

THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP
NEWS - LETTER.



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TWO NEW OXFORD DISCOVERIES

by B.M. Ward.

1. IS LORD OXFORD BURIED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY?

Mr Percy Allen recently visited the Heralds' College where he made a most interesting discovery. He found there a manuscript book (Vincent 445) with the following title-page:

The Armes, Honours, Matches and Issues of the Ancient
and Illustrious family of Veer.

Described in the honourable progeny of the Earles of
Oxenford and other branches thereof from the first
Originall to the present tyme.

Together with a genealogicall Deduction of this noble
family from the blood of twelve forreine Princes, viz.,
three Emperours three Kings three Dukes and three Earles
conveyed through the principall houses of Christendome.
Gathered out of the History, Records and Other Monuments
of Antiquity.

by

PERSIUALL GOLDING

The following extract, from page 51, deals with the 17th Earl of
Oxford:

EDWARD DE VEER, only sonne of John, borne ye Twelveth day of
Aprill A° 1550, Earle of Oxenforde, high Chamberlayne, Lord
Bolebec, Sandford and Badelesmere, Steward of ye fforest in
Essex, and of ye priuy Counsell to the Kings Matie that now
is: Of whom I will only speake, what all mens voices Confirme:
he was a man in mind and body absolutely accomplished with
honourable endowments: he died at his house at Hackney in the
moneth of June Anno 1604 and lieth buried att Westminster.

Percival Golding was, presumably, a nephew or great-nephew of Margery
Golding, mother of the 17th Earl of Oxford and sister of Arthur Golding,
his tutor. He was therefore a cousin of the 17th and 18th Earls of Oxford.

This adds weight to his testimony that Lord Oxford was buried in Westminster Abbey, because he would be in a position to obtain information about the de Vere family that might not be available to the general public. Although the book is undated, it is clear, from internal evidence of the above passage, that it was written during the reign of James I. This means that it was written some time between 1604 and 1625.

Is there any reason to suppose that Lord Oxford was buried in the Abbey? I think so. Oxfordians are aware that Lord Oxford's two favourite cousins were Sir Francis and Sir Horatio Vere, generally accepted as Francisco and Horatio in "Hamlet". Just before his death in 1604, Lord Oxford appointed Sir Francis Vere to be the guardian of his eleven year old son, Henry, afterwards 18th Earl of Oxford. In 1609 Sir Francis Vere died, and was buried in the north transept of Westminster Abbey. His widow erected a beautiful monument over his tomb, a picture and description of which is given in "The Mystery of Mr. W.H.", by Colonel B.R. Ward (1923).

In 1625 Henry, 18th Earl of Oxford, then aged 32, died on active service in the Low Countries while serving under Sir Horatio Vere. He was buried in the Abbey beside Sir Francis Vere. Sir Horatio Vere, then Lord Vere of Tilbury, died in 1635; and he, too, was buried beside his brother, Sir Francis. It would seem therefore, that Sir Francis Vere's tomb in the Abbey was regarded as a family vault. When we consider the close friendship and relationship between Sir Francis and Sir Horatio Vere, and the 17th and 18th Earls of Oxford, it certainly seems possible that the 17th Earl may also have been buried beside them.

We know, of course, that the 17th Earl was buried at the Church of St Augustine, Hackney, in 1604. And in her Will, drawn up on November 25th, 1612, his widow, Elizabeth Trentham, Dowager Countess of Oxford, (who died six weeks later) desired:

"to be buried in the Church of Hackney within the county of Middlesex as near unto the bodie of my said late deare and noble lorde and husband as maye bee, and that to be done as privately and with as little pomp and ceremonie as possible maye bee. Onlie I will that there bee in the said church erected for us a tombe fittinge our degree and of such chardge as shall seem good to myne Executors".

The question of the tomb of Lord and Lady Oxford at Hackney was carefully gone into by the late Mr. A. Waldron Clarke, an authority on Hackney antiquities. Owing to the demolition and rebuilding of the Church in the eighteenth century, it is impossible to locate the tomb with accuracy. Mr. Waldron Clarke's conclusions as to its probable site were published in the "Hackney Spectator" in 1924. A typescript copy of Mr. Clarke's article is available on loan to members of the Fellowship on application to the Hon: Sec., 3, Valley Green, Welwyn Garden City -

Meanwhile, if we accept Percival Golding's statement that Lord Oxford is buried in Westminster Abbey, is it not possible that his remains were transferred from Hackney to the Vere tomb after the death of his widow, the Countess of Oxford, in 1613? If so, it may be natural that no "burial" record would appear in the Abbey Registers, because it had already appeared in the "burial" register of the Church of St. Augustine at Hackney.

This question of Lord Oxford's possible burial in Westminster Abbey raises an interesting point in the matter of the identity of Oxford as "Shakespeare". The Prefatory Matter in the First Folio (1623), certainly suggests that "Shakespeare" was buried, or was intended to be buried, in the Abbey. But this is a much larger issue, and must be left over to a future issue of the "News Letter".

[Since the above went to press, Mr. Louis T. Golding has kindly informed us that Percival Golding was the youngest son of Arthur Golding, and therefore first cousin of the 17th Earl of Oxford.]

2. ANNE CECIL AND THE CRISIS OF 1576

Mr. E.M. Goodacre, a keen follower of Professor Lefranc and the Derby Theory, has kindly drawn my attention to a manuscript at Hatfield House which has hitherto escaped the notice of Oxfordians. The manuscript was calendared in full by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in Part XIV of the "Calendar of Hatfield MSS" (1923), page 19. It is unsigned, and undated; and was conjecturally ascribed to Elizabeth, Countess of Derby, in 1597. But internal evidence shows clearly that it was written by Anne Cecil, Countess of Oxford, in 1576. The manuscript, as it appears in the Calendar, is given below:

NOTES BY AN ILL-USED WIFE (COUNTESS OF DERBY?).

(1597?, before August). At Greenwich no board wages for two grooms, usher, page, chamber keeper. After the cooks not paid. Horses lent to Smith before the Progress. New nags for £13 sent to Theb. (Theobalds?) unshod, no money to defray.

Knocked up at 1 o'clock, waked.

Kept out of his chamber at dinner and supper by York and other within.

When Momerancy came, no money to buy before he was landed.

Not speak a word nor countenance in father's house.

So many 100 pounds spent of ten thousand come to his hand since marriage.
Never one token of love in gown, button, aigrettes.
A hose-garter asked again.
No pillion to come from Wyvenhoe, but of poor golden fustian.
His man to demand a note of her small plate in her own hand given her;
and he never speak him self. Linen spoiled, very fine and damask.
Women ij gotten with child; men entertaining them in chamber and dare
not find fault because they were great about him.
iij M li. since Easter lying at Greenwich.
Charge of men to keep purse.
(Undated, unsigned, $\frac{1}{2}$ page).

"York" is presumably Rowland York, at whose house on the Thames Oxford
landed on his return from the Continent in April, 1576.

"Momerancy" is the Duc de Montmorency, who came to England to receive
the Garter in 1572.

"Wyvenhoe" was Oxford's country house on the Essex coast, which he
gave to Anne Cecil after their separation in 1576.

OUR PRESIDENT AT LAVENHAM

On April 13 Colonel Douglas lectured on "The Shakespeare Problem" at
Lavenham, Suffolk, where the de Veres were the original Lords of the Manor,
and one of them (the 13th Earl) the builder of the famous Church. The Rev.
Prebendary M. Fountain Page, M.A., Rector of Lavenham, was in the Chair.
The evidence for Shakspeare, Bacon, and Oxford, was submitted impartially;
and the audience was asked to consider itself a Jury.

The lecturer pointed out that the alternative lay between the actor-
maltster of Stratford as the poet, or the hypothesis accepted by prominent
persons at the time, and recently by Sir George Greenwood and others, that
the name "Shakespeare" was used by certain noblemen as a pseudonym. The
best evidence for Shakspeare of Stratford lay in the utterances of Ben
Jonson. If these were genuine, no doubts could remain; but the opponents
of orthodoxy reject his evidence. The case for Bacon was unanswerable on
two counts: (a) that he led people to suppose that he was "Shakespeare",
and (b) that prominent persons at the time believed that he wrote under
the name "Shakespeare". The Oxford case depended on the personality and
life history of Edward de Vere, and on numerous personal allusions in the
Sonnets and Plays, some of which were shown on lantern slides.

The lecturer submitted that if the orthodox evidence were rejected, the only alternative lay in the "Group Theory", with the Earl of Oxford as the "master mind" working in collaboration with his son-in-law Lord Derby and his cousin Francis Bacon. Professor Lefranc's researches into "Love's Labour's Lost" was quoted in support of the case for Lord Derby.

We greatly appreciated the presence of our member the Rev. R. Flynn, Vicar of Belchamp St. Paul's, who supported the President. He gave notice of an "Oxford Pageant" now in preparation in his parish. Our grateful thanks are also due to the Rector of Lavenham, Mr. F. Lingard Ranson, and others, whose organization contributed so largely to the success of the lecture.

SHAKESPEARE AND MONTAIGNE

by PERCY ALLEN

For many years past, in common with other students of Shakespeare, I have known that the dramatist was familiar with Montaigne's "Essays"; but not until Admiral Holland pointed out that MOAI in "Twelfth Night" meant MONTAIGNE, and that the forged letter to Malvolio was based upon certain of Montaigne's "Essays", did I realise the extent or importance of Oxford's debt to the Frenchman. This information sent me posting off to Hachette's where I bought Montaigne in French and English (Florio's translation), and also the Essayist's Life in the "Grands Ecrivains Francais" series. Since then I have been studying Montaigne, and collating him with the Shakespeare plays; with the result that I am now more than ever convinced of the determining influence exercised by the Gascon gentleman upon the English Earl.

Precisely how it all came about, we can only guess. My own surmise is that when Oxford, on his way back from Sicily, landed in France - probably at Marseilles - early in 1576, he turned westward for a while. Here, perhaps, he visited Nérac, the capital of the Court of Navarre (the scene of "Love's Labour's Lost") (x), and may well have met Montaigne in Périgord.

(x) We know, from the Howard-Arundel Papers in the Public Record Office, that Oxford claimed some intimacy with Marguerite de Valois, Queen of Navarre, who is the "Princess of France" in "Love's Labour's Lost". The Earl, according to Charles Arundel, told him: "That the Queen of Navarre sent a messenger to desire him (Oxford) to speak with her in her chamber".

Be that as it may, it seems now positively certain that when the first two volumes of Montaigne's "Essays" were published in 1580, Lord Oxford found in them a man, and a work, after his own heart. Both writers were profound egotists, deeply interested in themselves: both were studiously inclined, without being scholarly in an academic sense: both were introspective and moody: both loved Latin authors, particularly Ovid, Seneca, and Plutarch: and both, incidentally very fond of riding and horses.

The late J.M. Robertson - no friend to the Oxfordians - realised Montaigne's influence over Shakespeare sufficiently to make him opine that technically, morally, and intellectually "the poet's nerves", inspired by Montaigne, "have caught a new vibration". These are strong words, but I would go farther even than Robertson, and would say that, while passage after passage in certain comedies, and in "Romeo and Juliet", owes much to the writer of the "Essays", the whole basic idea of our great Shakespearean tragic drama is due, primarily, to Montaigne. That Gascon gentleman - the world's first great egotistical essayist, whose next French exemplar in the highest rank will be Rousseau - knew well, and states openly again and again, that his book is unique in literature, that it is a complete and deliberate revelation of himself, and is written for that purpose only. Lord Oxford, I am positively certain, entranced by the Frenchman's writings, said to himself in the year 1581: "What he has done as an essayist, I will do as a dramatist"; and in 1583 he drafted "Hamlet", the first and last purpose of which is, in Prince Hamlet's (Oxford's) own words "to tell my story" to succeeding generations. Almost every episode in "Hamlet": the supernatural ghost-motive: the brooding over death: the political repentance without genuine will to repent (i.e. the prayer of Claudius): the serene and poised character of Horatio: Hamlet's madness: the irresolute weakness of human will: the tyranny of custom (i.e. the closet-scene with the Queen): and the decay of the human body after death (i.e. the graveyard-scene), with other motives also, are all dealt with, sometimes copiously, by Montaigne.

In the third volume, more than any other, Montaigne dwells upon the horrors of the French Civil Wars of his day, of the futility of unworthy ambitions, and so forth. And I am convinced that in these last two volumes we have the inspiring force of the two tragedies that follow upon "Hamlet" - viz., "Macbeth" and "King Lear" - which develop, respectively, the mad ambition theme and the French Wars of Religion, as I have shown in my "Plays of Shakespeare and Chapman in Relation to French History".

"MOAI doth sway my life". MONTAIGNE may not have 'swayed', to any great extent, the outward experiences of Oxford's life. But that Montaigne exercised a dominating and decisive influence upon the themes and shaping of the great Shakespearean tragedies - and, to a lesser degree, upon certain comedies - seems to me an indisputable fact. Montaigne's great Huguenot contemporary, Agrippa d'Aubigné, also as I have shown in the above mentioned book, profoundly influenced Oxford when he wrote "Macbeth" and "King Lear", though Oxford must have read "Les Tragiques" in manuscript because it was not published until 1616.

In conclusion, in support of Admiral Holland's article in the last "News-Letter", I believe that the name "Malvolio" is taken straight out of one of Montaigne's Essays - "Des Noms" (I.46), first published in 1580:

"... on servoit celles (i.e. names) qui se commencent par M: mouton, marcassin, merlus, marsoin; ainsi des autres. ... à la vérité est il commode d'avoir un nom beau, et qui aysement se puisse prononcer et retenir, car les rois et les plus grands nous en cognoissent plus aysement, et oublient plus mal volontiers.

If I am right, Shakespeare must have read the 1580 edition of Montaigne's "Essays"; because Florio, in his translation, alters "noms qui se commencent par M" into "names that begin with P: as pig, pie, pike, pudding, etc."

Further on, in the same essay, Montaigne tells us that he is here concerned with anagrams, and with "the letters in a name", as follows:

"Nicolas Denisot n'a eu soing que des lettres de son nom, et en a chargé toute la contexture pour en bastir le conte d'Alsinois, qu'il a estrene de la gloire de sa poesie ..."

Conte d'Alsinois (cf. Count Malvolio) is an anagram of "Nicolas Denisot".

BOOK REVIEWS

by Col. M.W. Douglas, C.S.I., C.I.E.
President of the Shakespeare Fellowship

"LES ELEMENTS FRANCAIS DE 'PEINES D'AMOUR PERDUES'", by Abel Lefranc,
Membre de l'Institut, Professor au College de France.
(Reprinted from "La Revue Historique", 1936).

In the above article our distinguished Vice-President sums up his researches connected with the play "Love's Labour's Lost".

Commentators agree that it is an early play. Fleay, Knight, and Dr. Furnivall date the composition in 1589; it was the first play published (1598) under the name "William Shakespere". Professor Lefranc proves that it rests on historic foundations, and that most of the chief characters are men of the period.

Henry of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV of France, married Marguerite de Valois, daughter of Catherine de Medici, in 1572; but after the massacre of St Bartholomew in August of that year, he withdrew to Navarre without his bride. He was partly responsible for the government of Guyenne (Acquitaine), and the division of authority led to disputes with the King of France. It was therefore arranged, in 1578, that Catherine de Medici and Margu rite should negotiate a settlement at N rac, where the royal couple lived happily for some four years.

In the play the period is reduced to three or four days. Biron is de Goutant, Baron de Biron: Longueville is Henri d'Orleans, duc de Longueville: Dumain, often identified with Mayenne (brother of the duc de Guise), is probably the Dumaine of N rac, who, together with Biron, signed Anthony Bacon's passports: Boyet, the 'Minister' in the play, is de Pilbrac, Chancellor and Minister of Margu rite.

There is additional evidence in regard to Helene de Tournon, "celle qui mourut d'amour", recorded in Queen Margu rite's "Memoirs", but not published until 1628: an incident generally accepted as the origin of the death scene of Ophelia in "Hamlet". Both the historic setting of the play, and the allusion to the death of H l ne de Tournon, have been accepted as relevant by Sir Edmund Chambers; and, tardily and of necessity, by other commentators.

These researches credit the author of the play with intimate knowledge of the Court and of the leading characters. Professor Lefranc, courteously and almost regretfully, points out that serious and embarrassing difficulties beset orthodox Shakespeareans as the result of their admissions. He wonders when the actor of Stratford left England, or how he became familiar with Navarre. We quote Sir George Greenwood: "A young provincial, with such smattering of education as he may have procured during some four or five years at a free Grammar School ... speaking the dialect of his native country, comes to London in 1587, a penniless wanderer, straight from the society of boors and petty tradesmen ... of illiterate Stratford". We believe that after two years, in 1589 (as accepted by Sir Sidney Lee), this "young provincial" aquired sufficient knowledge, whether this side of the Channel or the other, to write this play. The great French critic has shown, that whatever plays may or may not have been written by William of Stratford, he was not the author of "Love's Labour's Lost". Even Sir Edmund Chambers is at a loss, and writes: "The 'Memoirs' (of Margu rite de Valois) tell the story of the death of H l ne de Tournon, which seems to be alluded to in V.ii. Shakespeare can hardly have known all this at first hand. Neither the 'Memoirs' nor the accounts of Henri and Marguerite by Brantome and others were available in print. Unless there was a source play, some English or French traveller must have been an intermediary". We add no comment to this tacit admission.

Professor Lefranc finds that William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, was the author, seeing that he was travelling in France in 1582-3, and subsequently became known as a playwright. Holofernes, the pedant in the play, may well be identified with Richard Lloyd, his tutor, who mixed his English and Latin words, as in the play, and in an extant letter addressed to James I. in 1610. Holofernes presents the "Pageant of the Nine Worthies": and in 1584 Lloyd published "A Briefe Discourse of those Puisant Princes, the Nine Worthies". Two series of tapestries, representing "Nine Worthies", were on view in the royal chateaux of Pau and Nérac, which may well have been seen by Lloyd. Moreover, one of them is represented in the play (V.ii), when Nathaniel enters armed as Alexander.

Professor Lefranc deserves the acknowledgement of all readers of Shakespeare for his invaluable researches; and we are glad to read that "notre intention est de continuer le meme travail pour une serie d'autres oeuvres du plus grand des dramaturges modernes".

(Note. A copy of Professor Lefranc's article, in pamphlet form, is available on loan to members of the Fellowship, on application to: Hon. Sec. Shakespeare Fellowship, 3, Valley Green, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.)

"THE SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM RESTATED", by Sir George Greenwood K.C., M.P., condensed by Elsie Greenwood. (Athenaeum Press, 6/-).

This is a transcript by Miss Greenwood in a hundred and sixty five pages of her father's famous indictment, and his ruthless analysis is the more forcible by reason of brevity.

Lord Ponsonby welcomes the book with a thoughtful foreword, acknowledging Sir George's thorough knowledge of "Shakespeare", and stating that his objective was to disprove the claims of the Stratford man, but not to suggest a substitute. He trusts that "the staunchest upholder of the traditional belief" may take this opportunity of re-examining the foundations of his position. Interest in the problem has diminished owing to the original book being out of print, and this timely revival will remind us that those foundations are verily builded on sand.

Miss Greenwood has wisely included a selection of the original Press reviews, from which we quote the "Nation":

"We would recommend all who care for Elizabethan literature to acquire and read "The Shakespeare Problem Restated", a carefully reasoned, scholarly, and interesting book".

OCCASIONAL NOTES

An excellent article by one of our members, Mr. Charles W. Barrell, appeared in "The Saturday Review of Literature" (New York, May 1st, 10 cents), entitled "Elizabethan Mystery Man". Mr. Barrell gives a very clear and concise statement of the case for Lord Oxford as 'Shakespeare'. It is understood that in the following issue (May 8th) Professor Elmer Edgar Stoll, of the University of Minnesota, will answer Mr. Barrell: but at the time of going to press this issue had not yet been received in England.

An article by Mr. Percy Allen entitled "Lord Oxford as Shakespeare" is appearing in the May issue of the "East Anglian Magazine". The magazine can be obtained from the Proprietors, 54a Foundation Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, price 1s. 2d. post free, or from any branch of Messrs. W.H. Smith & Sons throughout the world, price 1/-.

Since his return from America, Mr. Percy Allen - in addition to lectures at the Theatre Royal, York, and at the Old Vic - has given four talks at the Interval Club, Dean Street, with our President in the chair. The first was an account of his American tour: the second and third dealt with the influence of Montaigne and d'Aubigné on Shakespeare: and the last was an historical resumé of the development of Shakespearean heterodoxy, with some comments of the controversy to-day. The average attendance was about 35; and, as was also the case last year, the attendance at the last lecture doubled that of the first. Several of those present expressed their intention of joining the Fellowship next autumn.

Mr. Louis T. Golding, of Brookline, Mass., U.S.A., who attended our Annual Dinner last year, has written a life of his ancestor Arthur Golding, the translator of "Ovid", and Lord Oxford's uncle and tutor. It will be published in America in the early summer. Mr. Golding hopes to be in London by the end of May, and we hope to hear more from him concerning this important work at the Fellowship Dinner on June 6th.

We deeply regret to record the sudden death of Mme. Lefranc, wife of our distinguished Vice-President. We are sure all members of the Fellowship will join in extending their sympathy to Professor Lefranc at the sad loss of his lifelong companion.

OCCASIONAL NOTES (cont)

FOR SALE

1. Two photogravure proofs of the Stratford Bust as it was seen by Sir William Dugdale about 1636. Price 2/6 each. Apply: Miss Greenwood, 5 Kensington Gate, London, W.8.
2. In the early days of the Shakespeare Fellowship - (1922-3-4) - we had a weekly column about our work and activities in the "Hackney Spectator". Mr. Francis Clarke, who was one of our foundation members, and for some years Hon. Librarian of the Fellowship, has about 50 cuttings of the Fellowship column from the "Hackney Spectator", price £1. Mr. Clarke, whose book-shop in Chelsea will be remembered by some of our older members, has been obliged to go out of business owing to the recent slump. Apart from the historic interest of these early Fellowship articles, their purchase would help an old member who has been hard hit through no fault of his own. Apply Hon. Sec.

CORRESPONDENCE

From Rear Admiral H. H. Holland, C.B., author of "Shakespeare, Oxford,
and Elizabethan Times"

To the Editor "Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter"

Dear Sir,

In Dr. Cairncross's letter to the "Times Literary Supplement" (printed in the March "News-Letter") he states that my "use of interpolation and revision is so universal that it (presumably my chronology) loses all value".

I would therefore ask members of the Fellowship to read my book, and see for themselves whether, with the single exception of "Love's Labour's Lost", I do, as he states, use interpolation so universally.

yours, etc.,

H. H. HOLLAND