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THE RIVAL POET OF THE SONNETS

by Gilbert Slater, D.Sc., F.R.Hist.S.

Among Shakespeare students the identity of the unnamed poet of the 86th Sonnet has long been the subject of speculation, with a preponderance of opinion in favour of Chapman. This choice seems to be the natural one for those who identify the author of the Sonnet with William of Stratford, but scarcely so for non-Stratfordians; and I was surprised to find that Mr Percy Allen held the same opinion.

Mr Allen's knowledge of the contemporary dramatic literature is probably unique in its extent and thoroughness, and we can all agree that the rivals of Shakespeare-the-playwright were other dramatists, with Chapman and Jonson conspicuous among them. But however great Oxford's contribution to the Shakespeare panel may have been, he was not merely - he was not even primarily - a playwright. He was also a great nobleman and a courtier; and in the Sonnet in question it is, I believe, the courtier who is speaking, and not the dramatist. In that capacity also he had rivals, who probably exercised his mind much more. Here is the Sonnet:

Sonnet 86

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
Was it his spirit by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
Giving him aid, my verse astonished.
He, nor that affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
As victors of my silence cannot boast;
I was not sick of any fear from thence.

But when your countenance fill'd up his line,
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

It is clear, I think, that "all-too-precious you" was Queen Elizabeth; and, if so, the rival poet must surely be not Chapman

but Raleigh. "The proud full sail of his great verse" would probably be a fair and even generous appreciation of Raleigh's lost poem "The Ocean." Raleigh was a true poet, a great navigator and sailor, and especially a lover of the sea; and in "The Ocean," written in the midst or immediate memory of his fights in the little barks of the period with the storms of the Atlantic, his poetic genius would naturally attain its highest flight - his spirit "taught to write above a mortal pitch" by the spirits of sea and wind and storm. Then, "his compeers by night": what can be the reference there except to those nightly gatherings round Raleigh's fireside of the most independent and progressive thinkers of the day, which so much exercised the gossips of the Elizabethan Court? "That affable familiar ghost which nightly gulls(x) him with intelligence" - who is that but Christopher Marlowe, whose friendship with Raleigh is immortalized by the interchange of the Sonnets "Come live with me and be my love . . ."

Raleigh's poem, as I have said, has been lost, lost through the egotism of the Queen, who should have treasured it. To it he affixed a dedicatory introduction, of mediocre verse, full of the most fulsome flattery. The Queen carefully preserved the flattery, so that it remains extant; and it is to it that Oxford refers in the concluding lines:

But when your countenance fill'd up his line,
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

Gross flattery was pardonable in a poor gentleman, conscious of great ability, and eager to devote it to the service of the State, since Elizabeth's vanity in her later years made that the high road to advancement. But the Premier Earl could not condescend to it. He would not compete on that low level; and the Sonnet was written to say so, as gently and politely as possible, but quite firmly and definitely.

Interpreted thus, Sonnet 86 throws, I think, an interesting light on Edward de Vere's character, and on his relationships with the Queen on one side and with Raleigh on the other. It indicates, I think, that native generosity and a strong inherited sense of "noblesse oblige" were two of his leading characteristics. When both he and Elizabeth were young, he may well have been in love with her, whether he was or was not one of her paramours, and the father of one of her illegitimate children. But, in accordance with his family motto "Nihil Vero

(x) i.e. feeds him as the seagull feeds its young?

Verius," he would offer her no insincere flattery. When she sought other less scrupulous favourites, he continued to render her loyal service until her death.

To the base imaginations of the crowd of intriguing parasites which thronged the Court, it was obvious that he must be actuated by personal jealousy in his relations with Raleigh - and also, at an earlier time of his life, with Philip Sidney. With Sidney he did have a serious quarrel, arising out of the fact that he strongly advocated the French marriage, of which Sidney was an equally strong opponent. But the evidence all points to the conclusion that the quarrel ceased when its cause was removed. In the case of Raleigh it is based on a 'sotto voce' conversation between them when Elizabeth was playing on the 'virginals', an early form of piano, while waiting for the report of the execution of Essex. Oxford is reported to have remarked, as he watched the keys (or 'jacks') dancing under the Queen's hand, "When jacks(x) start up heads go down." If this story was not invented, Oxford's remark was a grim comment on the fickleness of the senile Queen's favour to one who had suffered from it undeservedly, and an expression of understanding and sympathy. Something can be learnt from such gossip; but it must be remembered that, when it concerns men like Oxford and Raleigh, the facts on which it may be based come to us through the distorted vision of base minds viewing men of finer character than they could or would conceive.

Before leaving this topic I may point out that we find the same thought expressed in Sonnet 25:

Great prince's favourites . . . in their glory die.
The painful warrior famed for fight,
After a thousand victories, once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour razed quite;
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd.

(At Dr Slater's request the above article was shown to Mr Percy Allen, who replies as follows):

Dr Slater has made out skilfully his case for Raleigh as the Rival Poet of the Sonnets. Here I outline in skeleton my case for George Chapman.

Concerning Sonnet 86, Dr Slater argues that "all-too-

(x) This was a pun; the word 'jack' also meant a person of inferior birth.

precious-you" is Queen Elizabeth, and that "the proud full sail of his great verse" refers to Raleigh's lost poem, "The Ocean." In my opinion, however, the lines are addressed, not to the Queen, but to Oxford's illegitimate actor-son, the "Fair Youth" of the Sonnets, who, to Oxford's acute distress, has been playing in one of Chapman's plays; and has lent his beautiful person - he was evidently good-looking - to "filling up" (on the stage) "his (Chapman's) line"; thereby emotionally short-circuiting his father, "Shakespeare."

As regards that company of "compeers by night," and the gulling of the rival poet, by a "familiar ghost," Dr Slater's interpretation and mine more nearly agree, because Chapman was a member of Raleigh's "School-of-Night" group, which dealt secretly in the occult, including what we to-day call spiritualism. The ghost, to my thinking, was not Marlowe, but a "spirit" with whom Chapman believed himself to be in friendly communication.

It is not, however, in Sonnet 86 alone that the clues to the rival poet's identity are to be found. In 85 Oxford provides another important clue, when he cries Amen!

To every hymn that able spirit affords -
words which, I feel certain, are aimed at Chapman's two School-of-Night Hymns, namely "Hymnus in Noctem," and "Hymnus in Cynthiam" (Cynthia-Elizabeth), written in 1593, published 1594, with an Introduction addressed to Royden, wherein Chapman refers darkly to the help of that "heavenly familiar," which, in sonnet 86 - written probably in riposte to Chapman - is gently derided as an "affable familiar ghost." Chapman's "Hymns" characteristically attack, not only two Shakespearean plays - "Richard II" and "Midsummer Night's Dream" - but sneer also at Oxford himself (Hamlet), in several passages, while they laud Oxford's cousin, Sir Horatio Vere (Horatio), then warring in Flanders. In "Ovid's Banquet of Sense" (1595) Chapman attacks the conceits of "Venus and Adonis," and of "Love's Labour's Lost": in "A Coronet for his Mistress Philosophy" (1595) he again eulogizes Horatio Vere, and pounds Edward in stanza after stanza: in "De Guiana" (1596) - a poem affixed to "A Relation of the Second Voyage to Guiana," written by Lawrence Keymis, who was Raleigh's right-hand man on that expedition - Chapman gibes at Oxford-Shakespeare, as one of those natures which "stick in golden-gravelled springs." Lastly, in a poem to his friend Harriots, another of the School-of-Night group (1598), he returns, with

undiminished bitterness, to his tirades against Oxford as "Shakespeare."

Of Chapman's plays, which, chronologically, follow upon the poems, the same story must be told. In "The Blinde Beggar of Alexandria" (1598), Shakespeare's rival writes, with surprising frankness, of the illicit relations between Elizabeth (Queen Aegiale) and Cleanthes (Oxford). In "An Humerous Days Mirth," printed in 1599, though probably written a little earlier, we have a long burlesque of "Love's Labour's Lost" - which had derided Chapman and the "School-of-Night" - wherein Lemot (EVERY word: VERbum) stands clearly for Oxford, and Queen Fortune for Elizabeth. Finally, in the two great "Bussy D'Ambois" plays (ca. 1601 and 1607), we have a closing series of imitations of, and attacks upon, several Shakespearean plays, including particularly "Twelfth Night," "Macbeth," and "Hamlet" - the last-named tragedy being criticized at great length in "Bussy's Revenge" which includes a passage stating with astonishing frankness that Prince Hamlet is the Earl of Oxford.

Oxford-Shakespeare's counter-attacks upon Chapman are, as we have seen, in the Sonnets, in "Love's Labour's Lost" (1597-8) - "base sale of chapmen's tongues" - and in "Troilus and Cressida" (ca. 1598), where the scurrilous Thersites is almost certainly Chapman. All these are the interventions of two great rival dramatists in the Elizabethan "Battle of the Poets" during the closing years of the sixteenth century. Many pages would be needed to develop in detail what I hold to be a conclusive case for Chapman as "Shakespeare's" rival poet.

Nevertheless, I feel that Dr Slater and I are really at one over fundamentals. Our only difference of opinion is, I think, one of chronology. The rivalry between Oxford and Raleigh was in the 'eighties: and between Oxford and Chapman in the 'nineties. It comes to this. Chapman (and others, e.g. Marlowe and Royden) were disciples of Raleigh's "School of Night," and they carried on the Oxford-Raleigh rivalry of the previous decade. There is a parallel case in the Harvey-Nashe quarrel of the 'nineties, which is recognized by Dr McKerrow to have been a sequel of the Tennis Court quarrel between Oxford and Sidney in 1579. The truth seems to be that the quarrels - and there were plenty! - between courtiers in the 'seventies and 'eighties, had their sequel in the quarrels of the professional dramatists and hack-writers of the 'nineties.

BOOK REVIEWS

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

"Shakspere, Shakespeare and de Vere"
by Louis P. Bénézet, A.M., Pd.D.

Dr Bénézet is impressed by two mysteries; the first that the belief prevails that the Actor-Maltster of Stratford was the Poet Shakespeare; the second that scholars in general have failed to recognize that in 1550 a child was born, of precocious and extraordinary genius, named Edward de Vere, who possessed all the qualifications which we associate with the Poet (App. B), while his Plays, reckoned by contemporaries to be second to none, are supposed to have been lost. Presumably these are the Shakespearean plays; but the key to the mystery is found in the Sonnets.

Sir George Greenwood used to say that, given certain conditions, he might believe that Shakspere of Stratford was partly responsible for certain plays, but it was beyond all human credence that he ever could have written a single Sonnet.

According to Chambers the Sonnets continue the poetic impulse of "Venus" and "Lucrece," and cover a period of three or more years, probably from 1595 to 1600. They contain three salient features which amount to fact. Firstly, that the Poet had passed the meridian of life, an elder counselling a younger; secondly, that he was lame; thirdly, that he was misunderstood and embittered. Chambers, with amazing intuition, writes: "The Sonnets give glimpses of a soul-side imperfectly revealed in the plays - there is a perturbed spirit - record of misplaced and thwarted affections - of imperfections and disabilities - tired of life before his time - brooding on the passing of friends - and thoughts of death."

Dr Bénézet in this scholarly and attractive book elaborates these features, and proves that by no flight of the imagination is it possible to read the Sonnets into the life of Shakspere of Stratford. In fact in 1595 he was thirty-one, and on the rising wave of wordly success: from that year to 1600 he was acting in Jonson's "Everyman"; applying for his coat of arms; speculating in property; concerned in the building of the Globe Theatre; and, to his discredit, manipulating "a corner" in grain in

Warwickshire to the detriment of the poor, for which he and his associates were 'harried by the Sherifs'.

Dr Bénézet believes that the Sonnets were a diary in rhyme written to relieve the tumult of Oxford's emotions, and were in the making as far back as 1581 when he was accused of plotting against the Queen, and wrote:

"When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes." S. 29. Traversing Oxford's career, he shows by a series of relevant quotations with illuminating comments that these above features, and Chambers's analysis, apply to him; and the Sonnets are as a mirror reflecting his eventful and tragic life.

His views on the identity of the Fair Youth are interesting. To Sidney Lee is due the credit for destroying the fiction that the youth was Mr W. H. of the dedication who was undoubtedly William Hall of Hackney, a procurer of MSS. The identity of the youth is to be found in the Sonnets; and in agreement with Mr Percy Allen, Captain Ward, and others, Dr Bénézet believes that he was the nine-year old boy who acted as Oxford's page in 1584 and was his natural son: further, that he was an actor in his father's company of players, and probably passed under the name of "William Shakespeare." It is to him that most of the Sonnets were addressed - he quotes a number of them in support of this hypothesis, stressing the view that they represent a father addressing a natural son, and finds Sonnet 87 of special significance.

"Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a King, but waking no such matter."
He dismisses "in limine" the case for Southampton; whereas the Countess of Oxford, Elizabeth Trentham, the second wife, may or may not have known the identity of the youth. The supporters of Southampton, including such a scholar as Dr Rendall, Mr Looney, and others, have much to say with equal confidence; and remember that Oxford's son was born in 1593 at the time of the dedication of "Venus" and "Lucrece" to Southampton, and was given the name of Henry.

But can we reasonably assume that none of these so-called parental Sonnets, allowing for the play of imagination, were addressed to Oxford's son and heir? The Earl married Elizabeth Trentham in 1591, the boy was born in 1593, an event of supreme importance in the Oxford family. He was eleven years old when his father died in 1604. The marriage was a happy one and

provided the Earl with a quiet breakwater during his closing years. The widow desired to be buried "near my deare and noble lorde and husband," and, as a former Maid of Honour, clever and well educated, may we not assume that she was interested in the Sonnets?

Many of them were written during this period, and one in particular would seem to have been addressed to his son Henry:

"Oh, that record could with a backward look

Even of five hundred courses of the Sun." (S.59) - meaning that we (you and I) might compare ourselves with our ancestors, notably the famous Aubrey de Vere who five hundred years ago in 1098 was a Crusader at Antioch.

Was not "the almost Chinese thought of the father urging his male heir to carry on the line" more relevant to his son Henry, the future eighteenth Earl, than to a natural son

"She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby,
Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die."

This brief and eloquent appreciation of the Earl of Oxford in thirty-four pages is unanswerable. Dr Bénézet may not have solved the problem of the Fair Youth, which is perhaps insoluble: but he leaves no doubt in the mind of an impartial reader that Oxford was the author of the Sonnets, and thus "the Master mind" responsible for most of the Shakespearean works.

(Note. The price of the above booklet is 2s. 3d. (bound in cloth), 1s. (bound in paper), and 7d. (unbound), all post free. Will members who wish to secure copies please send their requirements with remittance (in stamps or otherwise) to: Hon. Sec., Shakespeare Fellowship, 3 Valley Green, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, who will get the necessary number of copies in bulk from Dr Bénézet, and will distribute them when received.

"Shakespeare's Vital Secret Known to His Queen"
by R. M. Lucas
(Rydal Press, Keighley)

Mr Lucas reveals the "vital secret" that the sixth Earl of Derby was "Shakespeare." Derby and Bacon however, were born in 1561, the Earl of Oxford in 1550, a disparity in age which the author disregards, but which excludes Derby by reason of youth from the authorship of certain plays, including Hamlet, and the Sonnets.

Derby, through Henry VII a possible "Challenger" to the throne, was given the nickname "Shake-the-Spear." He subsequently appointed a young actor Shakespeare, his agent and factotem, and the nickname became a safe pseudonym, Shake-speare.

The motif is not new. Bacon was the shaker of the spear of Knowledge at the Serpent of Ignorance, while the Bolbec-Oxford crest was a lion holding a spear. Derby was known to write plays for the common players, and they are to be found in the Folio (1623), but the MSS. were lost when the Eagle Tower was destroyed by the Roundheads.

Mr Lucas admits that many pens contributed to the Plays and Sonnets. He might have added "that the name Shake-spear was adopted as a mask name in 1593, and that several men of high position used it, including one of supreme genius." (Greenwood.) We are told, however, that the theories connected with Bacon, Oxford, and Raleigh have proved to be mere sandbanks.

Three prominent contemporaries knew the secret, Marston, Speed, and Davies.

Marston, as the possible author of "Histriomastix," interpolated a passage in which Troilus refers to "thy garter blue" and "My Knight when he shakes his furious spear." This can refer only to Derby. Moreover, the play "Troilus and Cressida" treats of the infidelity of a wife and was written by Derby owing to the Essex scandal. Troilus is probably an Oxford Play in view of a similar charge against Lady Oxford, and its date, 1598 (Allen) is previous to the Essex scandal. Lee considers the reference a 'piece of irony' which may be the case, seeing that this is the same John Marston, who, together with the Bishop of Norwich, represented Bacon as the author of "Venus" and "Lucrece"; and he was urged to "better write, or write alone." Speed's accusation is based mainly on conjecture and only implies that Derby used the pseudonym Shakespeare.

Davies is the poet and calligraphist of Hereford, and the epigram quoted is the one commencing with the line: "To our English Terence Will Shakespeare." Mr Lucas holds that the lines apply to Derby only, but Davies was fond of making puzzles of his epigrams and this is one of them. He is the accepted author of the writing across the envelope of the Northumberland MS. containing a list of works by Bacon, and the MSS. of the

plays of "Richard II" and "Richard III." There were such words as Mr J. fauncis William Shakespeare, Bacco, Shakespeare you, yourself, etc.

The Earl of Oxford's epitaph in the Harleian Collection runs: "Of whom I will only speak what all men's voices confirm, he was a man in mind and body, absolutely accomplished with honourable endowments." Mr Lucas, however, tells us that he was a strange, literary, artistic fop, mean and brave, chivalrous and unscrupulous, who may have set the model for the Sonnets and collaborated with his son-in-law in certain plays; and to whom Derby appears to have sent a manuscript copy of his Sonnets which T.T. acquired and published after Oxford's death. Any port is refuge in a storm, and this wild conjecture is supplied to explain the procuring of the Sonnets in Hackney by William Hall in 1608.

Further, we read that as the main Shakespearean output was after 1598, Oxford is excluded as he died in 1604. But twenty-seven Plays had appeared by 1604, and it does not follow that those which appeared thereafter were composed in the same year. There is ample evidence to the contrary; for instance "Othello" (1588), "Lear" (1598), "Macbeth" (1595-1600). "The Tempest" is claimed as Derby's farewell play, but there is good evidence for Raleigh as the author.

Ben Jonson in the Folio was addressing the Earl of Derby. He was probably called in by Derby to aid his son James Stanley to collect the plays and see that neither he nor his son were associated with any that were treasonable. This suggestion is no doubt related to Derby's absence after 1620 owing to ill health and his inability to supervise the Folio. Again, there would be nothing surprising in Derby asking Bacon to assist Ben Jonson and he thus would be in a position to insert his bilateral cypher in some of Derby's plays. Bacon may have done this in the case of the Oxford plays but it is inconceivable that he would tamper with plays written by Derby during the lifetime of the latter. The Avon was in Wiltshire, the only one known to Jonson, who had never been to Stratford. But we know that Shakspeare "died of a feavour" (1616) contracted from a drinking bout in Stratford with Jonson and Drayton.

If not Derby, had Ben Jonson in his mind any other Poet, "the soule of the Age" etc.? An alternative is found in the pertinent question, who financed the Folio? The Patrons, the

Incomparable Paire of Bretheren, were obviously mainly responsible, and it was necessary to sell 1,000 copies at £1 (Greg) an outlay of £10,000 to-day's currency. The Earl of Pembroke would certainly have found the money to perpetuate the plays of his father-in-law Oxford, as leader of the Group. It is unlikely that he would have done so for the Earl of Derby. It was imperative to advertise the work and attract purchasers. Ben Jonson, as the literary agent employed, was required to write an attractive advertisement, and did so.

The corner-stone is the authorship of "Hamlet" and The Sonnets, for the author of these was the Supreme Poet, Shakespeare.

It is here that Mr Lucas's case breaks down.

He agrees that there was only one play, "Hamlet," and the original was written between 1575 and 1589. Admiral Holland's date is 1583, supported by forty-five contemporary incidents. The writer of "Hamlet" was mature in years, possessed of a wide knowledge and experience of life in all its phases, and it is impossible to accept the youthful Earl of Derby as the author.

In the Earl of Oxford we find a close analogy in life and character with that of Hamlet; also, there is the cast: Polonius - Burleigh: Ann Cecil - Lady Oxford: Horatio - Sir Horace de Vere: Francisco - Sir Francis de Vere. And even Marcellus - Prince Maurice of the Netherlands: Barnado - Barneveldt his Minister. Moreover, Polonius's gibe at Hamlet, "falling out at tennis," is a clear reference to the Oxford-Sidney quarrel on the tennis court.

Nor does he fare better with the Sonnets, according to Chambers begun 1595, probably earlier. We quote his remarkable analysis: "A perturbed spirit is behind the quiet mask . . . record of misplaced thwarted affections of imperfections and disabilities, inseparable perhaps from the undesired way of life . . . tired of life before his time - brooding over the decay of beauty and the passing of friends, letting his imagination play freely round the thoughts of death." This passage cannot apply to the young Earl of Derby. In the case of Oxford it is an unconscious revelation of his later life. Moreover, the author of the Sonnets had passed the meridian of life, an elder counselling a younger.

"When forty winters shall besiege thy brow." (S.2)

"Although she knows my days are past the best." (S.138)
Were Mr Lucas to accept that Bacon introduced his "Essay on Gardens" into the "Winter's Tale," he would support the Group hypothesis. If, however, he has failed in his main objective, he has greatly increased our knowledge of the Earl of Derby as a playwright. His book is interesting and full of information: he deals well and truly by William of Stratford.

CORRESPONDENCE

From Dr Gilbert Slater, D.Sc., F.R.Hist.S., author of "Seven Shakespeares."

I regret to see that in my note which appeared in the January issue of the "News-Letter" by a slip I wrote "Was Chapman the author of 'Henry VIII', and was he the main author of 'Troilus and Cressida'?" What I meant to write was "Was Fletcher the author of 'Henry VIII', and was Chapman the main author of 'Troilus and Cressida'?"

* I wish also to say in reply to Col. Douglas that I am not prepared to maintain "that the plays of the Folio were not, even in the main, the work of one man." I think they very likely were, and that Oxford was the man. But whether his contribution was more or less than that of all other contributors put together, cannot yet, I think, be estimated with any confidence.

From Capt. B. M. Ward, Hon. Sec. of the Shakespeare Fellowship:

† The last paragraph of Dr Slater's letter raises an interesting point. It seems to me that in estimating the contributions of the various authors of the plays of the Folio the foremost consideration should be chronology. Oxford was considerably older than most of the other contributors with the exception of Raleigh. Is it not likely that the great majority of the plays were originally written by Oxford, as Count Masques, in the fifteen-seventies and early 'eighties; and that in the 'nineties and after Oxford's death, they were revised, re-written, added to, and amended? I suggest that this revision of his old Court Masques was, broadly speaking, undertaken by two groups (a) the aristocrats (his personal friends and relations, such as Bacon, Derby, Raleigh, and Lady Pembroke) and (b) the professional dramatists such as Marlowe, Greene, Chapman, and Fletcher, who adapted them for the public stage. For instance, all

Oxfordians, after reading the findings of Mrs Clark and Admiral Holland, would surely be unanimous in accepting "The Merchant of Venice" as an Oxford play. But I think that few would not agree with Professor Dover Wilson that Act IV scene 5 is clearly a non-"Shakespearean" interpolation. This is but one example amongst a great many.

From Mr Ernest Allen:

With reference to Mrs Clark's admirable book "The Man Who Was Shakespeare," reviewed in the January "News-Letter," may I make the following comments with reference to Malvolio (Sir Christopher Hatton) in "Twelfth Night"?

I had formed the conclusion some time ago that if the precise facts were known it would be found that most of the 'Malvolio' incidents had been taken from life at the Court, "Twelfth Night" being a particularly topical play and dealing entirely with Court circles. Mrs Clark entirely justifies my surmise. I had not previously realized that Hatton and the Queen were on such intimate terms - indeed, practically in the relation to each other as lover and mistress.

An interesting point may have escaped our readers. It will be remembered that Malvolio, early in the play, pictures himself as married to the Countess Olivia (Queen Elizabeth) attired in "my branched velvet gown . . . from a day bed where I have left Olivia sleeping," and, a few lines later, "playing with some rich jewel." A portrait of Hatton is reproduced in the book, showing him wearing a long chain with a large jewel pendant from it, which he is fingering.

This may be a coincidence; but it looks as if the portrait was known to Shakespeare when writing "Twelfth Night." Possibly Sir Christopher Hatton habitually adopted some such pose, and his trick of fingering, or 'playing with some rich jewel', was known to his contemporaries.

OCCASIONAL NOTES

One of our members, M. Charles Boissevain, gave a lecture at the Lyceum de Suisse, Geneva, which was reported in "La Tribune de Genève" on February 1st 1938. M. Boissevain emphasized that the orthodox case rests on the evidence of Ben Jonson in the First Folio. But this evidence was an intentional fraud, connived at by the family of the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, who

had died twenty years before its publication. M. Boissevain claimed that the essential part of the 'Shakespeare' works - the Sonnets, the Poems, Hamlet, As You Like It, Midsummer Night's Dream, and Othello - were the work of Lord Oxford: but he believes that others - e.g. Francis Bacon - were concerned in some of the Roman and Historical plays.

Another of our members, Mr George Frisbee, has a fine article in "Reading and Collecting" (Chicago, January 1938). It is an answer to an article by Mr Gekle in a previous issue entitled "A Layman's Lament." In his usual trenchant and devastating style Mr Frisbee trounces the orthodox view with right good-will and good-humour; and there are many shrewd blows at his old opponents, the 'Paedicali'!

There was an interesting correspondence concerning Shakespeare authorship in the "Northern Whig" (Belfast) during January. Mr Bertram G. Theobald (President of the Bacon Society) and Mr H. Kendra Baker (another well-known Baconian) joined issue with the Rev. Felix Holt and Mr J. A. Hogg (Stratfordians). One of our members, Mr W. Ringland Robinson, in an admirable two-column letter under the title "A Group of Authors", presented a wider view. He claimed that Dr Gilbert Slater, author of "Seven Shakespeares", had shown that the "Shakespeare" plays and poems were the work of several authors of whom the chief was Lord Oxford. Among the others were Bacon, Derby, and Raleigh - but not Shakspere of Stratford.

We deeply regret to announce that on March 8th, while this issue was at the printers, Dr. Gilbert Slater died at his home, 4 Park Crescent, Oxford, aged 73 years. An appreciation of him will appear in the next issue of the "News-Letter."