as she claimed supernatural as well as temporal powers, Dr. Owen received no acknowledgment whatsoever when she added Francis Bacon to the ranks of the Theosophical Society’s Masters of Wisdom. Still, a lot of Adyar true believers drifted into the formal Bacon organization, and they determined where the power structure would remain for thirty more years. Perhaps the real question in Baconianism during this period

was not “who wrote Shakespeare?” but “is the Bacon Society to become a scholarly society with a lunatic fringe or a lunatic core with a scholarly fringe?”¹⁰

True, the Bacon Society had once tried to stay the messianic tide, but it was Mrs. Pott herself who, as early as 1888, had postulated that Bacon founded the Rosy Cross.¹¹ And she, like some 19th century Charles Hamilton or Donald Foster, was only too happy to expand her super-hero’s holy canon *ad infinitum* on spurious “scientific principles.”

Baconian intellectuals, including Owen’s supporters Mrs. Elizabeth Wells Gallup¹² and James Phinney Baxter, distanced themselves as far as possible from this appalling metamorphosis. But the interim mantle of what was now neo-Baconianism passed from Frank and Parker Woodward directly to Alfred Dodd, another Mason and enthusiastic spiritualist who contributed a series of very influential books on the subject between 1931 and 1949. These were widely distributed by the Theosophical (Adyar-Besant branch), occultist, and fringe Masonic circles. (On the Woodwards, see further my Postscripts, “Rose Upon the Rood of Time” and “Lilies that Fester.”) They have much for which to answer.

Dodd’s first major work, *The Personal Poems of Francis Bacon* (Liverpool, 1931),¹³ was to run through ten editions in fourteen years, and reached a receptive public far beyond the normal milieu of neo-Baconianism. In place of Begley’s tormented homosexual, Dodd gave his readers a Tudor heir, eventually martyred by the evil state which had deprived him of his rightful throne, but, like Christ, taking on the role of invisible king through his holy Masonic and Rosicrucian assemblies. Dodd supported his expansion of Owen with a revised Sonnet sequence that placed more appropriate emphasis on Tudor- and Rosicrucian-Roses.¹⁴

In the early 20’s, E. W. Smithson, believing that there were too few intelligent readers anymore (and even fewer among Baconians), put a bullet through his head; a friend and sincere admirer, Sir George Greenwood, edited the all-too-brief remains of twenty-five years worth of unassuming labour as *Baconian Essays* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1922). Free-thinker Greenwood had already written *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* (1908) in reaction to this growing and ominous tide, and perhaps, his friend’s suicide spurred him to accept the Presidency of the newly-formed, and then non-partisan Shakespeare Fellowship in 1922, at the invitation of its organizer, Col. B. R. Ward *père*. By the time the more reasonable Baconians regained control of their Society in the early fifties, the irreparable public damage was long done, and major intellectual interest shifted almost entirely to the Shakespeare Fellowship. G. R. S. Mead, the old Theosophical Society’s one internationally known scholar, lost the fight for honesty and reason to Besant in 1909, but continued to publish good maverick Shakespearean scholarship (Col. Ward, Roderick Eagle, G. Wilson Knight, and Caroline Spurgeon) in his *Quest* magazine throughout the 1920’s.

It was in 1930 that the first signs of counter-culture appeared, innocently enough, in the Shakespeare Fellowship.¹⁵ Three of the second-generation Oxfordians, Capt. B. M. Ward *films*, the well-known drama critic Percy Allen, and Gerald Phillips publicly rejected Henry Southampton as The Fair Youth of the *Sonnets*. Now this primal identification was the absolute keystone of J. Thomas Looney's case for Edward de Vere, Southampton's prospective father-in-law, as author of the *Sonnets*.¹⁶ And it was Capt. Ward's father, Col. B. R. Ward, who had furnished the first concrete demonstration of the Oxfordian hypothesis with the discovery, July 12, 1922, of the marriage of printer's tout Mr. W. H.[all] in Hackney, August 4 (old style), 1608. This identification's endorsement by senior Stratfordian R. B. McKerrow in the *Times Literary Supplement* helped to gain Oxfordians international recognition.

Still, these younger men, two of whom had been with the Oxfordian movement for a couple of years, preferred an unknown illegitimate son by an unknown woman of rank. The son was called Will and later went on the public stage (shades of Lord Alfred Douglas!) Both Phillips and Allen, who certainly knew of Dodd's accelerating success, would shortly offer alternative sonnet arrangements more suitable to their revisionist biographies.¹⁷ They may also have known Justice Jesse Johnson's *Testimony of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New York, 1899), which argued that a much older man had fathered the plays upon the actor William and addressed the *Sonnets* to him.

Senior Oxfordians generally ignored such hijinks,¹⁸ but B. R. Ward *père*, who edited the official Fellowship page in the *Shakespeare Pictorial*, Stratford, hoped to steer the younger generation in a different direction without calling further public attention to their delinquency. The opportunity came quickly when an orthodox Stratfordian reviewer, D. Willoughby, writing in the *Saturday Review*, May 2, 1931, (firstly) offered the opinion that the Oxfordians had a "fighting case" but for lack of literary sensibility and psychological apprehension were not fighting it. "For greater quarry let them look in the direction of Anne Vavasour, that dubious maid of dubious honour. . . . Already she is a more substantial figure than Mary Fitton, yet of her shining possibilities scarcely anything so far has been made."

On July 12, 1931, (secondly) Percy Allen, following Looney, hypothesized "in view of the fact that Sir Thomas Knyvet, who fought a duel with Oxford in 1582, can be identified with Tybalt who fights a duel with Romeo; and that Tybalt was a Capulet and kinsman of Juliet; I confidently anticipate we shall find that Sir Thomas Knyvet was a relative, and not as has been previously assumed a lover, of Anne Vavasour."¹⁹

Col. Ward *père*, recollecting that it was exactly nine years to the day since he discovered William Hall, sent his son over to Surrey to inspect a recently announced collection of de Knevett archives. It took less than five minutes on July 16, 1931 (thirdly) to ascertain that Tom (Tybalt is King of Cats) Knyvet's sister Henrietta was the mother of Anne Vavasour and grandmother to the

changeling boy that Anne bore to Edward de Vere in 1580, thereby precipitating a new war of Montegues and Capulets through the streets of London. Col. Ward had it in print for his August issue.

Since Allen had already committed himself to the thesis that a part of the sonnets were addressed to a child,²⁰ the theoretical ten to twelve year old contemporary of Southampton should have been the next grist for his mill in the then unlikely event that Oxford's still nameless son could be identified after 350 years. He and Capt. Ward *filed* chose not to wait. Now, the publication of Canon Gerald Rendall's *Shakespeare's Sonnets and Edward de Vere* (1930) had already confirmed the wisdom of Looney's original appraisal. Largely due to Rendall's senior status in British academic circles, Oxfordian books, including Allen's, were generally received with respect throughout the 1930's.²¹ The first hard-covered reply to Oxfordian claims, John Drinkwater's *Shakespeare*, came out in approximately February 1933 and is reviewed by Allen's friend, Marjorie Bowen in the April *Shakespeare Pictorial*.²²

At some unknown period between then and the Shakespeare Fellowship dinner on May 16th, 1933, Percy and Ernest Allen jointly wrote and published a small hard-bound book of sixty-nine pages, *Lord Oxford and Shakespeare: A Reply to John Drinkwater* (London: Dennis Archer, 1933). In the course of that work (one of the rarest of Oxfordian memorabilia), the Allens stated with "certainty" that Southampton was the son of Queen Elizabeth, born "probably" in 1574 (*op. cit.*, pp. 24-5, 40-2, 65). The anonymous source of Allen's certitude was Capt. B. M. Ward *filed*, as revealed in a memoir two years after:

By far the most striking arguments raised by Mr. Phillips, throughout the book [*Sunlight on Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 1935], are those by which he seeks, very skillfully, to show that the words "Truth" and "Beauty," in these poems, seem often to stand for the boy's father (Vere), and his mother; and that the frequent references to the "sun" almost invariably mean "son." . . . They have been "in the air" for several years past; and taking up my own annotated copy of the sonnets, I find the following entries, made in ink, beneath sonnet one, *some two years ago*, [emphasis added] after a talk with Capt. Ward:

"True" and "Truth" are Lord Oxford; "Beauty" is Queen Elizabeth.

"Time" is the Royal Succession, and "Rose" is the Tudor Rose.

As for the interpretation of sonnet XXXIII:—

Even so my sun (son) one early morn did shine
With all triumphant splendour on my brow —

it was at a Shakespeare Fellowship dinner, two years ago [emphasis added], that I read aloud, and put that meaning upon the 33rd sonnet. Questions of precedence are, however, unimportant and secondary.²³

Actually, a question of precedence is quite important here. John Drinkwater is reviewed in the April *Shakespeare Pictorial*, with no allusion to the forthcoming reply by Percy Allen; this proof copy could have been submitted as late as March 15, 1933. Col. Ward *père* had covered nearly every issue since he began editing the Oxfordian page in January 1929. Had he been physically able, he would obviously have replied himself to the first hard-cover critique of Oxfordian claims ever made. Instead, Col. Ward *père* was replaced as of the March issue by Marjorie Bowen. Ward's death occurred on April 30, 1933.

In unleashing the incestuous²⁴ Tudor Rose theory surreptitiously through Percy Allen within, at most, two weeks of his father's death, Capt. Ward *fils* was steering down an Oxfordian road that Sigmund Freud had declined to travel.²⁵ The son had just assumed the dead father's position, and within two weeks of that father's death, on the first public occasion available, he simultaneously destroyed the two historical Sonnet theses (Anne Vavasour and, by inference, William Hall), on which his father's reputation rested. To make the situation worse, the displacement of the father was effected by a direct and unacknowledged graft from the henbane of mad Baconianism that his father had organized the Fellowship to combat. Percy Allen agreed to play the role of "Will Shakspere" and anonymously mouthed the offending words at the funeral banquet.

Significantly, Capt. Ward did not report Allen's Tudor Rose "discovery" (in fact, his own discovery) in the two-column account of that May 16th dinner which was published adjacent to his father's obituary and portrait on pp. 16-17 of the *Shakespeare Pictorial*, July 1933. Nor is *Lord Oxford and Shakespeare* ever mentioned again by an English Oxfordian.

The phrase "Tudor Rose," rallying cry of all neo- and post-Oxfordians, comes directly from Dodd (*op. cit.*, p. 30 last line, and again, p. 43 last line). On this second occasion, Dodd places it directly opposite a citation from *The Phoenix and the Turtle* and two citations of "Truth" with capital letters (p. 42), of which we have heard much further reiteration by neo-Oxfordians. Allen, in 1935, still did not know whence his friend was deriving his theories.

When Allen did publish *Anne Cecil, Elizabeth, and Oxford* (London: Dennis Archer, 1934) without mention of Southampton, he curiously based his argument for an illegitimate Tudor heir on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Oberon and Titania quarrel for possession of the little changeling boy.²⁶ Since it is explicitly stated by Titania that the mother is "a votress of my order," the only logical reading for an historicist critic would be a reference to the illegitimate child by Anne Vavasour. There simply were not all that many bastards being produced by Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting. None, in fact, till

another Dark Lady nominee, Mary Fitton, did the service for William, Earl of Pembroke.

In other words, Ward *filis* and Allen fostered a perverse textual misreading which set back by over a decade the system of historical exegesis which Looney, Col. Ward *père*, and many other Oxfordian scholars had already been applying with success for fifteen years. Since Anne Vavasour rapidly disappeared from the English Oxfordian scene, vice-president Abel Lefranc was still unaware of the link when he wrote his comprehensive study of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1945.²⁷

So Capt. Ward *filis* waited one more year (1935) to finally take responsibility for the potential slaying of the father figure, and in the very act of confessing (again indirectly through the pen of Percy Allen), he repudiated his intention of doing anything of the kind. Allen writes, "I . . . in collaboration with Capt. B. M. Ward have a study of the subject [the Sonnets] in draft . . . Further Phillips, Ward, and myself all agree with Lord Alfred Douglas, that the fair youth became an actor. If that be so — *and the evidence to me seems conclusive — that youth cannot have been Southampton, Pembroke, nor any other peer* [emphasis added]."²⁸

Nevertheless, when, after much further procrastination, the small pamphlet did appear, it was not noted in either the *Times* or *The Shakespeare Pictorial*.²⁹ The nine-year run of the *American Fellowship News-Letter cum Quarterly*, which later gave Capt. Ward a lengthy obituary, never referred to it. Did Ward secretly wish to kill a misconceived child even as he brought it into the world?

By then an unexpected and unknowing surrogate heir³⁰ was already claiming the father's newly discarded funeral meats. Charles Wisner Barrell appeared in England in late 1934 to early 1935, hot on the trail of the bastard Vere. As he later described it:

This was the beginning of a seven-years search which has led through the dusty files of the Public Records Office and Somerset House, various Courts of Chancery, Queen's Bench, Prerogative and Request, among the yellowing pages of many thousands of volumes of genealogical records, State Papers, personal letters, diaries, armorial devices, biographic commentaries, histories — and finally to privately-owned collections of Elizabethan and Jacobean portraits.

As a result of this gradgrindish pursuit of fact, I acquired much gray hair, permanent eyestrain and a bad disposition, but at the same time I may say without false modesty that I emerged from the long and continued paper-chase with documentation that appears to play a vital part in the permanent identification of Edward de Vere.

Complete corroboration of Mr. Looney's pioneer studies is now available.³¹

Barrell published a small portion of his documentation in a six-part preliminary paper which appeared in the *Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter*, Dec. 1941 to Oct. 1942.³²

The April '42, no. 3, Barrell Part III reached J. Thomas Looney on May 15. Looney immediately replied:

I have read this the critical chapter of your Sonnet researches with a more absorbing interest than I have read anything else for quite a long while. You have certainly fulfilled every promise and expectation suggested in the preliminary articles, and I congratulate you most heartily on a very notable elucidation of the age-long Sonnets Mystery. This and your unique work on the Shakespeare portraits will, I am confident, give your name an enduring and prominent place in the history of Shakespearean research.

Thanks to your very capable "sleuth-work," as you call it, the perplexing enigmas of the Sonnets have been finally resolved. At long last the Dark Lady and the Fair Youth — or, as we must now say the *two youths* [original emphasis] — have been brought forth out of the shadows and made to stand in the full light of day. It is an outstanding event in literary history, and the honour belongs wholly to you. I sincerely trust that you will live to see your discoveries take their rightful place in Shakespeare annals and your labour recognised as they deserve.

In view of your disclosures respecting Anne Vavasour's relationship with the Earl of Oxford and her whole career, I suggest that you re-read his poem on *Women* which furnished the first clue to Shakespeare's identity and set going the whole Oxford movement. Every word of the poem seems to point directly to her personally . . . Incidentally I would mention that the lady in his "Echo Poem," which is also given in full in "*Shakespeare*" *Identified* was Anne Vavasour. This is indicated at the lead of the poem, but as I knew nothing of this lady at the time, the words were unintelligible. . . . Now, of course, everything is perfectly clear.

It is unpleasant that our Shakespeare researches should compel us to stir up so much Elizabethan mud, but when we have settled down to the new viewpoint, we shall be able to enjoy the literature just as we are able to read the poems of Burns, Byron and Shelley without an

undue consciousness of their irregularities. In the Oxford-Shakespeare case there is at any rate the satisfaction, in bringing forward one set of irregularities, that suspicions of worse irregularities seem to be conclusively disposed of.

May I take the liberty of commenting upon one minor point in the early part of the article, which, however, in no way affects your argument. On page 28 you make reference to Henry Howard as the Iago of Oxford's matrimonial rupture, just as it is suggested in Captain Ward's life. In "*Shakespeare Identified*" I refer to Oxford's receiver as the Iago of the tangle. This however was not a mere supposition: it actually appears in the Burghley documents dealing with the rupture: a document which is published in the "Hatfield MSS." Captain Ward had in some way overlooked this very relevant memorandum of Burghley's; hence his theory about Henry Howard. Oxford's receiver as Iago, furnishes one of the strongest points in the *Othello* argument, whilst Iago's repeated: "Put money in thy purse," and his oft-quoted speech: "Who steals my purse, &c.," is so evidently suggestive of the receiver's functions as to place the matter beyond doubt, if Burghley's memorandum had left any room for such doubt. So explicit, however, is Burghley's statement upon the point, that it was Oxford's receiver who had aroused suspicion and that the trouble had arisen "through the double dealing of servants," that I should consider the *Receiver-Iago* identification as strong, probably, as any that I have established.

I am sorry that being cut off from the necessary books and papers, I am unable to furnish the precise references, but if the Calendared Hatfield MSS. are accessible, there should be no difficulty in locating the particular document.

I should be much obliged if you would find a means of making the correction in the pages of the *News-Letter* sometime, as I consider the *Othello* argument of special importance and the *receiver as Iago* a vital part of it.³³

This is one of Looney's finest hours. It is to be regretted that Charlton Ogburn, Jr., in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, managed, by following in the steps of his parents, to confound Looney utterly with this mishmash: "The villain of the drama became Oxford's receiver, Rowland Yorke, with Henry Howard added to him: 'Iago' is almost [!] a transliteration of 'Y-orke.'"³⁴ He does equally badly with Col. Ward's William Hall argument ("I cannot see the publisher of the *Sonnets* dedicating . . . to the likes of William Hall . . . even if

he was about to be married, as we are told that Hall was.”)³⁵ Mr. Ogburn *filis* does not appear to know that Hall was associated with Thorpe in previous raids on the papers of dead Catholics; further, that as Hall married on August 4, 1608, and the *Sonnets* were registered on May 20, 1609, the word “begetter” reflects the precise nine month difference necessary to beget an heir; and finally, that Thorpe acted with obvious malice aforethought toward the original author in appending the fraudulent and satirical *Lover’s Complaint* to his publication, a final *coup de grâce* in a book opened with a gloating dedication to long-time fellow pillager William Hall. And there are many other instances where Mr. Ogburn has followed his parents’ romantic suggestivism to the detriment of Looney’s demand for a rigorously demonstrable objective correlative to any opinions that the reader might first have subjectively conceived.³⁶

The only hard-cover writers, since the senior Ogburns published in 1952, who attempt to get back to Looney’s original historical constructionism are Abraham Bronson Feldman, his student Warren Hope, and Dr. Ruth Loyd and Judge Minos Miller, deriving from Charles Wisner Barrell. Both generations of Ogburns did splendid work, but paradoxically, by virtue of being better *littérateurs* than their followers, or often their critics, they have frequently exerted a very bad influence on emotionally excitable people who do not appreciate the finer nuances, or indeed the role, of the romantic imagination.

Barrell’s “impressive evidence” received a solid endorsement from Col. M. W. Douglas, president of the English Fellowship (*Fellowship News-Letter*, May 1943, 2-3):

The opinion has long been current among supporters of the Oxford theory that there was a second youth, in addition to Southampton; whether a natural son, or Henry de Vere the son and heir of the author, named perhaps after Henry Southampton, or one of Royal descent. *The third hypothesis has been considered and rejected by Mr. Barrell [emphasis added].*

...
The *Sonnets* are the cornerstone of the Oxford Shakespeare fabric... The solution of the riddle was commenced by Mr. J. T. Looney, and has been continued by the late Colonel Ward, Dr. Rendall and Mr. Percy Allen.

Mr. Barrell has contributed much important evidence which goes far to establish the identity of the prominent characters.

Capt. Ward *filis* is conspicuous by his absence from a short list. Could it be that Capt. Ward had finally rid himself of the pernicious influence of Alfred Dodd and this is why Col. Douglas appealed to the often wavering Allen, the last known Southamptonite, to re-adapt his 1930 Baby Henry de Vere theory,

from which something could still be salvaged?

Too late. Allen was receiving other —and higher — advice. He inserted a notice directly beneath Douglas's remarks stating that he was himself already at work on "a detailed review of the whole case" which he had not attempted before.

That result, entitled *The Dark Lady and Fair Youth of the Sonnets*, was finished in the summer of 1943, and is now apparently lost. A 12,000-word epitome, limited to 70 copies, appeared in typescript sometime between late fall and winter, 1943-44.³⁷ The prospectus described "evidence from Elizabethan plays and poems . . . strongly supported by an examination of certain contemporary portraits and prints, including the Ditchley portrait of Queen Elizabeth (1592)³⁸, and Camden's print of her funeral procession (1603). Barclay's allegorical romance, *Argenis* (1621) also supplies corroborative evidence."³⁹ But readers received from the prospectus no advance hint that Shakespeare's son was heir to the throne. This was the first time — after eleven years of promises — that a complete exposition of the Royal Birth theory hit print. It sold out within three months and sank without a ripple. No one, save Dorothy Ogburn, is on record as ever reading it again. However, much of its content can be reconstituted from Allen's even stranger and final work, *Talks with Elizabethans* (London: Rider & Co., n.d. [1946]).

Percy Allen had published no less than seven books and two pamphlets on the Oxfordian case between 1928 and 1934. The next eight years saw him a nearly ruined man: disastrous depression investments, the death of his beloved twin brother Ernest on their birthday in October 1939, the loss of an eye, a physical assault by thieves, separation from his family, flights from bombings. He had not written in eight years. His old friend Capt. Ward, with whom he had formerly wintered, became a militant Stalinist and had literally gone underground (i.e., chose to live in a basement as a mark of solidarity with the working class).

Fortunately, another old friend resurfaced in 1939, Fredrick Bligh Bond, a gifted, ardent, and quixotic archeologist, psychological researcher, and most recently, an Oxfordian. By 1942, he had steered Allen to one of his most remarkable psychic finds, the automatic writer Hester Dowden (daughter of the great Shakespearean scholar Edward Dowden of Trinity), adviser to many internationally famous literary people. The Wilde family, the James family, W. B. Yeats, Thomas Wolfe, the Prime Minister of Canada and Stratfordian guru G. Wilson Knight, among others, passed through Mrs. Dowden's door.⁴⁰ She had not raised her fee since the First World War, and kept no records; all automatic scripts became the sole property of the sitters. To eke out her income, she boarded an occasional artist in her comfortable home off Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, London.

In 1936, Baconian Alfred Dodd, who did not foresee that he would raise seventy years of hell in the opposition camp, had already gone to the same

psychic to communicate with his Master Francis, but the infuriated medium had turned both Dodd and his spirit guide out of her house, and, she thought then, her life. She frankly told him, "My father . . . and Judge Webb used to argue over the problem when I was a little child. My father never believed it, and he was impartial and honest. And I cannot believe it. I am sick of this controversy. It cost my father a fortune in research and books. He spent a lifetime in the study." And further, when Dodd remonstrated, she added, "I am aware that my hand has written something contrary to my views, but that does not imply that I am to change my opinions for yours. Oh, no! I simply do not want to trouble myself about the matter."⁴¹

Percy Allen went to Hester Dowden to talk with, not Shakespeare, but his late brother Ernest. He continued to go back to Hester for at least three years, having conversations — through her control Johannes — with a second Francis Bacon, a first Will Shakspeare, and Edward de Vere. These conversations began on Dec. 15, 1942, and the last published example is from September 1945.

More than one client had done well by Hester Dowden's counsel and, in the beginning, Allen was no exception. His sudden creative outburst in the summer and fall of '43 (he did a second, now also missing manuscript on *Bacon's Share in Shakespeare* in 1944) was the direct result of Edward de Vere's assurance that Southampton was indeed his son by Elizabeth; but in place of the dark incest out of which the Tudor Rose theory was born, Mrs. Dowden gave Allen a clear vision of "Father, mother, son, that's how all stories, natural or supernatural, run," as her lifelong friend, W. B. Yeats, had put it.⁴²

Automatic writing aside, Mrs. Dowden had suffered for many years from intense literary inhibition. In 1917, she had produced a complete translation from the German of the romantic poet Grillpanzer's *Hero and Leander*. It remained unpublished. Now, after many years, she was moved to poetry herself. She — or something using three fingers of her left hand — produced four competent fourteen-liners. The last and best was written in less than an hour in the early morning of August 20, '45.⁴³ Lord Oxford considered it the best proof of his identity (it took three sonnets to warm up, as he had not composed for earthlings in centuries). Shakespearean? Well, a moving, ebullient, sonnet certainly. Probably the best ever written by a lady past seventy with three fingers in less than an hour.

I remember Dorothy Ogburn reciting it to me. This was the first and only time I received any indication that she knew of the Allen séances. Her eyes glowed and her voice lilted. It was approximately summer 1967. Dorothy was an excellent judge of good theatre and performable poetry, an excellent performer herself in very small groups, like Hester Dowden:

When from the star-strewn heavens I gaze around,
And mark the narrow compass of the Earth,
Small as an atom in the sunlight drowned——

I marvel how within such narrow girth
My love for thee found sustenance and space;
The wine too close was housed, too small the cup;
My precious draught o'erflowed the narrow place,
Lost all its perfumed flavour, soon dried up.
Now has my love found her true path of grace;
Deep in thy soul she hides herself and me.
Here is no fear of time, of age no trace;
Forever of restraining fetters free——
 So we enjoy the glory of the sun,
 In sure affinity — for we are one.

“You know,” she said hesitantly, slightly embarrassed now, but still glowing, “it’s almost like a religion.” Yes indeed, but I refrained from explicating to her Yeats and his circles’ studies in Celtic Sophiology.⁴⁴ Still, from that moment forward (though I asked no questions), I was always haunted by the conviction that if Dorothy had not loved this sonnet, the *second* Tudor Rose movement would have died aborning like the first.

II

The Shakespeare Fellowship elected Percy Allen to its leadership on August 22, 1945 with acclamation and unanimity, unaware of the revelations he would soon publish. Now the blessed recipients of psychic gifts are often exalted only to be swiftly struck down, as Bligh Bond had previously discovered at Glastonbury.⁴⁵

Allen returned his scripts to Mrs. Dowden for further annotation and she, contrary to her normal practice, agreed to further help a man who had become as much a friend as a professional therapist dare allow a client to become. She quickly saw that the communicators were not all what they professed to be. Will Shakspeare, among others, made the blatant historical howler that John Fletcher wrote *Titus Andronicus*, and soon after, *The Taming of the Shrew* in the early 1590’s, when Fletcher was a provincial schoolboy. Conscious Hester, who kept copies of most Elizabethan dramatists (one of her few inheritances from her father whose ruinous collecting habits brought the family to near penury) and who would readily travel a hundred miles to view a rare Jacobean revival, knew this well. The subconscious communicators had displaced time by at least fifteen years; perhaps they remembered that late Fletcher had written *The Tamer Tamed*, a pre-feminist sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew*. Or had the control Johannes gone out of control as badly as he did in the Dodd case, in 1936?

Allen, who in a less bemused state, could have recognized such gaffes himself, would not be stayed. He published his book, *Talks with Elizabethans*, with a preface absolving Mrs. Dowden of responsibility, but not warning

readers about the misinformation.⁴⁶ On the affirmative side, his two appendices based on his unpublished *Who Were the Dark Lady and Fair Youth?* contained some admirably suggestive sonnet readings, notably the relation of sonnet #121 to *Hamlet*. It likewise contained his identification of Avisa of *Willobie His Avisa* fame as Elizabeth Tudor, for which he was, years after, ripped off without the slightest acknowledgment by a Stratfordian researcher who then took a scholastic award on her only slightly covert claim that Will Shakspeare numbered himself among the Queen's suitors.⁴⁷

An *ad hoc* meeting of under twenty Oxfordians swiftly followed the publication of Allen's *Talks with Elizabethans* (1946). Allen, their leader who had been elected less than a year earlier as "pre-eminently marked out by his investigations, writings, and lectures, as successor to the Presidential chair. . . with acclamation and unanimity," was unanimously removed as head of the Fellowship, not, as report has it, for indulging in psychical activity but for embarrassing the Fellowship with an irresponsibly researched book. He continued his usual energetic Oxfordian activities for a few more months but gradually lapsed from sight. One further brief lecture appeared in the *English Newsletter*, 1950.

When Hester Dowden died a few years later, the broken Allen re-appeared to beg, at any price, the possession of her planchette, by which he believed he could, without benefit of medium, contact his lost friends. Her daughter, Mrs. Lennox Robinson, was moved by Allen's plight but also blamed Allen for compromising her mother. Fighting down her mixed emotions, she told him, "No. It is ended," and placed the offending and desired instrument on top of her mother's body to be burnt with her.⁴⁸

It is uncertain when the Americans Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, who would next launch this nearly defunct theory onto a national publicity drive, first contacted Allen. In their book, they acknowledged that there were only two other Oxfordians who shared their belief, "Mr. Allen and, toward the end of his life, Capt. B. M. Ward," but "it must, however, be stated that we had arrived at the conclusion that Southampton was the son of Oxford and the Queen almost a year before we heard that anyone else had entertained the suspicion."⁴⁹

Now there are a surprising number of deplorable historical gaps and inaccuracies in this naïve statement. First, as has been seen, Capt. Ward *files*, not Percy Allen, founded the Tudor Rose theory, as stated in *The Shakespeare Pictorial*, available since 1935 in the New York Public Library. Second, Ward was not then late in life but thirty-nine years of age. Late in life, he was promulgating a bizarre power theory — and fighting D-Day on the beaches of Normandy. Third, the only previous hard-bound version of the Southampton claim, *Lord Oxford and Shakespeare*, has been in the New York Public Library since 1933, along with every other book written by Percy Allen on Shakespeare up to 1934. Only one, *The Life Story of Edward de Vere as Shakespeare*, is cited in the Ogburn's bibliography.⁵⁰ It is surprising if the Ogburns never bothered

to check back on their readily available predecessor in the six years between 1946, when they discovered there was a prior Southampton theory, and 1952 when they published.⁵¹ Finally, the undated Allen-Ward *Enquiry*, which is the only other Allen work in the bibliography, is cited a single time in the text, and classified so carelessly that an unforewarned reader would naturally think that the Ogburns were quoting from a single pamphlet which title they had slightly varied, rather than utilizing two quite distinct publications, which were not certainly ever in their possession simultaneously.

Evidently the Ogburns did little or nothing to enlighten themselves concerning the little that there was to be known about the Southampton arguments till a very late stage in their labors, though they were certainly exposed to the Royal Birth theory near the beginning of their relatively brief period in formal Oxfordian circles. The first notice of Dorothy Ogburn in the *Fellowship News-Letter* (January 1945, p. 2) quotes her as, justly, praising Charles Wisner Barrell for his "brilliance and scholarship. . . . I am amazed by the scores of your references, as well as the keenness of your perceptions." Barrell had cited and dismissed the Royal Birth theory in his Sonnet article (August 1942, 64). Looney's endorsement of Barrell appeared posthumously only eight months earlier in the April '44 issue.

If the Ogburns became aware of the Royal Birth theory without originally connecting it to the Earl of Southampton, it is strange they never bothered to ask their then-friend, Charles Wisner Barrell, as by whom or under what circumstances this Royal Birth theory was being applied and discussed. Of course, had the senior Ogburns, without evidence, made the same intellectual pre-suppositions from which Phillips, Ward, and Allen all originally proceeded, Dorothy's extraordinarily quick and metaphorically perceptive mind would readily reach the same conclusion. If you can have only one Fair Youth (contra Looney) and there is only one Royal Birth (contra the neo-Baconians), who else can you nominate except Southampton? Still, the fact that they apparently did not check with Barrell suggests that they first attached relatively small importance to their independent discovery.

The one year which elapsed between the time that the Ogburns independently conceived the Southampton theory and, on their own statement, the time that they learned of the Allen—Ward thesis, must extend roughly from a period at the end of February '45 forward to late '45 or Feb.-March '46, because the Ogburns's run of the *English News-Letters* (now in the author's possession) begins with March 1946, and this contains the news of Allen's demotion. Contact would inevitably have followed first word of the only other living Southamptonite.

*Who Were the Dark Lady and Fair Youth?*⁵² had long since sold out, and the fact that the Ogburns directly cite it only in the very late pages of their book and do not incorporate it into their bibliography, indicates that it was not the source of their certitude. Since they never saw *The Shakespeare Pictorial* or the

earlier Allen pamphlet, *Lord Oxford and Shakespeare*, the only possible printed matter available to them on Royal Birth theory was the just-published *Talks With Elizabethans*, which offered potted summaries of the arguments both pre-dating and post-dating the 1943 private issue.

When Charlton Ogburn, Jr. for once joined forces with Samuel Schoenbaum in striking a happy medium, he described Allen as suffering “the mental debility that sometimes comes with advanced old age” [he was not yet in his seventies and lived till 1958] when he “wrote about séances in which the spirits . . . had speaking parts” [Mrs. Dowden was an automatic writer]. He obviously did not know that these memoirs of the pseudo-Will Shaksperre under the uncontrollable control Johannes are the stuff of which the Tudor Rose theory was reborn.⁵³

Ms. Price (*op. cit.*, 4-13) provided a solid alibi for Elizabeth at the time of her alleged delivery, and understandably censures the Ogburns for faulty research. However, according to Gerald Phillips, who had been following the Royal Birth theory from its start, the Ogburns are directly indebted to Ward and Allen for their non-research (cited by Warren Hope & Kim Holston, *The Shakespeare Controversy*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992, p. 131). If the ordinarily reliable Ward, not the Ogburns, muffed his long years of opportunity so badly here, it is yet another indication of how obsessed he was by his symbol. But, if Dorothy Ogburn was deceived by over trusting a usually reliable English source, she fared even worse when resorting to American historian William Kittle, whose posthumous *Edward De Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford and Shakespeare* (Baltimore: Monumental Printing Co., 1942) contains the warning that the author died before editing his considerable historical researches. How badly the book needed editing, which the senior Ogburns and the neo-Oxfordians failed to give it, has been shown by Ms. Price (*op. cit.*, 17-18).

In the early 30's, Mr. Kittle published a totally ignored book identifying Oxford as the author George Gascoigne, a thesis taken up by the elder Ogburns (*op. cit.*, p. 823, p. 1258) in a strictly modified form: Oxford wrote everything not signed by Gascoigne in *An Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*. Dorothy graciously presented me with her amply, censoriously annotated copy of Kittle.⁵⁴ Her use of such words as “crazy” and “absurd” on the margins is yet another indication that her incorporation of evidence from Kittle's last book was born of haste and, possibly, desperation.

Before publication of *This Star of England*,⁵⁵ the Ogburns broke once and for all with their old friend Charles Wisner Barrell, the only trained Elizabethan researcher whom they knew (he could have saved them the Kittle gaffe). They further showed their pique by reducing the *second* Edward de Vere to a single reference in a book of 1,300 pages, with no indication that they were consciously interring founder Looney as deeply beneath the “Tudor Rose” as Allen and Ward *filis* tried to bury the late Col. Ward *père* in 1933. When the English Fellowship, which did not lack trained historians, subjected *This Star* to

inevitably stringent but impersonal criticism over two issues (April and September 1953), the Ogburns responded to the entire British readership by announcing, "So long as English men and women insist on the virginity of Elizabeth Tudor, they will never establish the authorship of Edward de Vere" (*op. cit.*, April, 1954, p. 12).

From this second break, there was no turning back. They now stood utterly removed from the past. The semi-comedy became a tragedy. For reasons unknown, Barrell never published again after 1948. The few scholastically qualified students who inevitably gravitated to him rather than the Ogburns were in no position to draw widespread attention to their discoveries. For lack of any other comprehensive text, the first Ogburn book became the standard Oxfordian reference work for the next thirty years, despite the definitely superior but poorly distributed works of Dr. Ruth Loyd and Judge Minos Miller in the 1970's. And the worser half remains prominently behind.

In August 1943, Kittle's last book prompted this non-review in the American *Fellowship News-Letter* (p. 67):

The Shakespeare Fellowship disclaims extravagant theories which have no basis in documentary proof. . . . The most recent unsubstantiated claim . . . is that Lord Oxford was . . . George Gascoigne. . . . There is no reason to believe for a moment that the Earl had anything to do with any verse or prose written by George Gascoigne. . . . Evidence must be collected and it must be interpreted, but interpretations must accord due regard to facts and sane reasoning.

Well, my friends and the rest of us had fair warning.

POSTSCRIPT I

"Rose Upon the Rood of Time": Pseudo-Rosicrucianism in the Authorship Controversy

A bird's-eye view of the appendix to Alfred Dodd's *Shakespeare's Sonnet-Diary or the Personal Poems of Francis Bacon* (10th ed., Liverpool: Daily Post Printers, 1945) exposes an entire underground network of British-American pseudo-Rosicrucians. The oldest Rosicrucian authority cited by Dodd (p. 234) is Kenneth Mackenzie (1877) who assures his readers that "The Brethren of the Rosy Cross will never and should not . . . give up their Secrets. This ancient body has *apparently* disappeared from the field of human activity, but the labours are being carried on with alacrity and with a sure delight." Next cited is Dr. Wynn Wescott, then coroner of London, who in 1894 lectured before his Masonic Lodge [unidentified by Dodd], and "proved the connection between Rosicrucianism and Free Masonry, and that the unity of the Orders was a fact" (*op. cit.*, p. 234).

Now, Kenneth Mackenzie and Dr. Wynn Wescott are to Masonic criticism

what J. Payne Collier is to Shakespearean criticism: genuinely scholarly, affable, industrious, and on occasion, absolute liars and endorsers of forgeries. On the death of Mackenzie in 1886, Wescott had moved with alacrity to procure all of Mackenzie's considerable remaining papers. Largely on the basis of these documents and the probable continental sources to which he was led by them, Wescott produced a "Rosicrucian" order called The Golden Dawn founded on a forged charter from a non-existent German Rosicrucian chief. One of his most notorious breakaway members, Alistair Crowley, went on to become, among many other remarkable things, a spy for both sides during World War I. As part of his cover, he passed on his bogus Rosicrucian transmission to an American, "Dr." H. Spence Lewis, who set up shop in southern California under the initials AMORC, and became the first wealthy mail-order occult teacher in America.

It should not surprise us to find "Dr." H. Spence Lewis, Imperator for North America, assuring Alfred Dodd, "I was delighted from the very first page [of Dodd's book]. . . . We know he [Bacon] became the Imperator for the whole of Europe. We are proud to name our new Auditorium the Francis Bacon Auditorium."⁵⁶

Further, the Secretary of the Rosicrucian Lodge (AMORC, Bristol, UK) wrote, "I have read [Dodd's] book with the greatest interest . . . The present Imperator of the Order for North America possesses the most authentic evidence of Francis Bacon's Imperatorship, having access to many secret MSS of Rosicrosse tradition . . . not available to the public. . . . More I cannot say."⁵⁷ The Imperator incidentally published a life of Christ based on unavailable MSS which he saw in Tibetan monasteries: "Even Judas Iscariot left an outline of his part in the affair."

Dr. Wynn Wescott hailed from a town adjacent to Bristol, and Bristol remains a hotbed of devious Golden Dawn promotionalism, and international political aggrandizement, sometimes masquerading as scholarship, to this day.

Now, this bogus lineage extends from Mackenzie to Wescott (Golden Dawn) to Crowley to A. Spence Lewis back to Bristol AMORC, and gullible Dodd gets a double feedback, from the London and southern California branches, of the same fake information without recognizing that everything originates from the Bristol area ca. 1885, not from Renaissance German Rosicrucians or Elizabethan Masons. Dodd adds Royal Birth to the royal stew. With this boost from Dodd, Lewis, being a successful California ad-man, not a mystic, soon had Francis Bacon's picture plastered on top of Rosicrucian correspondence course ads placed in The New York Times and thence down the entire American publishing hierarchy. Pictures of many other long-dead intellectuals then further opened the gates of respectability to occultism in middle class Depression America. Copies of Dodd were promoted for years in Lewis's Francis Bacon Auditorium to people who had no interest whatsoever in Elizabethan or any other literature.

If Mrs. Dowden were aware (and she had excellent connections) that Dodd was being used as a tool by a pack of international con-men moving in on the English occult scene, it is understandable why she turned him out of her house. For the low price of the sitting (scripts became the client's sole property), Dodd — and AMORC — obtained thousands in free advertising from Britain's most respected psychic; and, after seven year's wait (1936-1943), Dodd decided to chance a belated claim on her unwilling endorsement for a carefully launched pseudo-religious campaign. Johannes countered through Mrs. Dowden-Percy Allen by bringing on a *second* Francis Bacon (who would be repudiated in his turn once he had served his purpose) to undo the damage that the Dodd-ite forces, who included the President of the Bacon Society (Bertram Theobald), were doing to the English cultural scene. But in the process of cleansing the house of one devil (it was assumed that the emergence of a second Bacon would be discretely passed about in literary-psychic circles), the door was opened to two more false spirits, i.e., Will Shakspeare and Edward de Vere. Nobody anticipated that Allen would insist on going quickly into print, and that the Baconian Royal Birth theory would thereby be re-imported into America as the Oxfordian Royal Birth theory under the aegis of occultly naïve Dorothy Ogburn.

In 1929, Dodd received corroboration from Frank and Parker Woodward on "Rosicrucian" ciphers which they had first published privately in 1915 while Dr. Owen was still excavating. But Frank Woodward, a President of the Bacon Society, was *also* a mail-order Rosicrucian and probably a member of a Masonic organization then under the control of Dr. Wynne Wescott.⁵⁸

The reader who has not had enough occultism by now may consult *The Theosophical Enlightenment* by Joscelyn Godwin (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994) to which I contributed much of my own research on Mackenzie and the origins of pseudo-Rosicrucianism, notably in Chapter 11. The reader will be introduced to finer minds than this article would suggest. But the more prudent the mind, the less likely to mingle with the neo-Baconians. For one of the few serious attempts in the twentieth century to get back to the hard structure behind all this phantasmagoria, see René Guénon's *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* (English tr., London: Luzac, 1946).

It has been obvious since Lefranc and Brooks that a thorough study of the Shakespeare plays in relation to (a) Hermeticism, (b) Platonism, (c) Rosicrucianism, and (d) possibly, Freemasonry would eventually be in order. However, considering the historical quagmires involved, and the lack of intellectual consensus on which to proceed, it is understandable that they did not proceed.

The one academic who did take up Lefranc (with all too scant thanks), Francis Yates, made so many sins of omission and commission that it would take an article as long as the present one to guide the beginner through them. To name no more, she ignores the large hermetic library held by Southampton's

friend, Sir Edward Dyer, only a few blocks from the Globe Theater; and also the alchemical laboratory kept by the Countess of Pembroke and Dyer in the woods behind Wilton House. Charles Nicholl's work on *King Lear* and alchemy suffers from similar problems.

I would suggest the uninformed reader start with academic A. O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* (long out of print), and E. M. Tilyard's succinct *The Elizabethan World Picture* which shows the part that Platonism and Hermetic correspondence played in the non-initiated Elizabethan mind.

The simple fact is there are no surviving Rosicrucian rituals (German) prior to 1780 while the Freemasons, after the 18th century secularist revival, made frantic efforts to mutilate and destroy the surviving memorials of their traditionalist past. There are no pertinent Masonic rituals surviving within a hundred years of the death of William Stanley, the last plausible Shakespeare candidate. One thing official Masons certainly did not do was go around burying their manuscripts in tombs or immersing them under huge quantities of water as certain neo-Baconians and very recently neo-Oxfordians are beginning to claim.

For a reliable account of recent historical research which could link William Stanley, Oxford's son-in-law, and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, to proto-Masonic and Rosicrucian movements see Ronald Heisler in the annual *Hermetic Journal* (London, 1994). Mr. Heisler also produced evidence for an *ur-Two Noble Kinsmen* in the early 1590's. The remaining readers of the *SOS Newsletter* will be interested to know that Heisler finds close parallels between Du Bartas's work and the Hermetic societies of the time. As both Oxford and the author of *Venus and Adonis* were interested in Du Bartas, they probably shared this further hermetic interest (cf. *SOS Newsletter*, Winter 1997). We may also note the Plato that de Vere purchased along with his Chaucer and Geneva Bible and his reference for the Greek Orthodox Rite when in Italy. But this is a long, slow road.

POSTSCRIPT II

Lilies that Fester

Yet another by-blow of the Baconian Royal Birth theory unexpectedly surfaced recently in neo-Oxfordian circles. It derives from the very first book to defend Dr. Orville Owen, *The Strange Case of Francis Tidir* (London: Robert Banks & Son, 1901). The author, solicitor Parker Woodward, charmingly disclaimed any literary expertise, and in addition to providing some mixed *curiosa* relevant to Royal Birth Theory, also advanced the opinion, under the chapter title "Practical Joking in 1592," that one of Bacon's masks, Robert Greene, never existed. He thought the contradictions in the many accounts of Greene's dying hours and funeral obsequies proved as much. (Mercifully, he did not go on to argue that the much more contradictory accounts of the death of Christopher Marlowe, the lost Dauphin, and later, the Russian Royal Family prove that these worthies never existed either.) More-

over, as Dr. Owen previously “translated” a play by Bacon in which his mask “Greene” was brought in as a character along with Shakspeare and Marlowe, Woodward was shooting up his own client.⁵⁹

Undeterred, Woodward further reproduced parallels between Bacon’s early mask (John Lyly) and Greene to substantiate his thesis that Lyly, Greene, and Shakespeare formed three consecutive *personae* of Francis Bacon. Now, he was not only shooting up Dr. Owen, but also Mrs. Pott, President of the Bacon Society, who in her edition of the *Promus*, had correctly pointed out the lack of John Lyly’s influence on the proverbs in Bacon, and found even fewer parallels in Greene.⁶⁰ So far as we are aware, no second Baconian has ever revived this doubly heterodox theory.

But a hundred years later, it is back lock, stock, and barrel under the auspices of neo-Oxfordian Stephanie Hopkins Hughes (“The Relevance of Robert Greene to the Oxfordian Thesis,” Portland, OR: Paradigm Press, 1997), who coyly refers to her mentors as a “handful of renegade Baconians,” and note the plural.⁶¹ Since Ms. Hughes cited no specific authority in her paper, which also attributes the work of George Gascoigne to Oxford, either she has independently made the same mistake as Parker Woodward, or, more plausibly, absorbed her sources and techniques at second hand from, say, “The Poet’s Death as a Jest,” (Kittle, 1930, chapter 26), where it is suggested that Oxford killed off his non-existent mask (or, if Gascoigne did exist, he can be dissolved into several people who were not seen around London). Still worse, despite methodical replies to her Greene theory from Jerry Downs and Diana Price on “Phaeton,” the Oxfordian e-mail discussion group, she was invited to keynote an Oxfordian conference before many naïve beginners insufficiently instructed in the dark by-ways of neo-Oxfordian politics. One can only hope that the sponsoring academics will curb Ms. Hughes once they become aware of the arbitrary and perverse sources from which her opinions are derived. They do not offer an acceptable role model to the unforwarned young research students at the recent Concordia, Oregon conference. Is *Edmund Spenser and the Impersonation of Edward de Vere* to follow shortly?

Bear in mind, all Oxfordians prior to the Ogburns are reductionists. One cannot ever know how much a man wrote until one knows how little he could have written. Once again, the Ogburns and their disciples are not in the classic Oxfordian tradition.

POSTSCRIPT III

“Truths Out of a Medium’s Mouth”

A final irony in this tragical-comical-historical-pastoral. While acting as Anne Yeats’s archivist in the early 70’s, I passed an obscure auction house on the Dublin Quays. It specialized in the estates of deceased priests, and that particular day was offering the effects of the respected Jesuit art collector, and leader of the Irish Oxford Shakespeare Society, Gerard Schine. Least noted among the treasures at auction was Fr. Schine’s collection of annotated

Oxfordian books, which I acquired reasonably enough.

On the flyleaf of Percy Allen's *Life Story of Edward de Vere, Fr. Schine* had inscribed three stanzas from the *L'Envoi* to Thomas Edwards's *Proclus and Cephalus. Narcissus* (see fn. 5):

Adon deafly masking thro
Stately troupes rich conceited
Shew'd he well deserved to
Loves delight on him to gaze
And had not love her selfe intreated,
Other nymphs had sent him baies.

Eke in purple roabes distaind,
Amid'st the Center of this clime,
I have heard saie doth remaine,
One whose power floweth far,
That should have bene of our rime
The onely object and the star.

Well could his bewitching pen,
Done the Muses objects to us
Although he differs much from men
Tilting under Frieries,
Yet his golden art might woo us
To have honored him with baies.

with the following quote from a source I could not then identify, and not noted by Barrell:

"The Queen wooed the Earl of Oxford, but he would not fall in."⁶²

Beneath, he listed his source "from Hester Dowden." This conversation, which must have occurred either pre-World War II or post-1945 (Ireland stayed in essential quarantine during the World War), went otherwise unreported. Yet the priest had obtained better in five minutes from conscious Hester than Allen got in his three years with Johannes. And the additional weight of Hester's identification (or was it her father's before her?) rests on the fact that Oxford, like Adon, had refused "love's baies," and, astonishingly, the memory of this ancient scandal still intrigued court circles long after Edwards wrote.

Acknowledgments. For queries courteously and extensively answered in the course of my research, I wish to thank Dr. Ruth Loyd and Judge Minos Miller; the editor of *The Elizabethan Review* for the loan of otherwise unobtainable

copies of the English *News-Letters*; Christopher Dams and Fr. Francis Edwards for information concerning English archives; and Derran Charlton for his exceptional kindness. Sources for Mrs. Dowden are: her daughter, Mrs. Lennox Robinson; Dr. Oliver Edwards, who spoke to me of Hester and Grillpanzer; Mrs. Sophie Jacobs, sister of Estelle Solomons; Miss Norah McGuinness and family; Thomas Purefoy; Harold Rutledge; Isabel de Lockyer; Dr. Robert Cummins of Cork; Arthur Power; the novelist Francis Stuart; Ned Lysett; Dr. Eric Dodds of Cambridge; Dr. Eric Dingwa of the British Society for Psychical Research; friends and members of the Dublin Unitarian Church; and Estelle Solomons' close friend, Miss Goodbody of Morehampton Road, Dublin. Except where specifically noted, the author, who gathered his materials between 1967 and 1973, has included no material that was not independently vouched for by at least three witnesses, and further omitted any accounts, however interesting, on which there was a conflict of testimony.

Endnotes

¹ The contributions of Fathers Francis Edwards and Ernest Ferlita are more recent and fall outside the scope of this article. That other most formidable Jesuit and psychical researcher, Father Herbert Thurston, staunchly defended orthodoxy against Rev. Walter Begley in the pages of *The Month* (London: February, 1902).

² Mrs. Henry Pott, *Bacon's Promus Illustrated by Passages from Shakespeare* (London: 1883), pp. 62-69, esp. 66-67. Mrs. Pott showed the making of a fine scholar, had she continued her preliminary investigations. Unfortunately, she quickly discovered that her greater talent lay in political administration rather than literature. As the generation gap among Baconians left the leadership of their newly-formed Society (1888) up for grabs, it soon became quite easy to patronize and be patronized by malleable people less able than oneself. We hope that the preliminary De Vere Bible report does not go the way of the *Promus*. But as the graduate student who issued that report on the De Vere Bible early in the 1990's has gone on record as endorsing the Royal Birth methodology, and further has failed to answer or even comprehend criticisms from Jerry Downs on Shakespeare's alternative available sources, a fresh consideration of the De Vere Bible by independent anti-Stratfordian scholars is to be desired.

³ E. J. S[mithson], *Bacon-Shakespeare: An Essay* (London: Schoenstein, 1899). Smithson was so fearful of the social consequences that he held off publication for over a decade.

⁴ Samuel Smith Travers, *Shakespeare's Sonnets: To Whom Were They Addressed?* (Hobart Town, Tasmania, 1881), cited by Begley, *op. cit.*, pp. 364-65. Smith Travers was no relation to Dr. Travers-Smith, at one time married to Hester Dowden, on whom see below. Charles Wisner Barrell certainly knew Begley when he proposed that Oxford wrote the Sonnets to his illegitimate son

(*American Fellowship News-Letter*, February 1942), p. 12, and therefore may have derived telling examples from Smith Travers.

⁵ Thomas Edwards, *Proclus and Cephalus. Narcissus*, ed. Rev. W. E. Buckley for The Roxburghe Club (London: Nichols and Sons, 1878). See also Postscript III in this article. The reference was finally taken up in C. M. Ingleby's *Shakespeare's Centurie of Prayse* (2nd ed., London: 1879), pp. 17-18. The revising editor, Lucy Toulmin Smith, arbitrarily separates the first stanza from the latter two. The only other critic ever to publicly pick up on this reference is Charles Wisner Barrell (*Fellowship Quarterly*, Spring 1948 [pp. 1-7] & Summer, 1948 [pp. 9-12]). The American Society was in the process of breaking up, (I received my copies from Barrell himself); they do not appear to have received general circulation and are never acknowledged by any subsequent writer. Curiously, while Barrell gave his source, he himself did not actually name Dowden as the near-discoverer of the Oxford theory.

⁶ Begley, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-27. Also Bacon's *Nova Resuscitatio* (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), 2:22-30. Begley's identification of Labeo is endorsed, surprisingly, by the Stratfordian H. N. Gibson in *The Shakespeare Claimants* (1962; Reprint, New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1971), pp. 59-65, and was commended by Garnett and Gosse in the first decade of the twentieth century. Alfred W. Pollard, in *The Times Literary Supplement* during the mid-twenties, resurrected the only coherent Stratfordian identification of Labeo as Michael Drayton, a thesis which has been chillingly passed over by his fellow Stratfordians. The present author, with John Michel, tends to come down heavily on the side of Gibson and the Baconians here, contra Charlton Ogburn, Jr., Patrick Buckridge (*The Elizabethan Review*, autumn 1996), and Fred Manzo (*The Elizabethan Review*, autumn 1995).

⁷ Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-41. Begley preferred the claim by Richard Grossart on the pages immediately following (pp. 341-43) that Francis Bacon was the man.

⁸ We suspect that Dr. Owen, an avid bibliophile, saw a copy of John Barclay's *Argenis* (French edition, 1621; 2nd English version, 1629 with revised key), a political *roman à clef* indicating that Elizabeth Tudor had borne an unidentified, but not unidentifiable, child who went to France under an assumed name and there made love to Margaret of Navarre. By an odd coincidence, Bacon, who spent two years in France during the late 1570's and whose brother Anthony's passport (British Museum, Add. MSS. No. 4125, noted by James Phinney Baxter, *The Greatest of Literary Problems*, Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915, pp. 515-16), bore the signatures of the same three lords featured in *Love's Labour's Lost*, was cast for that role in Dr. Owen's cipher narrative. (Baxter is virtually the only Baconian to call attention to the passport, though it is certainly one of their best points.) Bacon's intimate, Ben Jonson is put down in the Stationer's Register, Oct. 2, 1623 as the first would-be English translator of the potentially seditious *Argenis*, though he never

published. The 1629 edition, appearing under other auspices, included a key which identified Queen Elizabeth as a concealed mother. If Owen had fessed up to his actual sources, his theory might have had a less bizarre reception. For a Baconian who believed he had discovered *Argenis*, see Granville C. Cunningham's *Bacon's Secret Disclosed in Contemporary Books* (London, 1911), pp. 128-65.

Bacon's Navarre connection was first discovered by Rev. James Wilmot in the post 1770's. And Abel Lefranc independently rediscovered new Navarre-Shakespeare links in the pre-World War I era through his investigations into the life of William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby. These have been noted by Stratfordian as well as Oxfordian scholars, but none of them, into the 1960's, made any use of his later contributions embodied in *À La Découverte de Shakespeare* (Paris: Edition Albin Michel, 1945), 2:175-272. Dr. Felicia Londré (*The Elizabethan Review*, Spring 1995) is the first academic in English to call attention to these and to Lefranc's important article, "Les Eléments français de 'Peines d'Amour perdues' de Shakespeare" in *La Revue Historique* (Paris, 1936). Despite Lefranc's lucidity, his methods do not readily lend themselves to summary. See also his *Sous le Masque de 'William Shakespeare,'* (2 vols., Paris, 1918-9), 2:1-103. Another of his important books, never discussed by contemporary critics, is *Le Secret de William Stanley* (Bruxelles: L'Édition du 'Flambeaux', 1923).

⁹ There are genuine historical sources behind this wretched phantasmagoria. Briefly, Owen's mad wild and whirling words derive directly from an application of the same French sources which were held by Kenneth Mackenzie and later taken over by Wynn Wescott of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglica. The existence of many manuscripts relating to this subject were revealed by the present writer to its ostensible librarian custodians for the first time. Prior to 1865, the information from the French Masonic groups went directly to Boston where Owen's later sponsor, William Prescott became aware of what was really going on. This information regarding Tarot cards and their relation to a Great Wheel, pre-computer style, also spread to Chicago, Cincinnati, and Detroit with varying forms of accuracy. Circa 1906, not 1909 as usually given, A. E. Waite, a genuine Hermetic scholar, essentially completed the now definitive Tarot pack. He worked on the basis of prior constructions by W. B. Yeats, G. R. S. Mead, Marcus Blackden, Florence Farr, and a black magical pack held by Frederick Holland, now in the SOC.ROS archives. In this system, the gyration of the Wheel through three successive turns is brought to a halt by crossing the Ace of Cups (Holy Grail) upon the Wheel of Fortune.

When Waite heard a crazy American had conjoined the Wheel of Fortune and a chess-move cipher to the Holy Grail, he hastened to the banks of the Wye to communicate with the Prescotts. Dr. Owen was that close to finding out the real secret of the Wheel, i.e., it is an *Ars Memoria* such as those which have recently been discussed by non-occultist Francis Yates. But Waite would have

found Owen beyond enlightenment.

Waite had already traced records to the first known French manuscript on Tarot, ca. 1750. This manuscript material gave the correlation to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, based on the Hebrew work Sepher Yetzirah. Waite left a privately issued elucidation of nineteen pages in the Masonic Library at Freemason's Hall, which was seen by the present writer in the 1980's but has since mysteriously disappeared. Now, to link this back to Shakespeare, we refer the reader to Charles Nicholl's *The Chemical Theatre* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 144 and 151, where he will find a proto-image of Waite's Great Wheel specifically tied to *King Lear*. Nicholl seems unaware of Waite's work, but he should have known of New Critic Robert Heilman's *This Great Stage: image and structure in King Lear* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), which deals at length with the image of the Great Wheel in relation to the zodiacal cycle and the Fool of the Tarot pack, which is numbered "0." Some critics challenge the existence of Tarot cards in Elizabethan England, but if there was a Tarot pack in 1590's London, Shakespeare seems to have been turning a wicked pack of cards. We will bring the wheel to a halt with these magic words from A. E. Waite: "Personally, we think nearly everyone whose name is appended to the title page, even Shakespeare, wrote the works attributed to them, unless of course, they were occult writers, in which case there is no telling what devices they may have resorted to."

¹⁰ History does not record the reaction of Mrs. Besant's fellow free-thinker and former co-tenant, J. M. Robertson, to all of this.

¹¹ A. E. Waite, relates in *Shadows of Life and Thought* (London, 1937), pp. 109-12, how he spent futile years trying to persuade Baconians to stop their abuse of his pioneering works on the Rosicrucians. In the end, after fifty years of protest, Alfred Dodd still twisted Waite's material as badly as Constance Pott did at the beginning.

¹² Sorbonne educated, Mrs. Gallup took charge of Dr. Owen's wheel (1895) when he suffered a breakdown and retreated to Aspen, Colorado to rest, not to treasure-hunt in England, as reported in John Michel's otherwise fine account, *Who Wrote Shakespeare* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), p. 147. When Mrs. Gallup, unaided by Owen, spun the Wheel of Fortune, it really sang, producing two plays, one about Bacon's "grandmother," Anne Boleyn, and great gobs of poetry from Homer's *Iliad*, a complete translation of which was promised within six months. (See J. E. Millet, a Harvard trained classicist and friend of James Phinney Baxter, *Baconiana* [April and October 1896, pp. 92-101 and 225-232] with an example and source material.) Shortly after, when Owen returned, Mrs. Gallup and her sister departed, along with a third, as yet unidentified, assistant. And the wheel was silent.

Mr. Mark Rylance, recently announced a production of one of Mrs. Gallup's plays as the work of Francis Bacon. She, or Bacon, deserves a chance

at a fine production from one of our best living actor-directors. But what do the editors of the *SOS Newsletter* (Fall 1996) deserve, who printed — without informed comment — the claim by Peter Dawkins [head of the Francis Bacon Research Trust in England] that *Anne Boleyn* “is not the only new Shakespeare/Bacon play. More than 10 others have also been unearthed.” Neo-Oxfordians are pitifully ignorant of the common ur-sources from which both their apocryphas recently derive.

¹³ Later works by Dodd give 1931 as date of first publication. But the 1931 edition contains two dedications, one for Easter 1930, the other Easter 1931. It was certainly available — and utilized by Ward *films* in his fatal conversation with Percy Allen (see pages 15-16).

¹⁴ We are dealing here with Baconian Royal Birth theory only in its irrational forms. These are the only ones which have had any social impact, and which alone exert a direct, controlling, and unacknowledged influence on neo-Oxfordian Royal Birth theory. It clarifies the disturbingly similar behavior patterns of the emotionally troubled and sometimes intellectually or financially dishonest people who have recently gravitated to the second, as they previously gravitated to the first. For a concise and reasonable presentation of genuine arguments for the Baconian Royal Birth Theory, see Pauline Holmes, “The Morgan Coleman Manuscript,” *Baconiana* (Jan. 1949). My old friend, an M. A. Wellesley, who kept Dr. Owen’s 400 lb. wheel on her front porch, never published her promised Baconian revisionism. Her trenchantly annotated Baconian library taught me much in my early days.

¹⁵ The first Oxfordian revisionist meetings are chronicled by an unidentified newspaper excerpt from 1930, filed in an envelope of clippings at the Stratford-on-Avon Shakespeare Library under the heading Shakespeare Authorship. They preceded Dodd’s original publication by a few months, but discussion of Dodd’s theories preceded them, and Dodd’s second edition is filled with scores of names in many countries to whom he sent his first edition.

¹⁶ As crypto-Oxfordian C.S. Lewis states it, “What man in the whole world, except a father, or a potential father-in-law, cares whether any other man gets married” (*English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, Oxford, 1954), p. 503.

¹⁷ Baconian Rendell Davies, in his deceptively modest *Notes upon Some of Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (London: Kensington, Cayme Press, 1927) provided a conservative Baconian antidote to Dodd before the fact (as E. W. Smithson had preceded Parker Woodward). But despite a favorable review in *The Times Literary Supplement*, and they seldom favorably reviewed Baconian offerings, he was ignored by all later Baconians, save the ever reliable Roderick Eagle.

¹⁸ Allen remarked of Looney on his death that “he [Looney] disliked controversy; and his disapproval of other men’s conclusions was always shown preferably by silence, rather than by counter-assertion in argument” (*English Fellowship News-Letter*, May 1944), p. 4.

¹⁹ Percy Allen, *Shakespeare Pictorial* (August 1931), p. 16.

²⁰ Percy Allen, *The Case for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as William*

Shakespeare (London: Cecil Palmer, 1930).

²¹ Most of the first, great, generation of Oxfordians passed in rapid succession during World War II, after which the press's attitude quickly altered from friendly-neutral to hostility and actual suppression.

²² Mrs. Bowen received a first edition of Alfred Dodd (1931); pagination documenting her acknowledgment differs in the nine later editions, the last of which is 1945. Though now little remembered, at least by American readers, Mrs. Bowen, otherwise Mrs. Gabrielle M. Long, was a truly distinguished author and deserves a revival. See *American News-Letter* (June 1943), p. 51. Crime aficionados still treasure her *The Lady and the Arsenic*, published under the pseudonym Joseph Shearing.

²³ *The Shakespeare Pictorial*, July 1935.

²⁴ In its crassest form, it is claimed that Oxford and Burghley deliberately attempted to mate Southampton to his half-sister for purposes of financial gain, and then had the nerve to sue him when the young man defaulted. A recent, even more obnoxious, revisionism holds that Elizabeth bore Oxford to Thomas Seymour before begetting Southampton on her eldest son. This semi-pornographic image has been promoted by a perpetual houseguest on the anti-Stratfordian lecture circuit. Our occult mole reveals that the unpublished sources of this theory include copies of Alfred Dodd with the names of Bacon and Leicester struck out, and Oxford and Seymour written in. What happened to the missing 11 years age difference remains a closely-guarded occult secret. This lecturer should acknowledge at least one of his onerous debts, but be that as it may, of one thing we can be certain. Dorothy Ogburn, who wrote that "the *Sonnets*, as Canon Rendall wisely observed, never contain a trace of erotic implication," by which she meant sexual deviation (*op. cit.*, p. 880) would be as grateful to these gentlemen as Elizabeth Wells Gallup was to Parker Woodward and Alfred Dodd.

²⁵ A knowledgeable British Oxfordian, from the 1940 period, long ago gave the present author a highly circumstantial account of later researchers writing to the widows of Col. and Capt. Ward, only to discover they were addressing the same woman. However, he cannot at present recollect the incidents. The death of the first (and perhaps only) Mrs. Col. Ward is recorded in the *American Shakespeare News-Letter* (June '42), p. 54. She apparently died near the end of '41, and it is odd that there was no English Oxfordian obituary. We intend to clarify this on our next visit to London.

²⁶ Allen, *Anne Cecil*. The *Midsummer Night's Dream* references are on pp. 69, 73, 75-107, 148, 188, 212, 234. I want to thank Dr. E. Jimmie Stein for the use of her copy of this scarce volume. Dr. Stein's extensive research on Shakespeare, Oxford, and Elizabethan colonization deserves publication.

²⁷ Lefranc, *À La Découverte de Shakespeare*, 1:419-518. Lefranc and Col. Ward alike are understandably ignored by neo-Oxfordians who are never at ease in the presence of any intelligence superior to their own.

²⁸ *The Shakespeare Pictorial* (July 1935).

²⁹ The complete title of this fifteen-page pamphlet is *An Enquiry Into the Relations Between Lord Oxford as 'Shakespeare,' Queen Elizabeth, and the Fair Youth of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, n.d. It is now available in the British Library after many years of misfiling, but not readily available for transcription purposes to a non-resident. Therefore we have not directly utilized it.

³⁰ Incredible as it may seem, Barrell never knew of Col. Ward's *père* seminal identification of Anne Vavasour, Tom Knyvet, and, by inference, the little changeling boy (*Shakespeare Pictorial*, August 1931). He attributes the discovery to Mrs. Eva Turner Clark in her 1933 book, *Shakespeare's Satirical Comedy 'Love's Labour's Lost'*, which started him off (*American News-Letter*, April 1942), p. 28.

³¹ *American Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter* (February 1942), p. 16. Unfortunately, Barrell's book about Anne Vavasour and her son, which was slated for publication in 1946, never appeared. An extremely lucid prospectus appeared in *Tomorrow* (New York: Feb., March 1946). Barrell lived until nearly 1980, but without any further publication after the sudden closure of the *American Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly* in 1948. His massive archives on the family of Edward de Vere, the x-rays of the Shakespeare portraits, and much else appear to be irrevocably lost due to immediate dispersal after his death (private communication from Dr. Ruth Loyd Miller, who was to have received them). The present writer attempted to trace the *Scientific American* archives concerning the three disputed Shakespeare portraits and discovered that they were transferred to a warehouse when the magazine changed hands in 1948 and were eventually, so far as can be ascertained, destroyed with the rest of the old files in the 50's. Barrell still believed they could be gotten from the magazine when I phoned him in 1966-67. Our thanks to Kenneth Rummell, a friend and former editor for *Scientific American*, on his extensive investigation which went far beyond the call of duty.

³² The eminent Hyder Edward Rollins vies with A. L. Rowse and Charles Hamilton as the Stratfordian crank of the century for implying in his *New Variorum* edition of the *Sonnets* (1944) that the second Edward de Vere never existed.

³³ Posthumously published, *The Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly* (April, 1944), p. 23. Bear in mind that Looney praised Barrell for his general achievement in forging from many newly discovered records an extended series of successive historical links to what Looney and Canon Rendall regarded was an already largely predetermined *Sonnet* sequence provided by Thomas Thorpe. Looney could not have seen Barrell's still unpublished reassignments to specific recipients, i.e. forty-three sonnets to Anne Vavasour (*Fellowship Quarterly*, June 1942), p. 47, and fifty-three sonnets to the second Edward de Vere (*ibid.*, August 1942), p. 67, but considering Looney's conservative bent, he would not have endorsed such sweeping internal revisionism as

justified by the external facts yet available to the readers. But the thrust of Barrell's argument he considered "conclusive." When one neo-Oxfordian had the gall to state that Looney leaned toward the Tudor Rose theory at the end of his life, it is significant that every one of his fellow true-believers allowed this statement to stand unchallenged. Is this ignorance or deliberate deceit?

³⁴ *Op. cit.* (1st edition, New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1984), p. 569.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

³⁶ Judge Thomas McAllistair of the Michigan Federal Circuit (private conversation, Sligo, Ireland, August 1967) recalled meeting Looney at a soirée attended by T. S. Eliot in London during the late 1930's. Eliot was fine, but the jurist found Looney "the most memorable literary mind I ever met."

³⁷ We have been trying to find a copy since the early 1960's, and no one, including Dorothy Ogburn, has ever been able to produce it. It is not in any American catalogue, the British Library, nor in the respective Oxfordian collections held by L.L. Ware or Christopher Dams in England. Hopefully, some reader may supply one. Even if it should contain better material, such material, being unknown, is irrelevant to a contemporary Tudor Rose critique.

³⁸ The Ditchley portrait appears as a plate in *Talks with Elizabethans*; see also *This Star of England* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1952), p. 1,200. It shows a gigantic Queen Elizabeth towering across a map of England, with many towns beneath her feet. Allen and Dorothy Ogburn both thought she was standing between the towns of Oxford and Southampton. (Neither town appears to this observer to be strategically placed.) Allen and Dorothy also believed Elizabeth to be wearing a maternity dress, a theory on which I am not qualified to pass. Allegedly, Allen referred to this theory in the missing pamphlet. However, I remember a hilarious afternoon with Dorothy and my Baconian friend, Sylvia Spencer Ruggles, in which they discoursed at length – and at rapid fire speed – on how Elizabethan fashions allowed social mobility and concealment far into pregnancy. Hopefully, this went in Dorothy's unpublished volume, which is on deposit at Emery University. It is the kind of exuberant improvisation – royal birth theory aside, that made knowing Dorothy really worthwhile.

³⁹ Barclay's *Argenis* (see note 8) does give some genuine comfort to Baconians, but how can it help Southampton's case? He was under 6 years of age when Elizabeth's boy was allegedly cutting up in Navarre.

⁴⁰ The Wolfe and Knight information, not otherwise recorded, came to me from Mrs. Dowden's daughter. Wolfe, who wanted to trace his 18th century heritage for a never-finished novel, presumably communicated by letter from the United States. Her mother daily burned a potentially lucrative income in autographed correspondence to forestall charges that she might be building up files on her clients. All letters were shredded and went into the waste basket as soon as the appointments were booked. Her biography appeared in the early 50's, but as it was uniformly denounced as inaccurate and misleading by family and friends interviewed, I do not use it.

⁴¹ Dodd, *Immortal Master* (London: Rider & Co., n.d. [1943]). Dodd optimistically states that even considering the shortness of the session, it was evidential, and that, since they shook hands, they parted friends. But his own description of her “frigidity” and “silence,” as well as the fact that this ardent spiritualist never booked a second sitting, says otherwise.

⁴² W. B. Yeats’ “Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient” appeared in *Poetry* (Chicago, Dec., 1934) and also *The London Mercury* that same month. It was re-published in every subsequent edition of his works. Readers unversed in theology must understand that all orthodox Christian bodies accept the doctrine of the masculine Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the triune God. The Eastern Church, which built its greatest cathedral (Haiga Sophia at Constantinople) to Holy Mother Wisdom has often emphasized the Eternal Feminine, who, despite her sanctity, remains outside of, and subordinate to, the masculine Godhead. In Yeats’ poem, which Mrs. Dowden evidently knew, a pre-Roman Catholic hermit rages against the Latin doctrine of the Trinity and affirms the pagan Gnostic heresy that the Holy Spirit is feminine, Mother-Wife to the Father and the Son. Mrs. Dowden, who was a deep student of Greek neo-Platonism (personal information from her friend, Mrs. Sophie Jacobs of Goulanders Green: interviews, 1970) provides Allen with an Oxford who is analogous to Creator-God, a Southampton who is Heir to his heavenly kingdom, the new creative dispensation, and Elizabeth, a ferocious Earth Mother and harlot, wife and Virgin Mother, who is, in the end redeemed, and who redeems them all by her quality of essential wisdom.

⁴³ *Talks*, p. 196.

⁴⁴ There is no printed treatment of this dominant Yeatsian theme. However, the reader can refer to Ron Heisler’s excellent and independent article “The Thirteenth Aeon” in *Yeats Annual* (New York: Macmillan, 1998). I have been lecturing on the subject for thirty years and will give a succinct account in my long-delayed *The Evidence of Things Unseen: W. B. Yeats and the Mystery of the Tarot Dance*.

⁴⁵ William W. Kennawell, *The Quest at Glastonbury* (New York: Helix Press, 1965), the only currently available life of Bligh Bond. Bond unwittingly gave Mrs. Dowden a great gift. While excavating Glastonbury Abbey (1907-1919) he became acquainted with a sometimes drunken medieval monk named Johannes, now doing penance as a psychic control. Seeking further aid in his genuinely important Glastonbury excavations, he approached Mrs. Dowden back in London. She had little to offer him, but much to his distress, Johannes took to modern urban life, abandoned him, and stayed on with Mrs. Dowden for the rest of her days. Much later, the three of them produced *The Book of Philip the Deacon* (London: Rider, 1932) to decent critical notices. Allen’s collaboration with Mrs. Dowden received a less favorable reception. See also Allen’s obituary of his friend in the *English News-Letter* (May, 1945), and Stephen Schwartz’ *The Secret Vaults of Time* (New York: Grosset and Dunlop,

1978), portrait of Bond, p. 2; self-portrait by Johannes, p. 35.

⁴⁶ *Talks*, pp. 41-2, 154, 157, 175.

⁴⁷ B. N. De Luna, *The Queen Declined* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970). In *The Unfortunate Traveler*. Thomas Nashe plainly indicates that Avisia really was a tavern slut. This almost ignored reference is worth returning to. Meanwhile, see Alden Brooks' *Will Shakspeare: Factotum and Agent*, (New York: Roundtable Press, 1937), pp. 36-9. In that case, Will Shakspeare could have known Southampton — in the role of his procurer. Ward and Allen's re-discovery of an Avisia in George Chapman's *An Humorous Day's Mirth (An Enquiry)*, p. 15) could yet prove the one good thing to come out of the Royal Birth mare's nest.

⁴⁸ Personal account from my old neighbor, Mrs. Lennox Robinson, née Dolly Travers-Smith, of Monkstown, County Dublin. Our first interview occurred in late December 1967, and in a lifetime of meeting remarkable people, I never heard more remarkable tales than on that night. John Michel received a rich and fascinating letter of reminiscences last year from an Allen relative, who is bitter toward Mrs. Dowden. However, Mr. Allen's relative was not a party to the transactions, and the unanimous testimony from the surviving witnesses directly involved is that Mrs. Dowden's tried her best and that was just not good enough to permanently salvage him.

⁴⁹ *This Star*, p. 927fn. This misstatement is expanded by William Plumer Fowler, *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters* (Portsmouth, NH: P. E. Randall, 1986), p. 168. Mr. Fowler simply relied on the senior Ogburns' non-research without a first-hand check, and he has been followed by many neo-Oxfordians who have never checked his non-research either.

⁵⁰ I believe absolutely in my friends' integrity. But knowing their high morality, I can only assume that the Royal Birth theory was of little importance to them during most of the course of their comparatively brief but wide-ranging venture into Oxfordianism. This is confirmed by letters from Charlton Ogburn, Sr., which I still hold, dating from the early 50's. A British correspondent had sent me extracts from *The Shakespeare Pictorial* re: Capt. Ward and Allen's theory that Sir Walter Raleigh wrote *The Tempest*, a subject which is alluded to in three separate issues. Mr. Ogburn, Sr. wrote back (and how kind of him to maintain correspondence with a 12-year old farmboy) that he was unaware that Ward and Allen did hold to the theory. He also failed to identify my request for the sources embedded in the appendix to *Talks With Elizabethans* as the previously published and now missing Allen pamphlets. Dorothy was, of necessity, the research half of the team, and in addition to typing the entire manuscript three times, she was compelled to maintain a very active social schedule throughout, from which her research inevitably suffered.

⁵¹ Their friend Charles Wisner Barrell had been in correspondence with Allen while investigating the Ashbourne portrait (*American News-Letter*, February 1940), p. 3. And it is likely that Allen would have sent his fellow commentator a copy of his pamphlet, *An Enquiry*.

⁵² Secondary sources give this alternative title for the missing manuscript.

⁵³ Ogburn, Jr., *op cit.*, p. 148.

⁵⁴ The correct title is *George Gascoigne* [which is in fact a reproduction of an Elizabethan autograph] [*April 1562 to January 1, 1578 / or / EDWARD DE VERE / seventeenth Earl of Oxford / 1550-1604*. (Washington, D. C.: W. F. Roberts, 1930), pp. iii, 217. The Ogburns cite this under *George Gascoigne* without date or place of publication in the bibliography, yet another indication that the Royal Birth theory was elaborated with haste and too late for assimilation into the overall structure of a formerly better constructed book.

⁵⁵ The Ogburns rejected a lucrative offer from one of the best-known publishing houses in America rather than delete their Royal Birth conspiracy sections.

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 298.

⁵⁷ *Op cit.*, p. 295.

⁵⁸ Notably *Baconiana*, October 1945, p. 160; April 1947, pp. 99-105; October 1947, p. 225. On the Sonnets, the Woodwards and the non-existent "Kay" Cipher which set off Dodd, Allen, and indirectly, the Ogburns, see further *Baconiana*, July 1946, pp. 129-132; and above all, pp. 182-4, a controversial masterpiece which was inexcusably unknown to the Stratfordian Friedmans when they wrote their much clumsier and unreliable account *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined* (Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. 170-1, 224.

⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 55-70.

⁶⁰ Woodward on Lyly, *op cit.*, pp. 107-9; Mrs. Pott, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

⁶¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 20. For Oxford as Lyly, *op. cit.*, p. 25; for Oxford as Gascoigne, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁶² Noted by Looney (1st ed., 1920), p. 246. Looney listed his source as the *Calendared State Papers, Domestic* 1601-3, p. 56. Also noted by Kathleen LeRiche (*English News-Letter*, September 1953), p. 5, debating the Ogburns, but they both missed the link, supplied by Mrs. Dowden, to the earliest anti-Stratfordian identification yet found.

Patron Page

Charles Champlin

Paul Nitze

Richard Clement

Sally Mosher

Edith Duffey

Richard Roe

Eileen Duffin

Martha Walker

Sally Mosher

John Wood

Patricia A. Ingram

The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded: King Lear

Delia Bacon

My abridgement of *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakspeare Unfolded* approximate half of the original edition of 1857. However, all of the abridged version was written by Delia Bacon. Though I've deleted and juxtaposed her words I've added none of my own.

One of the mysteries of the Shakespeare authorship mystery is why this task hasn't been undertaken before. Nathaniel Hawthorne, who arranged for its publication and provided its Preface, pleaded with the author to "shovel the excesses out of the book." He admitted he had only read isolated chapters of it. Ralph Waldo Emerson who stated that the work "opened the subject so that it can never again be closed" had delved into even less of it. More essentially, the excesses made it easy for professional critics to dismiss its contentions without considering them.

Delia Bacon was not blameless. Radical and original concepts demand a clarity of presentation. Her torrential paragraphs, so often repetitive, demanded a scholar's patience and persistence. Nor could many readers match her classical knowledge. And so her masterwork reached but a small minority of the audience for which it was intended.

The extracts which appear in this journal have been well selected by the editor, for it is Delia's exploration of King Lear which best expresses her contentions.

The "Leir" legend has long been a rich source to fictioneers, from popular hacks to literary prizewinners. But none have ventured beneath the surface of

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the story, so that it remains a classical family tragedy within conventional bounds. In the judgment of one esteemed Elizabethan scholar "*King Lear* is Shakespeare's play about retirement." But Delia considered it to be much more than that. To her it was "the grand social tragedy about the human social need in all its circumstances." Viewing the title character in the light of Francis Bacon's "prerogative instances," she found him to be "an impersonation of absolutism—the very embodiment of pure will and tyranny in their most frantic form."

Similarly, she discovered in other characters and other plays more undercurrents of Bacon's *Great Instauration*. She could not accept that they were merely an explosion of genius motivated by financial gain, but were a deliberate desideratum for mankind.

In the final paragraph of Hawthorne's Preface he wrote "It is for the public to say whether my countrywoman has proved her theory." I hope my abridgement will help them to do so.

Elliott Baker
London

Lear's Philosopher

Thou 'dst shun a bear,
But if thy way lay towards the raging sea,
Thou 'dst meet the bear i' the mouth.

Chapter I Philosophy in the Palace

I think the king is but a man, as I am — King Henry
They told me I was everything — Lear

It was not possible that the divine right of kings be openly dealt with in the presence of royalty itself, except by persons endowed with extraordinary privileges and immunities. Such persons were not wanting in the retinue of that sovereignty, working in disguise and laying the foundations of that throne in the thoughts of men which would replace old principalities and powers.

Poor Bolinbroke, fevered with the weight of his ill-got crown, might surely be allowed to mutter to himself, in the solitude of his own bed-chamber, a few general reflections on the quite incontestable fact that nature refused to recognize this artificial difference in men, classing the monarch with his poorest subject. The poet appears to have had some experience of this mortal

ill. He might seem, to a severely critical mind, to pursue his philosophical inquiry a little too curiously into the awful secrets of majesty, openly searching what Lord Bacon reverently tells us the Scriptures pronounce to be inscrutable, namely the heart of kings.

The profoundly philosophical suspicion that a rose or violet did actually smell to a person occupying this sublime position very much as it did to another would, in the mouth of a common man, have been sufficient to make a star-chamber matter. That thorough-going analysis of the trick and pageant of majesty would come only from the mouth of the brave and gentle hero of Agincourt. He says, talking in the disguise of a private, "I think the King is but a man as I am, the violet smells to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions. His ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness, he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet, when they stoop, they stoop with the light wing. When he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are."

In the same scene, the royal philosopher soliloquises on the same delicate question. "And what have kings that privates have not, too, save ceremony,—save general ceremony? And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?—What is thy soul of adoration?" A grave question. Let us see how a poet can answer it.

Art thou aught else but place, degree and form,
Creating awe and fear in other men?
Wherein, thou art less happy, being feared,
Than they in fearing?

(Again and again, this man has told us that he cherished no thought of harm to the king; and those who know what criticisms of the state he had authorized have charged him with falsehood and perjury on that account. But he thinks that wretched victim, on whose head the crown of an arbitrary rule is placed, is the one whose case most of all requires relief. He is the one, in this theory, who suffers from this unnatural state of things, not less, but more than his meanest subjects.)

What drink'st thou oft instead of homage sweet
But poison'd flattery? O! be sick, great greatness,
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure.
Thinkest thou the fiery fever will go out
With titles blown from adulation?
Will it give place to flexure and low bending?

Though the author, for reasons of his own, has seen fit to put them in blank verse, they are questions of a truly scientific character, questions of vital consequence to all men. But here it is the physical difference which accompa-

nies this so immense human distinction, which he appears to be in quest of. It is the control over nature with which these "farical titles" invest their possessor that he is pertinaciously bent upon ascertaining. We shall find that this is not a casual incident of the character or the plot, a thing which belongs to the play and not to the author. This is a poet who is perpetually haunted with the impression that those who assume a divine right to control and dispose of their fellow-men, ought to exhibit some sign of their authority; some superior abilities, some magical control, some light and power that other men have not. How he came by any such notions, the critic of his works is not bound to show. But the poet of Shakespere's stage, be he who he may, is in some way deeply occupied with this question. It is a poet who is possessed with the idea that the true human leadership ought to consist in the ability to extend the empire of man over nature, in the ability to unite and control men and lead them in battalions against those common evils which infest the human conditions and to the conquest of those blessings which the human race have always been vainly crying for.

When, by the mystery of his profession and art, he contrives to get the cloak of factitious royalty about him, he asks questions which another man would not think of putting. Walking up and down the stage in King Hal's mantle, then, that very dubious question—

Canst thou when thou command'st the beggar's knee,
Command the health of it?

What mockery of power is it? This might have seemed to savour somewhat of irony. It might have sounded like a taunt upon the royal helplessness. Thus it is that THE KING dares pursue the subject, answering his own question.

No, thou proud dream
That playst so subtly with a king's repose;
I am a king that find thee; and I know
"Tis not THE BALM, THE SCEPTRE, and THE BALL,
THE SWORD, THE MACE, THE CROWN IMPERIAL,
the inter-tissued ROBE of gold and pearl,
the FARCED TITLE—

Mark it—the FARCED title! A bold word, even with a king to authorize it.

Not all these laid in BED MAJESTICAL,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave
Who, with a body filled, and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest crammed with distressful bread...

What malice could a philosophic poet bear a wretched fellow that cannot sleep, that lies on the stage in *Henry the Fourth*, with the crown on his pillow, pining for the Elysium that his meanest subject commands? Whatever view we may take of it, this is a comprehensive exhibition of the mere pageant of royalty. The liberty of a great Prince to repeat to himself, in the course of a stroll through his own camp, certain philosophical conclusions could hardly be called in question. As to that most extraordinary conversation in which, by means of his disguise, he becomes a participator, it would ill become anyone to take exceptions to it. Yet it is a conversation in which common soldiers are permitted to speak their minds freely. It is a dialogue in which these men are allowed to discuss one of the most important institutions of their time from an ethical point of view. And it was none other than the field of Agincourt that was subjected to this philosophic inquiry. It was under the cover of that renowned triumph that these soldiers could venture to search so deeply the question of war in general. It was in the person of its imperial hero that the statesman could venture to touch so boldly an institution that gave to one man the power to involve nations in such horrors.

It is here that the king proceeds to make that important disclosure that all his senses have but human conditions, and that all his affections, though higher mounted, stoop with the like wing. He pursues this question of the royal responsibility until he arrives at the conclusion that every subject's duty is the king's, but every subject's soul is his own. He shows that there is but one ultimate sovereignty, one to which the king and his subjects are alike amenable, which pursues them everywhere with its demands and reckonings and from whose violated laws there is no escape. The king struggles vainly against the might of the universal nature. But he might as well "go about to turn the sun to ice by fanning its face with a peacock's feather."

It is easy to see what this particular form of writing offered to an author who wished to "infolde" his meaning. Many things, dangerous in themselves, could be shuffled in under cover of an artistic effect. And thus King Lear—that impersonation of absolutism, the very embodiment of pure will and tyranny—is taken out from that hot bath of flatteries to which he had been so long accustomed. With speeches of his supremacy, copied well nigh verbatim from those which Elizabeth's courtiers habitually addressed to her, still ringing in his ears, he is hurled out into a single-handed contest with the elements and anatomized alive before our eyes. Once conceive of the possibility of presenting the action and dumb show of this piece upon the stage at that time and the dialogue, with its illimitable freedoms, follows without any difficulty. For the speeches the monarch makes, with all the levelling of their philosophy, with all the unsurpassable boldness of their political criticism, are too natural and proper to the circumstances to excite any surprise or question.

A king, nurtured in the flatteries of the palace, was unlearned enough in the nature of things to suppose that the name of a king was anything but a shadow

when the power which sustained its prerogative was withdrawn. Such a one appeared to the poet to be engaging in an experiment very similar to the one in progress in his time, in that old, decayed, riotous form of military government which had chosen its dependence on the popular will and respect as fitting for its suppression of the national liberties. It was, of course, modified in the play or it would not have been possible to produce it then. But traced to its natural conclusion in the development of the plot, the presence of an insulted, trampled, outcast majesty on the stage furnishes a cover of which the poet is continually availing himself for putting the case he is always pleading. In the poet's hands, the debased and outcast king becomes the impersonation of a debased and violated state, the victim, too, of a blindness and fatuity on its own part, but not — that is the poet's word—NOT yet irretrievable.

Thou shalt find
I will resume that shape, which thou dost think
I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.

But that constitutes only a subordinate part of that great play, a play which comprehends in its new philosophical reaches the most radical questions of a practical human science, questions which the modern ages at the moment of its awakening, found itself already compelled to grapple with.

Chapter II Unaccommodated Man

Consider him well. Three of us are sophisticated.

This is the grand social tragedy. It is the tragedy of an unlearned human society. It is the tragedy of a civilization in which the grammar and the relations of sounds and abstract notions to each other have sufficed to absorb the attention of the learned; a civilization in which the social elements, the parts of life and their unions and their prosody, have been left to spontaneity and empiricism and all kinds of rude, arbitrary, idiomatic conjunctions and fortuitous rules; a civilization in which the learning of "words" is invented and the learning of "things" omitted.

There was but one language in which the speaker for countless hearts, tortured and broken on the rude machinery of unlearned social customs and lawless social forces, could tell its story. His illustrated book of it comes to us filled with his ever living subjects and resounding with the tragedy of their complainings. It requires but a little reading of that book to find that the author of it is a philosopher who is strongly disposed to ascertain the limits of that thing in nature which men call fortune. He is greatly of the opinion that the combined

and legitimate use of those faculties with which man is beneficently “armed against the diseases of the world” would limit those fortuities and accidents and vicissitudes that men, in their indolent despair, charge to Fate or ascribe to Providence. This philosopher borrows an ancient fable to teach us that this is not the kind of submission which is pleasing to God, that it is not the kind of suffering that will ever secure his favour.

The weakness and ignorance and misery of the natural man—the misery too of the artificial man as he is, the human liability to injury and wrong, the unborn pre-destined human arts and excellencies which man must struggle to reach—that is the scientific notion which lies at the bottom of this grand ideal representation. It is the human social need, clearly sketched, laid out scientifically as the basis of the human social art. In the poetic representation of that state of things which was to be redressed, the central social figure must, of course, have its place. It is the Poet, his new movements hidden under its old garb, who comes upon the selfish, arrogant old despot in the palace and prescribes to him a course of treatment. And the royal patient, once it has taken effect, is ready to issue it from the hovel’s mouth in the form of a general prescription and state ordinance.

Take physic, POMP;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou may’st shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.
Oh, I have taken too little care of THIS!

This is that Poet who represents his method of inquiry and investigation to the eye. This is that same Poet who surprises a queen in her swooning passion of grief and bids her murmur to us her recovering confession.

No more, but e’en a woman; and commanded
By such poor passion, as the maid that milks
And does the meanest chares.

The first perception of a falling off in the ceremonious affection due to majesty is so faint that Lear dismisses it from his thought. The process continues through all its swift dramatic gradations to the direct abatement of regal dignities. “It is worse than murder,” the poor king cries in the anguish of his slaughtered dignity and affection. So bent is the Poet upon this analytic process that he seems at one moment to be giving a literal finish to his process. But the fool’s scruples interfere with the philosophical humor of the king, and the presence of Mad Tom in his blanket suffices to complete the demonstration. It is the king who generalizes. It is in the tempest that Lear finds occasion to give out the Poet’s text. “Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou owest

the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the cat no perfume:—Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated. Thou art the thing itself. Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal, as thou art. Off, off you lendings."

It is man in his relation to nature, in his dependence on artificial aid, that this tempest wakes and brings out. "The naked creature" were better in his grave than to answer with his uncovered body that extremity of the skies "that doth from his senses take all feeling, else save what beats there." It is the personal weakness, the moral and intellectual as well as the bodily frailty, which are common to the King in his palace and Tom o' Bedlam in his hovel. It is this exquisite human frailty and susceptibility, still unprovided for, that fills the play throughout with the outcry of its anguish.

Thus it is that this poor king must be brought out into the wild uproar of nature, stripped of his last adventitious aid and reduced to the authority and forces that nature gave him, ready in his frenzy to second the poet's intent. All his artificial, social personality already dissolved, all his natural social ties torn and bleeding within him, there is yet another kind of trial for him as the royal representative of the human conditions. For the universal interest of this experiment arises from the fact that it is not merely as the king that his illustrious form stands to undergo this fierce analysis, but as the representative of that outward life which all men carry about with them, incorporating in their very personality the prejudices and passions of others and the variable tide of this world's fortunes.

The fact that this blow to his state is dealt to him by those to whom nature had so deeply bound him is that which overwhelms the sufferer. It is that which he seeks to understand, but his mind cannot master it. His brain gives way, the mental confusion begins. The poet takes pains to clear this complication. It is the wound in the affections which untunes the jarring senses of "this child-changed father." It is that which invades his identity. "Are you our daughter? Does any one here know me?" That is the frozen wonder which Goneril's first rude assault brings on him. He curses her, but his curses do not sever the tie.

But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter.

Or rather a disease that's in my flesh

Which I must needs call mine.

Filial ingratitude!

Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand

For lifting food to it?

This is the poet's conception of man as he is, not the abstract man of the schools, nor the logical man that the Realists and Nominalists went to blows for. As to the man of the old philosophy, "His bones were marrowless, his blood was cold, he had no speculation in those eyes that he did glare with." The New Philosopher will have no such skeletons in his system. He is getting his general

man out of particular cases, buiding him up solid from a basis of natural history. There will be no question as to whether he is or is not. "For I do take," says the Advancer of Learning, "the consideration in general, and at large, of Human Nature, to be fit to be emancipated and made a knowledge by itself."

This particular point which poor Lear is illustrating here, "that our affections carry themselves beyond us," is the view the same Poet gives in accounting for Ophelia's madness.

Nature is fine in love; and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself,
After the thing it loves.

Lear searches to the quick the secrets of this "broken-heartedness," this ill to which the human species is notoriously liable.

Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,—
O that way madness lies; let me shun that,
No more of that.

While he is still undergoing the last extreme of the suffering which the human wrong is capable of inflicting on the affections, he comes in the Poet's hands to exhibit the unexplored depth of that which casts him out from the family of man and leaves him to contend alone with great nature and her unrelenting consequences.

To wilful men
The injuries that they themselves procure,
Must be their school-masters,—

is the point which the philosophic Regan makes. But while the Poet notes the special relationship, he does not limit his humanities to the ties of blood or household sympathies or social gradations.

Because this representation is artistic and dramatic and not simply historical, the Poet must exhibit in dramatic appreciable figures the undefinable historical suffering of years. The wildest threats which nature in her terrors makes to man had to be incorporated in this great philosophical piece. In all the mad anguish of that ruined greatness and wronged natural affection the Poet, relentless as fortune in her sternest moods, will bring out his great victim and consign him to the rain and the lightning and the thunder and bid his senses undero their "horrible pleasure." For the senses, scorned as they had been in philosophy, have their full honest report to make to us. And the design of this piece required that the grand departments of human need should be brought together in this one man's experience so that a deliberate comparison can be

instituted between them.

The Poet will tell us plainly, once and for all, whether man is in any condition to dispense with the Science and the Art which puts him into intelligent and harmonious relations with nature in general. It was necessary to the purpose of the play to exhibit the extreme of that social evil which ignorant and barbarous ages build under the tyranny of our fine institutions. The careful reader of this play will find that the need of arts is that which is set forth in it, the need of arts more nearly matched with the subtlety of nature. But let us collect the results of this experiment.

Raised by that storm of grief and indignation into a companionship with the wind and rain and lightning and thunder, the king strives in his little world of man to out-scorn these elements. This is the experiment which the philosopher will try in the presence of his audience. With anguish in his heart, the crushed majesty, the stricken old man, the child-wounded father, laughs at the pains of the senses. The physical distress is welcome to him. He calls to the unconscious, soulless elements and bids them to do their worst.

Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.

That is the argument. This is a distinction appreciable to the human mind.

I never gave you kingdoms, called you children;
You owe me no subscription; why then let fall
Your horrible pleasure?

When the storm has done its work and he is faint with struggling with its fury, he still maintains the argument.

Thou thinkest 'tis much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin; so 'tis to thee.
But where the greater malady is fixed,
The lesser is scarce felt.
 The tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
Save what beats there.
 Pour on, I will endure,
In such a night as this.

When the shelter he is at last forced to seek is found, he shrinks back into the storm again because "it will not give him leave to think on that which hurts him more." So nicely does the Poet balance these ills and report the swaying moment. It is a poet who does not take commonplace opinions on this or any other such subject. It would have been more in accordance with the old poetic notions if this poor king had maintained his ground without any misgiving. But

this is a poet of a new order. Though his verse is not without certain sublimities of its own, he is observing nature and reporting it as it is. Notwithstanding all the poetry of that passionate defiance, it is the physical storm that triumphs in the end. The contest between that little world of man and the great outdoor world of nature was too unequal.

Man's nature cannot carry
The affliction nor the fear.

Unable to contend any longer with "the fretful element," "exposed to feel what wretches feel," he finds at last that art—the wretch's art—that can make vile things precious. No longer clamoring for "the additions of a kind," but glad to divide with his meanest subject that shelter which the outcast seeks on such a night, we have reached a point where the action of the piece becomes luminous and hardly needs the player's eloquence to tell us what it means. The author of *The Advancement of Learning* remarks that a representation, by means of these "transient hieroglyphics," is much more moving to the sensibilities and leaves a more vivid and durable impression on the memory than the most eloquent statement in mere words. "What is sensible always strikes the memory more strongly, and sooner impresses itself than what is intellectual. Thus the memory of brutes is excited by sensible, but not by intellectual things." And thus he proposes to impress that class which Coriolanus speaks of, "whose eyes are more learned than their ears," to whom "action is eloquence."

When the road from the palace to the hovel is laid open, when the hovel where Tom O' Bedlam is nestling in the straw is produced on the stage and the King stoops to creep into its mouth, we do not need a chorus to interpret for us or to wait for the Poet's own deferred exposition to seize the obvious meanings. One catches that there is something going on in this play which is not all play, something which "the groundlings' were not expected to get in their six-penn'orth" at the first performance. That witty and splendid company who made up the Christmas party at Whitehall on the occasion of its first exhibition there, rustling in silk and glittering in wealth that the alchemy of the storm had not tired, were not informed of it, though there was a gentleman of blood and breeding among them who could have told them what it meant.

They told me I was everything.

Storm-battered as he is, the poor King shrinks back from the shelter he had bid his loving attendants to bring him to. Why? Because he has not told us why he is there. This one man's tragedy is not the tragedy that this Poet's soul is big with. It is the tragedy of the Many, not the One, the tragedy that is the rule, not the exception. The Monarch is at the door of the Many. The scientific Poet has

had his eye on that structure and will make of it a thing of wonder that shall drive our entomologists and conchologists to despair and drive them off the stage with their curiosities and marvels. There is no need of a Poet's going to the supernatural for unemployed machinery. "There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out."

The Monarch has come down from that dizzy height on the Poet's errand. He is there to illustrate that grave abstract learning which the Poet has put on another page. Notwithstanding the learned airs it has, it is not learnign but "hte husk and shell" of it. This philosopher puts it down as a primary Article of Science that governments should be based on a scientific acquaintance with "the natures, dispositions, necessities and discontents of the people." In his *Advancement of Learning*, he suggests that, considering the means of ascertaining them at the disposal of the government, these points "out to be." He puts the case of discovering much that was new in the course of an accidental personal descent into the lower and more inaccessible regions of the Common Weal. This is the crystal which proves the most transparent for him.

The Monarch is at the hovel's door, but he cannot enter. There is no shelter for him in this Poet's economy because the great lesson of state has entered his soul. He is thinking of "the Many," he has forgotten "the One." He thinks it selfish to engross the luxury of the precious straw while he has subjects with senses like his own still out in this same storm unbonneted. In the searching delicacy of that feeling with which he now scrutinizes their case, they seem to him less able than himself to resist its elemental tyranny. It is this strangely philosophic king who is chosen by the Poet as the chief commentator and expounder of that new political and social doctrine which the action of this play is suggesting.

In that one night's personal experience, the king has been taking lessons in the art of majesty. The alchemy of it has robbed him of the external adjuncts of a king, but the sovereignty of Mercy, the divine right of Pity, the majesty of Human Kindness breathes through his lips from the Poet's heart.

I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.
 Poor, naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm.—

There are no empty phrases in this prayer. The petitioner knows the meaning of each word in it:

How shall your housless heads and unfed sides,
 Your looped and windowed raggedness defend you
 From seasons such as these? Oh, I have taken
 Too little care of this.

It is never the custom of this author to leave the diligent student of his performances in any doubt whatever as to his meaning. It is a rule that everything in the play shall speak and reverberate his purpose. He has the Teachers trick of repetition, but he is so rich in magical resources that he does not often find it necessary to weary the sense with sameness. He is prodigal in variety. It is a Proteus repetition. But his charge to Ariel in getting up his Masques always is,

Bring a corollary,
Rather than want a spirit.

It would be dangerous, not merely wearisome, to bring too near together those sentences wherein the scanses of meaning lie packed. The curtain must fall and rise again, ere the outcast duke, his eyes gouged out by tyranny, can dare to echo the thoughts of the outcast king. Turned forth to smell his way to Dover, led by one whose qualification for leadership is that he is "Madman and Beggar, too," Gloucester explains it to us.

't is the time's plague when madmen lead the blind.

Thus it is that this secret understanding with the king betrays itself.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Gloucester. | Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man That slaves your ordinance, that will not see Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly; So distribution should undo excess, And each man have enough. |
| Lear. | Oh I have taken Too little care of this. Take physic, Pomp; Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel, Thou thou may'st shake the superflux to them, And show the Heavens more just. |

It is very seldom that two men in real life, coincide so exactly in their trains of thought and in the niceties of their expression in discussing it. The emphasis is deep indeed when this author graves his meaning with such a repetition enforcing the philosophic subtleties. He is abroad in this play, full of errands to wilfull men, charged with coarse lessons to those who will learn through the senses only great Nature's lore—that "slave Heaven's ordinance—that will not see, because they do not feel."

Chapter III
The King and the Beggar

Armado: Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?

Moth: The world was very guilty of such a ballad some three ages since: but I think, now 'tis not to be found; or, if it were, it would neither serve for the writing, nor for the tune.

Armado: I will have the subject newly writ over, that I may example my digression by some mighty precedent.

Love's Labour's Lost

The king's philosophical studies are not yet completed; for he is in the hands of one who is bent on exploring those subterranean social depths that the king's prayer has just glanced at. The terms of true human pity in which he expresses it has no learned speech, no tragic dialect, or "its phrase of sorrow might conjure the wandering stars and bid them stand like wonder-wounded hearers." In the Poet's time, this was played in its own native shape and custom, daring as the attempt might seem.

The author is not satisfied with the picturesque details of that misery with its "looped and windowed raggedness," its "houseless heads," its "unfed sides." It must be more palpably presented with its proper moral and intellectual accompaniments before the philosophic requisitions of this design can be fulfilled. For the design of this play includes the defects of that which passed for civilization. That wild cry of human anguish which pervades it is the embodiment of that deeply-rooted opinion of mankind which the New Philosopher is known to have entertained. It is one which could hardly have been produced from the philosophic chair in his time, or from the bench, or at the council-table in such terms as we find here.

Those who persuade themselves that it was an historical exhibition for the amusement of audiences of the Life and Times of that ancient Celtic king of Britain will be prevented from ever attaining the least inkling of the matter. For this Magician does not get out his book and staff and put on his Enchanter's robe for any such effect as that. It is not enough in the revolutionary sweep of this play to bring the monarch from his palace and set him down at the hovel's door. It is not enough to show us, by the light of Cordelia's pity, the "swine" in that human dwelling and "the short and musty-straw" there.

The poet himself will enter it and drag out its human tenant into the day of his immortal verse. He will set him up for all ages on his great stage. This must be completed before this doctrine of "man as distinguished from other species" can be artistically exhibited. It is this vivid exhibition of man as he is which brings out the true doctrine of human society. The other, the common method, has failed.

The man of the new science looks with forebodings on those storms of

political revolution that were hanging then on the world's horizon. That is not the kind of change he meditates. His is the subtle, all-penetrating Radicalism which imitates the noiseless processes of nature. There is wild gibberish heard in the straw and out rushes Tom O' Bedlam with his "elf locks," his "blanketed loins," his "begrimed face," with his shattered wits, his madness, real or assumed. We know that there is gentle, noble blood under that horrid guise. It is the out-cast heir of a dukedom, compelled for the sake of prolonging life to that shape, as other wretches were in the Poet's time.

Here are some of the prose English descriptions of this tragedy which show that the Poet has not exaggerated his portrait. "I remember, before the civil wars, Tom O' Bedlams went about begging," Aubrey says. Randle Holme, in his *Academy of Arms and Blazon*, includes them in his descriptions as a class of vagabonds "feigning themselves mad." "The Bedlam is in the same garb, with his long staff," etc., "but his cloathing is more fantastic and ridiculous; for being a madman, he is madly decked and dressed all over with rubans, feathers, cuttings of cloth, and what not, to make him seem a madman, when he is not other than a dissembling knave."

In the *Bellman of London*, 1640, there is another description. "He swears he hath been in Bedlam, and will talk frantickely of purpose; you see pinnes stuck in sundry places of his naked flesh, especially in his arms, which paine he gladly puts himselfe to; calls himself by the name of Poore Tom; and coming near anybody, cries out 'Poor Tom's a cold.' Some be exceeding merry and doe nothing but sing songs fashioned out of their own braines; some will dance; others will doe nothing either laugh or weepe; others are dogged and sullen both in looke and speech."

Our young dukeling Edgar says—

The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;

But the poet is not contented with the minuteness of this description. The Jesuits had then been at work in England endeavoring to cast out "the fiend" from the many possessed persons. It appeared to this great practical philosopher that this creature, fetched up from the subterranean social abysses of his time, presented a very fitting subject for the practitioners professing superior influence over the demons that infest human nature. He has brought him out for the purpose of inquiring whether there is any exorcism which can meet his case or that of the great human multitude. Tom, thinking an occasion has arrived for defining his social outline, takes it upon himself to answer—

Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, swallows the old rat, and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of this standing pool; who is whipped from tything to tything and stocked, punished and imprisoned...

The point to be noted here is that this mad humor does not appear in the vein of that old-fashioned philosophy which has been rattling its abstractions in the face of human misery for so many ages. The helplessness of this human creature suggests to the royal sufferer that there ought to be some relief for the human condition, and his inquiries and discoveries are all stamped with the unmistakeable impress of that new philosophy which was not yet out of the mint. That philosophy, we are told elsewhere, concerns itself with the ideas as they exist in nature as causes, not as they exist in the mind of men as words.

From the moment in which Tom O' Bedlam makes his first appearance on the stage, the king has no eyes or ears for anything else. This startling juxtaposition was not intended by the poet to fulfill its effect as a mere passing *tableau vivant*. The relation must be dramatically developed in spite of the displeasure of the king's attendants. They seek in vain to part these two men. The king refuses to stir without him. He has a vague idea that the Bedlamite is in some way connected with the subject and, in spite of their disgust, the king's friends are obliged to take this wretch with them. The rough aristocratic contempt manifested by the king's party for this poor human victim of misfortune is made to contrast with their boundless sympathy and tenderness for the king, while the poet finds the mantle of his humanity wide enough for both.

As for the king, that new accession of his mental disorder which leads him to regard this man as a source of new light on human affairs is one of those exquisite physiological exhibitions of which only this artist is capable. The philosophic domain which that new road leads to appears to be considerably broader than that very vivid, but narrow, limitation of its fields which Mr. Macaulay has set down in our time. This philosopher that Lear inclines to has sounded the new science "from its lowest note to the top of its key."

One cannot but observe that Poor Tom's researches in this new field of practical philosophy do not appear to have been followed up since with any marked success. Modern philosophers do not exhibit that palpable bearing on practice, to which Tom so severely inclines. For he is one who would make "the art and practice part of life the mistress to his theoretic." Mr. Macaulay is not the only person who appears to think that does not come within the range of anything human. Many of our scholars are still of the opinion that "court holy water" is the best application in the world for him. For our philosophers are still determined to reason without taking into account the circumstance with which "nature finds itself scourged."

King Lear's own inquiries include the two great branches of the new philosophy. His mind is bent on the pursuit of causes. And though in the paroxysms of his mental disorder he is apt to confound them, this very confusion serves to develop the breath of the conception beneath. In the midst of the uproar of the tempest, he does begin with the physical investigation. He puts the question, "What is the cause of thunder?" But his inquiry does not stop there, where all philosophy has stopped ever since. It is the tempest in his mind that most concerns him. His practical philosopher must explore the conditions of that and find the conductors for its lightnings.

Then let them anatomize Regan; see what
breeds about her heart: Is there any cause
in nature that makes thee hard hearts?

A very fair subject for philosophical inquiry, one would say and as profitable and interesting perhaps as some that so profoundly engage the attention of our men of learning. It is perfectly clear that the author, whoever he may be, is very much of Lear's mind on this point. He does not depend upon Lear alone to suggest his views. There is never a person of this drama that does not do it.

Chapter IV
The Use of Eyes

All that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but—blind men

It is not merely in the direct discourse on questions of physical science or in Cordelia's invocation to "all the blessed secrets—the unpublished virtues of the earth" that the new physiological science which this work embodies may be seen. It betrays itself on every turn. The subtle relations of the moral and physical are noted here as we do not find them in less practical theories of nature. It is the scientific doctrine of MAN that is taught here, that man must be human in all his relations or "cease to be."

All the play is filled with the uproar of one continued outrage on humanity. It is not by accident that the story of the illegitimate Edmund begins the piece before Lear and his daughters make their entrance. The whole story of the base-born one who makes brutal, spontaneous nature his goddess and his law was needed to supply the deficiencies in the original plot. The story of the Earl of Gloucester was essential for the same purpose. Cordelia's agonized invocation to the forces of nature is continually echoed by the Poet, but with a broader application. It is not alone for the cure of the malady and infirmity with which the poor king is afflicted that he would open his Prospero book. "Nature's infinite book of secresy," he calls it elsewhere—"the true magic."

All the interior phenomena which attend the violation of duty are omitted here. The Poet has left us no room to suspect the tenderness of his moral sensibility or the depth of his acquaintance with these. The object on which our sympathies are concentrated is—

One more sinned against, than sinning.

It is at the conclusion of a long and elaborate discussion in which Gloucester refers to the influence of the planets that the base-born Edmund treats us to a prohibited piece of harmony. "Fa sol la mi." That particular conjunction of sounds was forbidden by the ancient musicians on account of its unnatural discord. The monkish writers on music call it diabolical. Edmund is disposed to acquit the celestial influences. He does not believe in men being—

Fools, by heavenly compulsion; knaves and thieves, by
by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by
an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that they
are evil in, by a divine thrusting on.

He has another method of accounting for what he is. This question of "the several dispositions and characters of men" and the inquiry as to whether there be "any causes in nature" of these degenerate tendencies, is a very important point with him. That which in contemplative philosophy corresponds to cause, in practical philosophy becomes the rule, the founder of it tells us. The play cannot be studied effectually without taking into account the date of his chronicle, that stage of human development in which the mysterious forces of nature were still blindly deified. The religious invocations with which the play abounds are not, in the modern sense of the term, prayers, but only vague, poetic appeals to the unknown, unexplored powers in nature. When all the new movement of human thought was still hampered by the narrowness of "preconceived opinions," the poet was glad to take shelter here, as *Macbeth* and other poems, for the sake of a little more freedom.

He is far from condemning "presuppositions" and "anticipations," but wishes them kept in their proper places. To undertake to face down the powers of nature with them is mistaken because these powers do not yield to human beliefs. Those terrible appeals to the heavens which King Lear launches are anything but pious. The boldness which shocks our modern sensibilities becomes less offensive if we take into account that they are not made to the object of our present religious worship.

That divine Ideal of Human Nature to which "our large temples, crowded with the shows of peace," are built, had not yet appeared at the date of this history. Paul had not yet preached his sermon at Athens in the age of this supposed King of Britain. Though the author was indeed painting his own age

and not that, there was such a heathenish and diabolical state of things to represent, that this discrepancy was not shocking.

It is the stars.
The stars above us govern our conditions,
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues.

It is not astrological theory which Kent is made to advocate here. It is the absence of any known cause and the necessity of supposing one where this difference he expresses is so obtrusive. Poor Tom appears in possession of a much more orthodox theory and Lear, in his madness, speculates upon this same question. The natural differences in human dispositions has seized the eye of this great scientific practitioner and he is making a radical point of it. The doctrine of this play is that those same powers which are at work in man's life are at work without it also; that they are powers which belong, in their highest form, to the nature of things in general; and that man himself, with all his special distinctions, is under the law of that universal constitution.

Poor Lear, when he undertakes to put his absolute power in motion, appears to treat the subject in the most savage and despairing manner. In his scorn for the failure in human nature from which he is suffering so deeply, he proposes a law which shall obliterate that human distinction. That is anything but the Poet's remedy. The moral disgust in which the knowledge of human good and evil betrays itself breaks forth in floods of passion that overflow the bounds of articulation. The radical nature of this question of natural causes is already indicated in the play when the king betrays the selfishness of that fond preference for his younger daughter and the frenzied paroxysm of rage and disappointment which her unloving, as it seems to him, reply creates. These are the terms in which he undertakes to annul the natural tie and disown her—

The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied and relieved,
As thou, my sometime daughter.

And when his "dog-hearted daughters" have returned to his own bosom the cruel edge of unnatural wrong, this is the greeting which Goneril receives on her return to her husband.

Albany: She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither,
and come to deadly use.

Goneril: No more; the text is foolish.

Albany: Tigers, not daughters, —

It is the distinction between man and the brute creation which the Poet paints so vividly for the purpose of inquiring if there is not some more potent provisioning of man for his place in nature. "Milk-liver'd man!" replies Goneril, speaking not only in her own behalf. The words have a double significance and the Poet glances through them at the state of things.

Milk-liver'd man,
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy sufferance;

Albany has talked of tigers and head-lugged bears. He has called upon the monsters of the deep in illustration of the state of things. But this descent to the lower nature from the higher appears to the scientific mind to require yet other terms. These comparisons, drawn from the habits of animals who have no law but blind instincts, do not suffice to convey the Poet's idea of human dereliction. It is the human and not the instinctive element that rules. The process which his hands are inclined to undertake is not half so cruel as the one which this woman has practised on herself while pursuing her "horrible pleasure" at the expense of madness and death to another. In that act she has slaughtered in cold blood the divine, angelic form of womanhood which great nature stamped upon her. She has desecrated not only the common form of humanity, but that lovelier soul which womanhood in its integrity must carry with it.

That is the Poet's reading. He is not one of those "Milk-livered men" who have not an eye discerning their honour from their sufferance. He is not one of those Moral Fools that Goneril alludes to, who think it enough to cry Alack! without inquiring what it is that makes that lack. His play is full of the practical application which Gloucester sums up—

'Tis the Time's plague when Madmen lead the Blind.

The whole play is one magnificent intimation that eyes are made to see with and that there is not so natural and legitimate use of them as that which human affairs were crying for. It is that eye which extends human vision far beyond individual sensuous experience, which is able to converge the light of universal truth upon particular experience. That is the eye which he finds wanting in human affairs. The play is pointing everywhere the Poet's scorn of "Blind men, who will not see because they do not feel," who wait for the blows of fortune to teach them the lesson of Nature's laws.

It is that same combination of sense and reason which the *Novum Organum*

provides for. But with the aid of the persons of the Drama, the new philosophy is carried into departments which would have cost the author his head to look into. Written in "with a goose-pen" those practical axioms pass for unconscious, unmeaning, spontaneous felicities. "Canst thou tell why one's nose stands in the middle of his face?" says the Fool. "Why, to keep his eyes on either side of it, that what a man cannot smell out he may spy into." The nose has not stood in the middle of the author's face for nothing. There has been some prying on either side of it and to good purpose.

It is in the second act that poor Kent, in his misfortune, furnishes another avowal on the part of this learned critic for a practical philosophy. He sits in the stocks because he could not adopt the style of his time with sufficient earnestness. It is from that seat that he puts his inquiry,—

Kent: Why, fool?

Fool: We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there is no labouring in the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but blind men.

Kent: Where learned'st thou that, fool?

Fool: Not in the stocks, fool.

"I have no way; and therefore want no eyes" says another victim of that absolute authority which is abroad in this play. This is his prayer:

Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man
That slaves your ordinance; that will not see
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly.

His eyes had been taken out of his head by the persons then occupying the chief offices in the state.

Lear: A man may see how this world goes with no eyes.
Look with thine ears.

His account of how it goes contains what one calls elsewhere in this play, ear-kissing arguments. "Get thee glass eyes and like a scurvy-politician pretend to see the things thou dost not." That was not the political eye-sight which this statesman and seer proposed to leave the times his legacy should fall on, whatever he might be compelled to tolerate in his own.

Surely this is a poet whose eye passes lightly over the architectonic gifts of univalves and bivalves, and entomological developments of skill and forethought. Here is a naturalist intent on that great chrysalis which has never been able to publish its Creator's glory, who would not think it enough to bring all the unpublished virtues of the earth to the relief of the bodily human

maladies. He is a man who is able to ascend to the actual principles of things and so base his remedies for social evils on the forms which have efficacy in nature instead of on certain chimeras or so-called logical conclusions of the human mind.

Nature, in the sense in which Edmund uses that term, is not this poet's goddess or his law. He is far from contending for the freedom or that savage, selfish nature to which the natural son of Gloucester claims his services are due. The poet teaches that the true and successful Social Art must be based on a science that recognizes the double nature in man. It is one thing to quarrel with the imperfect social arts, and it is another to prefer nature in man without arts. But it is impossible that the true social arts should be stumbled on by accident or arrived at by empirical groping.

The cause in nature of the phenomena of human life, appeared to this philosopher too important to be left to mere blundering experiment; too subtle to be entangled with the philosophy in vogue in his time. It did not seem to him that men who have eyes that were meant to see with should go on in this groping, star-gazing, fatally stumbling fashion any longer.

Why Was *Venus and Adonis* Published?

Richard Lester

As long as “William Shakespeare” the poet was assumed to be William Shakspeare of Stratford, the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to the Earl of Southampton was easily explained: he was soliciting patronage from a wealthy noble. But if Shakespeare was actually the Earl of Oxford, that motive wouldn’t be valid: he was certainly not looking for a patron, and he wasn’t trying to get published in order to sell his literary wares. So Oxfordians assumed he was just expressing his devotion to Southampton. And of course that fitted the already current supposition that Southampton was the “fair friend” of the *Sonnets*.

If that really was his motive, it should be consistent with what we know about *Venus* and its dedication, and also about the two men. First, why would Oxford publish this expression of devotion to Southampton to the general public? What makes us think that these two Earls would be interested in such exposure of a personal relationship? The situation was completely different from that of a poet addressing his patron in which publication is essential. If Oxford had wanted to express his feelings about Southampton to some smaller audience that they did care about, he could have circulated the poems in manuscript, as he did with his *Sonnets*, and as Philip Sidney did with *Arcadia*.

Second, why would Oxford offer what appears to be an old poem written for another purpose as an expression of devotion? What kind of respect would that show? Various writers have observed that in subject matter and mood *Venus* seems like something written by a much younger man: the familiar Ovid story, the hot-blooded love theme, the passion for hunting. Not the sort of thing one would expect from a middle-aged man. Some Oxfordians have suggested that *Venus* was offered precisely because it was appropriate for a young man,

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whether it was written years before, or especially written for Southampton just before its publication in 1593. But in either case it would be a kind of talking down to, which is not at all characteristic of Shakespeare. Other Oxfordians suggested that *Venus* was offered because it carried a warning of the Queen's possessiveness, which Oxford himself had experienced when he was young. But if that was a discernible meaning of the poem, it would seem to make open publication even harder to explain.

Third, why the expression, "first heir of my invention"? If *Venus* was new in 1593, it certainly would not have been Oxford's first literary work. But of course some writers have claimed that plays would not have been considered significant enough to cite in a dedication, even to someone who was supposedly very fond of the theater, and his shorter poems had not yet been printed and therefore also wouldn't count. But even if *Venus* was a first in some sense or other, why would Oxford call attention to the fact? It doesn't seem to add to the honor of the dedication.

Perhaps it was this problem that led some Oxfordians to the hypothesis that "first heir of my invention" referred to his first public use of the pseudonym, "Shakespeare," not to the poem itself. But this isn't consistent with the evidence of *Oenone and Paris*, a derivative "minor epic" published the following year.¹ Its dedication, which is an obvious parody of the dedication of *Venus*, started with: "Here you have the first fruits of my endeavors and maidenhead of my pen..." which indicates that the author understood "first heir of my invention" to mean first literary work. There is no hint of the poem being the first "heir" of an invented name, and one would think that he wouldn't have failed to parody such a reference if he thought it had that meaning. Also, the word "invention" was so commonly used to refer to literary inspiration or effort that, without some indication of a special meaning, it would have been understood that way.

Furthermore, with regard to the first use of the pseudonym, there is evidence that at least three of Shakespeare's plays were already known several years before *Venus* as being by Shakespeare. The rather obvious allusions to William of Stratford in *As You Like It* (V,i), *Henry IV part 2* (V,i), and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Induction), in about 1589, 1590, and 1592, respectively, would seem to be inexplicable unless there was a similarity of names, recognizable to at least some of the audience, that was either an annoyance to the playwright or some kind of joke.²

So why should Shakespeare refer to the name as an "invention" in 1593? Some Oxfordians say it was the official launching of the cover-up, with "Shakespeare" as the pseudonym and Shakspeare of Stratford as the stand-in. If so, then why didn't Oxford continue to use the name after *The Rape of Lucrece*? As far as we know it didn't appear again publicly until 1598. And why didn't "Shakespeare" show up publicly as an actor starting at that time? The first such appearance was about a play given in 1598, and even that was a reference made

19 years later.

But perhaps the most troubling thing about the *Venus* dedication that the traditional Oxfordian interpretation doesn't seem able to explain is its similarities to Philip Sidney's dedication of *Arcadia* to his sister, Lady Pembroke. It turns out that the most likely explanation of this unexpected connection also seems to answer all the preceding questions. Therefore, it merits a careful examination.

Arcadia and its dedication were written by about 1581 and circulated in manuscript not long after, but they weren't printed or published until 1590. The overall character of the two dedications is quite different: Sidney's is long and casual, and Shakespeare's is concise and formal. All the more reason to be surprised by the use of many of the same words and images:

Both dedications refer to use of idle time:

Arcadia: this idle work of mine...

Arcadia: Read it... at your idle times.

Venus: I... vow to take advantage of all idle hours.

Both refer to deformities:

Arcadia: though... it have deformities.

Venus: If [it] prove deformed...

Both express concern about offending:

Arcadia: your name... a sanctuary for a greater offender

Venus: I know not how I shall offend...

Both refer to fathering the poem:

Arcadia: this child which I am loth to father.

Arcadia: I hope, for the father's sake...

Venus: I shall be sorry it had so noble a god-father

Both develop the begetting image in a similar way:

Arcadia: having many fancies begotten [which if not] delivered
would have grown a monster, and more sorry might I be that
they came in than that they gat out.

Venus: if the first heir of my invention proved deformed, I shall...
never after [plow] so barren a land, for fear it yield me still
so bad a harvest...

Finally, note that both use the word “sorry” to express potential regret.

It seems impossible that this group of words and images would occur by chance in the two dedications since they were all either uncommon or unique. The word “idle” appeared in only 3 other earlier dedications and introductory letters out of 45 surveyed, “offend” or “offense” appeared in only 5, and “deformed” or deformities,” “sorry,” and the fathering and begetting images seem to have been unique to the *Arcadia* and *Venus* dedications.³

Furthermore, it seems unthinkable that Shakespeare would have borrowed these words and images from Sidney’s dedication just because he liked them. *Arcadia* was so recently printed and so well-known that his borrowing would have been obvious.⁴

It seems that the only possible explanation is that Oxford, again assuming that he was Shakespeare, deliberately used words and images from Sidney’s dedication in order to invite comparison between his *Venus* and Sidney’s *Arcadia*. And there seems to be no other reason for doing this than that he was competing with Sidney—or rather with Sidney’s ghost, which had been raised by the recent publication of his works. Oxford was presumably incensed at the high praise accorded Sidney when *Arcadia* and *Astrophil and Stella* were published in 1590 and 1591. He apparently wanted to show the same audience that he could do better, or, more exactly, had done better at about the same age. Of course, the comparison would hardly have been considered fair if Oxford brought out a product of his mature years to compare to something Sidney wrote in his mid-twenties.⁵

Thus, according to this theory, *Venus* really was the first heir of Oxford’s invention, in the sense of first major product of his literary effort, just as *Arcadia* was Sidney’s first major work. If so, Oxford would certainly have wanted to make it clear to the 1593 audience that *Venus* was his earliest work, not his latest. This assumes, of course, that some significant part of the 1593 audience knew “William Shakespeare” did or could have written *Venus* some 15 years before.

This competition motive becomes more understandable when seen in the context of the apparent rivalry between Oxford and Sidney, the first evidence of which goes back to 1579 when Oxford called a “puppy” at the tennis court.⁶ They were in different literary, religious, and political groups. Sidney had been very close to the Earl of Leicester, who was certainly no friend of Oxford’s. And there seems to have been competition for military assignments in the Netherlands in 1585. Oxford had been recalled from his very short command just about the time Sidney received his assignment, and it appears that the former was caused by the latter. Then to make matters worse—Sidney died a hero on the Continent in 1586, with the highest praise from Spenser, Raleigh, Greville, and others, and with a magnificent funeral that seems excessive considering his rank and literary accomplishments.⁷ Finally, Sidney was praised again when his works were printed in 1590 and 1591.

As a kind of corroboration of this theory that Oxford was presenting his

work as superior to Sidney's, the title page of *Venus and Adonis* bore the following (in Latin): "Let the common people admire common things, so long as to me Apollo hands goblets brimming with the waters of Castaly." Castaly was the spring sacred to the muses on Mount Parnassus.

Another kind of corroboration of the theory is that the dedication of *Venus* was parodied a year after its publication. This seems surprising if it was indeed taken at the time as a serious expression of devotion to the Earl of Southampton, a young noble already presented at Court and a protegee of arguably the most powerful man in England after its Lord Treasurer, William Cecil (Lord Burghley). But not so surprising if it was actually recognized as a deliberate imitation of another dedication.

This theory, as mentioned before, seems to be able to answer all of the questions cited above about *Venus* which the traditional Oxfordian theory couldn't answer: it was published openly because Oxford wanted to address the audience of *Arcadia*; it was an early poem because it was in competition with Sidney's work of about 1580; and it was explicitly stated to be his first work because it actually was; and it contained similarities to Sidney's *Arcadia* because he was deliberately trying to call attention to it.

But it raises other, more important, questions: why would Oxford have used Southampton for this message about *Arcadia*? What exactly was their relationship? Oxford obviously had something else in mind besides devotion to Southampton when he dedicated and published *Venus*. And this seems to undercut, or even deny, the face value meaning of the dedication. These two contradictory motives might still be reconcilable if we had reason to believe that Southampton would have cooperated in this attempted putdown of Sidney. But that doesn't seem likely. Southampton was a close friend and protegee of Essex who had been a loyal follower of Leicester. Sidney also had been close to Essex and Leicester: the former inherited Sidney's best sword and later married his widow and the latter man was, of course, Sidney's uncle. Therefore, Sidney was probably highly respected by Southampton. But if Southampton wouldn't have cooperated, what are we to conclude about Oxford dedicating *Venus* to him anyway? And what does this do to the idea that Southampton was the "fair friend" of the Sonnets?

Endnotes

¹ J.Q. Adams, in his *Oenone and Paris*, by T.H. (Washington, DC, 1943) pointed out that it had the same theme of unrequited love, approximately the same plot, the same setting, the same style, and a parallel title. Furthermore, like *Venus and Adonis*, the story of "Oenone and Paris" came from Ovid. The Folger Director said, "Throughout the text, verbal plagiarism of Shakespeare's poem is everywhere conspicuous." Incidentally, Adams identified T.H. as Thomas Heywood.

² The dating of these plays is according to the evidence given by Eva Turner Clark in *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays*.

³ This informal survey, though not exhaustive, included all apparently comparable dedications and introductory letters prior to 1593 (except those with Sidney's *Arcadia* and *Astophil and Stella*) that could be found. Most were from *The Renaissance in England* by Hyder Rollins and Herschel Baker.

⁴ Note that the similarities with the *Arcadia* dedication, although not immediately explainable for Oxford as Shakespeare, make even less sense for Shakspeare of Stratford

⁵ This paper focuses on *Venus and Adonis* for simplicity's sake, but much of the logic applies also to *Rape of Lucrece* and other similarities appear to make the latter part of the comparison. For instance, Shakespeare's "what I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours" seems to recall Sidney's "Now it is done only for you, only to you."

⁶ E.T. Clark pointed out two reasons for thinking Oxford and Sidney were friends, at least for a time: first, Oxford seems to have depicted Sidney as Ned Poins in *Henry IV*, and Poins was a friend of Prince Hal, who apparently represented Oxford; and second, they were both friends of Baron Willoughby D'Eresby.

⁷ J.T. Looney pointed out the curious coincidence of the sentencing and execution of Mary Stuart and the death and burial of Sidney. Mary was sentenced on 25 October 1586; Sidney died 3 days later. Mary was executed on 8 February 1587 and Sidney was buried 8 days later with extraordinary pomp. Looney hypothesized that the 3 months delay in burying Sidney and the grandeur of the funeral were to distract public attention from Mary's execution, and to hold up Sidney as a national hero of the Protestant war against the Catholics, with Mary as the ultimate cause of his death.

