

# THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

## NEWS-LETTER

No. 12

November 1938

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Shakespeare Fellowship was held at the Florence Restaurant, at 3 p.m., on Wednesday, October 19, 1938.

#### PRESENT

Col. Douglas - President	The Misses Carrington
Mr Percy Allen	Dr Woodward
Mr Ernest Allen	Mrs Adamson
Mr Aitken	Mr Tierney
Mr Fox	Miss Finch
Mrs Hobart-Hampden	Miss Young
Mrs Skene Lawrence	Mrs J. S. Atkinson
Mrs Fitzroy Carrington	

1. The minutes of the last meeting were read, passed, and signed by the President.
2. The President (Col. Douglas) and the Hon. Sec. (Capt. Ward) vacated their offices, and were unanimously re-elected.
3. Mr Percy Allen, representing the Hon. Treasurer, read the balance sheet, which was unanimously adopted by the meeting.
4. There followed a general discussion upon the present position of the Shakespeare controversy, and the status of the Shakespeare Fellowship in regard thereto. Mrs Adamson suggested that efforts should be made, if possible, to arrange for lectures on the Oxford theory to be given in other parts of London, if possible, as well as in the Finchley district, where - principally at Mrs Herridge's flat - many have already been given by Mr Percy Allen, and others. After the discussion about twenty members and their friends stayed to tea in the Restaurant.

LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF COMMON SENSE, by HERBERT LAWRENCE, 1769.

Below is an epitome of, and commentary upon, the Shakespearean allegory in the above book, made by Mr Percy Allen, from the first English edition, and from the French version of the second English edition, published at Avignon in 1777. Mr Allen has not seen the second English edition, except in the French version, which he has followed mainly, because the allegory is fuller in the second edition than in the first.

"WIT," who is the father of COMMON SENSE, the author, admits to TRUTH, his wife, that he has committed the crime of marrying her against her own inclination; because, strange though it may seem, he has never loved her; but, lured by an impulse which he must call divine, has committed an action upon which he looks back with horror. Doubtless, it is all the work of the Gods. The elders of the town (Athens) agree that the young man was really inspired, and that TRUTH must submit herself to the will of God.

WIT, as we shall see later, is undoubtedly "Shakespeare," otherwise Lord Oxford, and TRUTH, his wife, hints at a Vere pun. The passage is difficult to interpret, but the meaning clearly seems to be that the "Shakespeare" mystery is a very extraordinary one; and that it can be none other than God himself, who, out of the conjunction of such extraordinary people and such strange events, produced things so "wonderful" as the Shakespearean plays. All this fits in, exactly, with the reiterated "wonder" theme of the crucial closing scenes of "The Winter's Tale," the whole purport of which - as also in the case of this allegory - is the vindication of TRUTH by TIME.

But, although TRUTH, the wife, has agreed to accept WIT for her husband, there could be no conjugal compatibility between persons so diametrically opposed in character. The father, WIT, had a considerable dose of Vanity; he liked flattery, and liked playing with the natural sense of things. Sometimes he would calumniate TRUTH; and his passion for admiration led him often into the company of persons who were sunk in debauch, and who applauded in chorus WIT'S reprehensible conduct. TRUTH often remonstrated with her husband in the plainest terms; much to his wrath, since he was assured by his flatterers that these actions, with which she reproached him, were among the most brilliant of his life.

In this passage all that is said about WIT applies, easily and accurately, to Oxford, who quite certainly "had a considerable dose of vanity," and "liked playing with the natural sense of things," as passage after passage of elaborate word-play in the Shakespearean comedies sufficiently shows. The charge against him that he occasionally "calumniated truth" is also true of Oxford, who, as one can gather from the Howard-Arundel Papers, was given occasionally to making untrue statements, especially when, after dinner or supper, he had had a glass too much. His frequentation, when young, of the company of persons "sunk in debauch" is also true of Oxford - those companions of his - Robert Greene would be one of them - being described by Burleigh as his son-in-laws "lewd friends."

There were ceaseless quarrels between WIT and TRUTH; and WIT, far cleverer than TRUTH at presenting his case, soon obtained a divorce, some months before COMMON SENSE was born into this world. WISDOM, who had been formerly affianced to TRUTH, until WIT, by a trick, married her, - has gone to Egypt, but upon hearing of the divorce between TRUTH and WIT, he has returned disguised.

One cannot historically identify TRUTH in this allegory, nor can it be said that she always is Lady Oxford; but there is much significance in the following lines written in Latin, probably by her husband, on the fly-leaf of a prayer-book, once in Lady Oxford's possession. The lines run:

Words of Truth are fitting to a Vere; lies are  
foreign to the truth, and only true things stand fast  
. . . may thy mind always glow with love of the truth,  
and may thy true motto be EVER LOVER OF THE TRUTH.

Lawrence's allegory continues:

TRUTH and WISDOM meet, and talk together. TRUTH agrees to hand over her child, COMMON SENSE, to PRUDENCE, the female confidant of WISDOM. GENIUS, who is Wisdom's cousin, and an old and intimate friend of WIT'S, comes to them with the news that WIT has certain designs against TRUTH which the laws of friendship forbid him clearly to reveal; but it will be necessary for TRUTH, in future, to go about masked. TRUTH, however, declines to do so, arguing that disguise is the clearest possible admission of guilt. GENIUS hurries off to WIT, and tells him of

the attempted reconciliation, but does not tell him that he has told TRUTH of her former husband's evil intentions towards her.

COMMON SENSE tells the reader that, if any question arises as to how he, COMMON SENSE, can have known about all these matters, when he was still so young, the answer is that he was in a position to know, from the very earliest, the events that were passing in the family; that he was at least forty years old when he began to write the history; that he had been supplied with full information concerning all that took place, and was told anecdotes that were current among the family and their friends. Absurd though it may sound, COMMON SENSE, therefore, claims to be able to set down, in the most minute detail, the conversations of the characters whom he introduces. COMMON SENSE has drawn much of his information from the diary kept by his nurse, PRUDENCE, until the day of her death; TRUTH contributing thereto all that could make it interesting. COMMON SENSE was just a faithful transcriber of these memoirs.

This is a very remarkable passage, and in view of the knowledge we now possess - that Lawrence was an intimate of Lord Sandwich, and no doubt through him a friend of Lord de Vere Beauclerk, who was a collaborator with Lord Sandwich at the Admiralty I read the above lines as a statement by Lawrence - made as openly as he dared - that he had first-hand authentic information from aristocrats, and members of the de Vere-Beauclerk family concerning Lord Oxford and the Shakespeare mystery; and also that he had access to written documents as well; which he calls the "diary" of his Nurse, PRUDENCE. Lawrence tells us that he has been a "faithful transcriber" of the secret information, written and oral, which has come down to him.

WIT, meanwhile, has been writing repentant letters to TRUTH - letters which GENIUS, surreptitiously looking over his shoulder, has read. GENIUS warns TRUTH against her crafty ex-husband, but TRUTH can make nothing of the business. She shows the letters to WISDOM, who thinks that WIT is sincere, and that the trickery lies rather with GENIUS. TRUTH writes to WIT a letter dictated by GENIUS, asking for control of their child. "You did not love me," says TRUTH, "therefore you will not love the

child of our marriage." WIT agrees to the surrender of his child to its mother, the lady "Stiff Rump," as Genius calls her. The fact is that he wants a reconciliation, because his finances are low, and he has written a play, a masterpiece, which he much wants to put on the stage. All this is difficult to interpret. It is, of course, historically true that Oxford at this time - the late seventies - was on bad terms with his wife, and was leaving to her and to the Cecils the care of his daughter, Lady Elizabeth Vere, born July 2, 1575. The "masterpiece," as we shall see, is "Love's Labour's Lost."

There follows a general reconciliation between WIT, TRUTH, WISDOM, and GENIUS. During their talk, WIT introduces his favourite topic, the theatre, concerning which he says the wittiest things, and proves himself quite an expert at it - "un homme de Métier." He makes merciless comments upon recent plays, and modern playwrights; and GENIUS agrees with him. He, WIT, is at work on a comedy, the subject of which he will not disclose, as it is not yet finished. Besides, the subject is not important; but what IS important, in this play, is the delicacy of the sentiment, the brilliance of expression, the subtlety of the repartees, the whole art of the dialogue. WIT says, "I think it will be a masterpiece"; and GENIUS agrees, while arguing, himself, for a simpler sort of comedy. All parties, however, are in a very happy humour.

A very important paragraph. The first public theatre had been opened in 1576 (?) and in 1580 Oxford was to become lessee of the Blackfriars Theatre with Lyly as his actor-manager. The "masterpiece" which he was writing at the time was certainly "Love's Labour's Lost," which dramatizes European events of 1578, and was first played, it seems, at Richmond Palace early in 1579. The above description of it, as being unimportant in plot, but delicate in sentiment, brilliant in expression, and subtle in repartee, applies exactly to "L.L.L." in which, incidentally, the word "wit" occurs nearly fifty times.

The lady VANITY, who dislikes TRUTH, spreads abroad, to TRUTH'S deep pain and disgust, a calumny that TRUTH and WISDOM, though never married, need only the ceremony to make them man and wife: but no one believed the story. Not long after, there was brought to VANITY, from the

provinces, where he had been kept in great secrecy, a four-year-old child, so lively and mischievous that she called him "the monkey," though his real name was HUMOUR. He had a countenance so comical that no one could look at him without laughing. WIT, who was an old acquaintance of VANITY'S, became so fond of the boy that suspicions were soon circulating; and GENIUS confirmed them when he said to the boy, "My little man, you resemble your father more than your mother." "Yes," said the boy, "but who is my father?" "WIT is your father, and VANITY is your mother," replied GENIUS. So the mystery was out; and all the town was amused for a fortnight: and the best of it was that VANITY dared not stir out of doors for a month.

The plot thickens. The lady VANITY, as we shall see, seems to be Queen Elizabeth, and if TRUTH here is Lady Oxford divorced - actually separated - from her husband, it is most significant that these are the very years during which Lady Oxford was subject to calumny and slander - she is Hero in MUCH ADO - in which Lord Henry Howard was most guilty; and that the Queen, bitterly jealous of Anne, was keeping her forcibly from her husband. Anne is Mariana in-the-moated Grange, in "Measure for Measure."

The four-year old child is none other than the fair youth of the sonnets, who, according to the calculations of Capt. Ward and myself, was born in 1575, which is the year arrived at by deducting four years from 1579, the date of "Love's Labour's Lost." It is most significant that our date for the birth of the boy - a date arrived at before we heard of Lawrence's book - is thus corroborated. In the matter of parentage, we named Oxford and the Queen as the boy's father and mother. Again the allegory will confirm our conclusions.

I have no knowledge that the Queen used to call the Fair Youth "Monkey"; but we know that she used to call Alencon's envoy, Simier, by that name - "mon petit Singe."

The allegory continues:

Meanwhile the play is getting finished, and the author, WIT, pays several visits to TRUTH and WISDOM, because he wants the latter to protect his piece, and to write the prologue. WISDOM did not altogether like the play, which was not wholly to his taste, but he knew the

author's urgent need for money, and that his (WIT'S) subsistence for the following year would depend upon the success of the piece; so he consented to back it. No play-spectacle had ever been so brilliant; the most striking figure of all being VANITY in one of the front boxes (loges), dressed in all the colours of the rainbow.

Wit's urgent need for money is historically true. Oxford's tour abroad had cost him large sums, involving many sales of his lands, and he continued to be in great financial straits until in 1585 the Queen allotted to him a pension of £1,000 a year from the Secret Service fund.

The statement that no play-spectacle had ever been so brilliant may well be historically true; because, as Mrs Clark has pointed out, the first performance of "Love's Labour's Lost" was probably that given at Richmond Palace in the queen's presence before Simier and the French ambassador, under the title of "A Maske of Amazons and a Maske of Knightes," on January 11, 1579. Most interesting also is the statement that Lady Vanity, in the front stalls, was dressed "in all the colours of the rainbow," because the only Elizabethan lady who, so far as we know, was called "the Rainbow," was the Queen, who was also called "Nature." The "Rainbow" portrait of Queen Elizabeth is at Hatfield. It shows the Queen magnificently dressed (I have not seen the original), holding the rainbow in her hand. The inscription is

NON SINE SOLE IRIS  
NO REINE BEAU WITHOUT A SUN.  
NO QUEEN (is) BEAUTIFUL WITHOUT a SON.

The word "beau" must be used instead of "belle," in order to keep the pun, and to convey the idea of the man (Beau), and the woman (belle), being the parents of the son (Sun).

The allegory continues:

The public were delighted, at first, beyond expression, by the brilliance of the dialogue and the repartee; but towards the end, the spectators began to perceive that there was very little plot or intrigue, so that the play nearly got hissed at the close - a tendency to which the audience was encouraged by the insolent countenance of VANITY. GENIUS had written the epilogue, which was a delicate apology for the life and weaknesses of the author WIT - an incident made more striking by the fact

that this epilogue was recited by the natural son of the author. That boy, HUMOUR, grew up to be a plague to me, but I must do him the justice to admit that he soon became the delight and life of the theatre. VANITY, through delicacy, withdrew before he appeared upon the stage.

It is certainly true of "Love's Labour's Lost," that there is very little plot or intrigue, and that the charm of the comedy, which is very great, depends almost wholly on the brilliance of the dialogue, and especially of the repartee. It is a court-play through and through, in the final revision of which, ca. 1597, it seems very probable that Oxford's son-in-law, Lord Derby, had a large hand. Our Vice-President, Prof. Abel Lefranc, holds that Derby was "Shakespeare." Personally, I believe that this description of the first night of "Love's Labour's Lost," is historically correct; and was supplied to Lawrence by a person, or persons, who knew the facts. VANITY otherwise the Queen, may well have disapproved of parts of the play, in which she appears - if I am right - as Rosaline - as also in "Romeo and Juliet" - and as Jaquennetta; though that character was probably added when the play was revised. Another striking fact is the recitation of the epilogue by HUMOUR, the natural son of WIT and VANITY, because that episode fits closely with the recitation of Oxford's "sun-tree" speech, before the Queen at Whitehall in 1584, by Oxford's page, whom I hold to be the same boy, HUMOUR. Whether the child, at four years old, did actually recite an epilogue to "Love's Labour's Lost," must be a moot point. No doubt he did so later on. Lawrence admits that his chronology is not always very exact.

The allegory continues:

COMMON SENSE'S father (WIT) returned home intoxicated with delight at the success of his play; and VANITY also was much pleased with her son's success. The play was kept going by a friendly cabal for several representations, and then, like so many others, was forgotten. My father, who, as the author, had won a great reputation in the republic of letters, preferring cash to immortality, had sold a copy of the play for a good sum, before the first representation; and the re-establishment of his finances upon an honest basis enabled him to put his son into the theatre, where he could be useful to the father. He taught the boy dancing, fencing, and music, but he did not teach him to read, because he believed that literary



knowledge was harmful to a comedian, though it might be quite useful to a tragedian. The boy became an excellent dancer, in the grotesque manner, and was much applauded as an actor in low comedy parts, to which his age and figure suited him. The hidden talents of COMMON SENSE, on the other hand, would not flower quickly, as would those of the spring-time tree (arbre de printemps) which flowers, fruits, and is leafless in a year. COMMON SENSE will become a cedar of Lebanon, and all the birds of the air will seek shelter beneath its majestic branches. He is slow to develop, and is on bad terms with that bright boy of the theatre, HUMOUR.

Here, I believe, we have still more authentic information concerning the sequel to the first night of "Love's Labour's Lost." The statement that the Fair Youth was "put into the theatre," and became an actor, is most interesting, because, following Lord Alfred Douglas and others, I have been arguing for years past that the boy became a professional actor, and probably played Puck in "Midsummer Night's Dream." The allegory does not hint that he played Puck, but Lawrence provides the boy with every requisite for the part - liveliness, mischief, miming, dancing, and charm. Some of our members hold that he always remained an amateur actor. The boy, I suppose, was taught to read later on. Certainly many Shakespeare sonnets are addressed to him. The reference to him as a "springtime tree" (arbre de printemps) is interesting, because it suggests the usual Vere pun - VER meaning the spring. Ver, the spring, moreover is precisely the person who, at the close of "Love's Labour's Lost," sings the Spring song, "When daisies pied and and Violets blue." Moth, who is on the stage at the time, and whom I have long held to be the Fair Youth, was probably the singer. Early in the play he has referred to his "father's wit" (i. 2); and although his father was never, so far as I know, called "the moth," he is called Muiopotmos, the "butterfly" by Spenser, and "humble-bee" in this very play. COMMON SENSE, on bad terms with his step-brother, HUMOUR, seems to be here a real person, possibly Oxford's legitimate son by his second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, born 1593. Perhaps in this case Lawrence has jumped to the end of the century.

The allegory continues:

The laws of the country are very unsatisfactory, and with the help of WISDOM, a certain lawyer of great ability, named SOLON, recodifies these laws; these deeds

being celebrated by festivities and a great banquet, during which, after drinking a glass of wine, my mother, TRUTH, suddenly fell poisoned. VANITY was mixed up in this business, she being very jealous of the honours heaped upon WISDOM. TRUTH, meanwhile, remained very ill, and her doctor said that she had been poisoned at the banquet, though nobody knew by whom, until HUMOUR found his mother's writing-tablets upon her toilet-table, and bore them off to a theatrical friend, who, since HUMOUR was illiterate, read them to him. They were of little importance, but the reader read them all to HUMOUR, except the last two lines, which ran thus:

Since poison does its power deny  
Tis plain that TRUTH will NEVER die.

The Baconians claim this book as the first Baconian publication, alleging - upon what evidence I know not - that WISDOM is Bacon. It seems obvious that the original of Bacon, in the allegory, is not WISDOM - who, incidentally is not portrayed as a playwright - but SOLON the "lawyer of great ability." This poisoning business is a very difficult passage to interpret; but it seems certainly to connect up with the "poisoning-of-the-dog" episodes, in Jonson's "Every Man Out of His Humour" (1599), which certainly indicate an attempt by the Chapman group - with whom Bacon may have been connected - to "poison truth," by planting the plays (the dog) upon another writer - the Stratford man, or even Bacon himself? The statement that VANITY was mixed up in this poisoning business is cryptic; but there is nothing incredible in the supposition that Elizabeth did approve, for a time, of the fathering of the Shakespeare plays upon some one else than Oxford.

The phrase, "TRUTH will NEVER die" is a typical piece of Vere punning.

The allegory continues:

HUMOUR went to his mother, fell on his knees, and confessed to having taken her writing-tablets; but he received from her so terrible a reception that, although the circumstances have never transpired, she produced a strange alteration in the temperament and character of the young man. Hence those ridiculous pantomimes, and wild gesticulations, ridiculing the personal faults of humanity, and the low, base jokes which he sometimes permitted himself to make. The (whole) story of these tablets was never told to my mother, TRUTH, nor was it

ever written down in PRUDENCE'S journal, but from the age of fifteen years onwards, I drew my materials principally from memory, and from my own observation, though I must often refer to the journal.

The allegory, at this point, seems to be dealing with events of the late nineties; so that HUMOUR, by this time some twenty-four years old, could well have a "terrible reception" from his mother. Queen Elizabeth, when angry swore like a fish-wife. I think it probable that "the wild gesticulations ridiculing personal faults," which henceforth characterize the behaviour of Humour - who would now be standing as a mask for his father Shakespeare - refers to the pungent cynicism and merciless attacks on individuals, such as you get in "Troilus and Cressida," which is about 1598, wherein Pandarus is Burleigh, and Thersites is Chapman. It looks as though Lawrence decided that, even in veiled allegory, he could not put down all the intimate facts that he had learned, or heard reported, concerning the relations between the Queen and the Fair Youth. One is not surprised.

The Allegory continues:-

My father had finished his farce. It was well received by a crowded audience, and he drew profit and glory from it. The piece was full of local and personal satire, which always pleases human malignity. This pasquinade was called CONSULTATIONS. Its characters were a father, mother, and daughter - the daughter having recently been poisoned. She is at the point of death, and there is much discussion about poisoning between the doctors, who have been summoned to cure the patient. All of them have been sworn to secrecy; but servants come with broom-staffs, and beat these doctors off the stage. This illness has cured the daughter of her passion for Florio for who personated the youngest doctor of the three, and has tricked them all with a powder. The father is delighted by his daughter's recovery. TRUTH and WISDOM were present at the first night of this play about the poisoning. TRUTH left almost at once, and WISDOM walked out in the middle of the second act.

This "farce," "full of local and personal satire," entitled CONSULTATIONS and concerned with the poisoning of a "daughter," is apparently a lost Oxford play of a satirical character,

nearest in style, so far as one can judge, to "Troilus and Cressida," and of the same period; because the closing years of the century are those of the Battle of the Poets, of which "Troilus" - aimed at Chapman's "Homer" was certainly one. CONSULTATIONS may well have been a counterblast to Jonson's "Every Man Out of His Humour," which is concerned with the "poisoning of the dog" by Macilente who is Chapman. I feel certain that the "dog" and the "daughter" both mean the Shakespearean plays. Several women in Shakespeare's works stand for the plays - among them Audrey, Perdita, and at the end of the play Juliet, in "Romeo and Juliet." The same is certainly true of Miranda, in "The Tempest." In general, it is during the last act that these characters become most symbolical. In CONSULTATIONS it is significant that all the "doctors" have been "sworn to secrecy." The reference to the daughter, as being cured by her illness of her passion for "Florio," is most remarkable. Florio was for a time in the service of the Earl of Southampton, whom some hold to be the "Fair Youth" of the Sonnets. Florio's translation of Montaigne appeared in 1603; and it is certain that Montaigne greatly influenced Oxford, especially in the plays "Hamlet," and "Twelfth Night," It looks as though Florio were in some way connected with this attempt to injure the Shakespeare plays, or in other words to "poison the daughter," or "the dog." It is significant that TRUTH, Wit's wife, and presumably the mother of his "daughter," "left (the performance) almost at once."

## BOOK II.

The parties go to Rome, whence WISDOM and TRUTH pass on to an obscure part of Italy, and remain there during the reign of Augustus: but the traditional accounts of the the names of classical authors are wrong. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Martial, and many more, were only amanuenses, or transcribers, of literary productions to which their names were affixed, though all were dedicated by WIT and GENIUS. COMMON SENSE had this fact from his mother, TRUTH, whose veracity has never been questioned. "This small specimen of historical misrepresentation should convince us how little we ought to rely on what we read and hear, though the discovery may give umbrage to the majority of mankind, who are predisposed to credit what their forefathers believed; yet love of justice and candour would not suffer me to let the impositions pass upon the world any longer.

An important passage. For classical authors, Virgil, Horace, etc., read Elizabethan authors - which is certainly what Lawrence intended - and we arrive at this - that any of the Elizabethan literary productions were actually the work of WIT and GENIUS, otherwise of Oxford and one other of his group, unless GENIUS is just another name for Oxford, as perhaps it is. This conclusion, of course, fits in exactly with contemporary assertions, as e.g. the "Arte of English Poesie, 1589" the author of which refers openly to the fine literary work done by noblemen and gentlemen of Elizabeth's reign, as would be realized "if their names could be made public." The noblemen of that day wrote under pseudonyms, or under the names of other men then living.

The allegory continues:-

The world is very mad; especially kings and great people. COMMON SENSE has become a lunacy-expert. He sees HUMOUR, with finger on nose, winking at GENIUS, because he thinks that COMMON SENSE has been taken in. WISDOM tells COMMON SENSE that WIT and Co are strolling about Germany, performing interludes, and puppet-shows that ridicule the new (protestant?) religion.

Lawrence, it seems was a professional surgeon, though not on the register at the Royal College of Surgeons. Around the early part of the seventeenth century, many professional companies were touring Germany.

The allegory continues:-

WIT returns to his old trade of author. He wrote books that are attributed to Tasso and Ariosto, who acquired immortal glory therefrom. In London, after the Armada year, 1588, WIT, GENIUS, and HUMOUR make the acquaintance of a person belonging to the playhouse, a profligate in his youth, and, as some say, a deer-stealer. Certainly he was a thief, from the time he was first capable of distinguishing anything. My father and his friends suddenly formed an intimate liaison with this man - a connection "vraiment du coeur."

More hints, it will be observed, at the secret authorship, from which imposters gain credit and glory. Then Will of Stratford enters the story, soon after 1588, which is the conventional date for the coming of the Stratford man to London. The interesting statements are made, that he was a dishonest theatrical man, and perhaps a "deer-stealer;" the reference, of

course, being to the legend that he fled to London from Stratford, after poaching Sir Thomas Lucy's deer; though the much more probable reason was that he was a Catholic, fleeing from Lucy, who was a notorious heresy-hunter. It is interesting to note that only WIT, HUMOUR, and GENIUS - this last may be only a duplicate of Oxford - are named as becoming friendly with Shaksper. WISDOM - who may be Burleigh - is not among them; nor is TRUTH.

The allegory continues:-

The theatre-man (Shaksper) seeing that he had to deal with somewhat careless people (sans souci) who were never on their guard, seized the first opportunity to steal from them all that he could; and, the better to hide his theft, he told them with an affected air of interest, that one misfortune came never without another, and that information was being laid against them all as persons suspected of being involved in the plot which was being hatched by the Scottish Queen against the life of Elizabeth; that he knew their innocence, but that they had better not reckon on that, since nothing could save them, except swift flight from the country. The dupes took his word for it, and hastened to cross into Holland. When the theatre-man had thus got rid of them, by the panic terror into which they were thrown, he began to examine the fruits of his trickery in my father's baggage.

The statement that Oxford was never on his guard is corroborated by the King in "Hamlet," who, speaking to Laertes, concerning Hamlet (IV. 7) says:-

he, being remiss,  
Most generous and free from all contriving  
Will not peruse the foils.

In view of the recent proofs that Shaksper of Stratford was a Catholic, it is interesting to read here that Oxford's friendship and that of HUMOUR with Shaksper led them to be suspected persons; though the plot by the Scottish Queen will not fit, because that Queen had been beheaded in 1587. Whether Oxford and the Fair Youth did actually flee to Holland about 1589, I cannot say; but it may have been so, because we have little knowledge of his movements between 1589 and his second marriage in 1591.

The allegory continues:-

The knave discovered a common-place book containing

an infinite variety of modes and forms to express all the different sentiments of the human mind, with rules etc. for every occasion or subject that might occur in dramatic writing. He discovered also the magic glass of GENIUS, which would not only show the external surfaces of any object, but would penetrate even into the deep recesses of the soul of man. He also found the mask of HUMOUR, which made every sentence that came from its wearer's mouth a pleasant thing to hear.

This is a very enigmatic passage. Lawrence does not say, openly, that William of Stratford stole the MS plays of Oxford; but that he stole his common-place book, which may mean a book of dramatic notes, scenarios etc. But since the Genius, and the Humour, were stolen from the same group, the symbolic meaning seems to be that the Stratford man was no more than the "mask," for Oxford and his group, whose abilities and manuscripts he "stole".

The allegory continues:-

Excepting my mother TRUTH, WISDOM, and I, no one knew how he had acquired this treasure, and we should never have guessed it ourselves, but that the mask, which ordinarily serves for disguise, revealed to us the mystery. The mask of HUMOUR (gaieté) was an old acquaintance of ours, but although my mother was very reluctant to consent, we agreed to maintain profound silence concerning this theft, being persuaded that my father and his friends would easily recover their loss. We feared, on the other hand, to put this man (Shaksper) in the fetters of justice, which we could not have done without depriving the country of its greatest ornament.

Here is more intentional mystification, on the part of Lawrence; but it looks to me as though Lawrence thought that the Fair Youth (Humour) was in some way linked up with the business. I have long held that the Fair Youth took over his father's pen-name of "William Shakespeare," and that tradition has long mixed him up with the Stratford man. When the author says that he could not have delivered up Shaksper to justice "without depriving the country of its greatest ornament," I suppose he means, at bottom that the revelation of the truth was for secret and dynastic reasons impossible. He is, of course, intentionally cryptic. The loss of true authorship has not been "easily recovered." It has taken 300 years.

The allegory continues:-

With these materials, and a backing of genius (un

grand fond de génie), which one steals from nobody, he began to write dramatic pieces. I will say nothing of his successes - sufficient to name him Shakespeare.

This "backing of genius" is a curious phrase. I do not for one moment believe that Will of Stratford was a genius; partly for the reason that contemporary documents and especially the references to him in Elizabethan plays - as Sly, William, in "As You Like It"; and the young clown in "Winter's Tale"; and Sogliardo, in "Every Man Out of His Humour," all, without exception, refer to him as just a simpleton and a clown - in the case of Sogliardo, a very cunning and knavish one. In my judgment, the phrase "genius . . . which one steals from nobody," is ironical. That Shaksper himself "wrote dramatic pieces" I, likewise, do not believe; and I feel pretty sure that Lawrence, here, is not telling the literal truth; but, either from faulty knowledge, or from policy, is writing symbolically. It is interesting to note that "sufficient to name him Shakespeare" is the only occasion on which Lawrence, in the whole of his book, tells his readers, openly, that the elaborate dramatic allegory, which runs through it, is concerned with Shakespeare.

Continuation of Allegory:-

There is much about the affairs of France. The WIT group visits France; and the material, hereabouts, can be linked up with the wars of religion in France, and therefore with KING LEAR. (This material may account in part, for the appearance of a French translation). Truth silently deplores the death of RALEGH, who is described as "notre ami et notre favori." It is interesting to find his name linked with the Oxford group, especially in view of the fact that he probably had a hand in a late Shakespearean play, THE TEMPEST.

NOTES: Lawrence, in the First Edition of his book, hints that it was written between 1763 and 1769, the date of publication. COMMON SENSE has "resided in England for more than a century and a half," all owing for peregrinations. Deducting, say, 153 years from 1763, we get ca. 1610 as an approximate date for the beginning of the Shakespearean allegory, so far as the vindication of Truth by Time is concerned. It is probably not a coincidence that 1610-12 is about the orthodox date for "The Winter's Tale," the basic theme of which is the vindication of Truth by Time.



#### HOW LAWRENCE ACQUIRED HIS INFORMATION.

Lawrence who moved in "the first circles" of contemporary society, was a protégé of John Montague, 4th Earl of Sandwich, who was much interested in Shakespeare, and used to give elaborate theatrical entertainments at the family mansion, Hinchinbrooke Hall, in Huntingdonshire. One of the Earl's principal collaborators, at the Admiralty, was Lord de Vere-Beauclerk, whom, no doubt, Lawrence used frequently to meet. The de Vere-Beauclerks were connected with the first Duke of St. Albans, who was the son of Charles II and Nell Gwynn. He married the sole daughter, and heiress, of Aubrey de Vere, the 20th, and last, Earl of Oxford. St. Albans, therefore, obtained access to the family papers of the de Veres. These connections, presumably, explain how Lawrence got his secret information; and they explain also how - since the Beauclerks were directly linked with the Stuart dynasty, through Charles II - the secret of the Shakespeare mystery had to be maintained, though a century and a half had passed since Oxford's death. The idea that Lawrence invented the allegory is, of course, utterly untenable, even though it were not, as it is, corroborated, in almost all the principal details, by the interpretation which, for years past, several members of the Shakespeare Fellowship have put upon the mystery. The fact that, in a matter so difficult, delicate, mysterious, and complicated, Herbert Lawrence and ourselves, working by wholly different methods, at a time-distance of a century and a half, should have arrived at substantially identical conclusions, seems to give authenticity to both interpretations. Each supports the other. "THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF COMMON SENSE," therefore, is a work of capital importance to our Oxfordian case. Why Lawrence chose Common Sense as the name of the Author of his Allegory.

"Love's Labour's Lost" l. l. 55.

Biron. What is the end of study, let me know.

King. Why, that to know which else we should not know.

Biron. Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from common sense?

King. Ay, that is study's god-like recompense.

Biron. Come on then, I will swear to study so.

To know the thing I am forbid to know. . . .

Or study where to meet some mistress fine,

When mistresses from common sense are hid;

Or, having sworn too hard a keeping oath,

Study to break it, and not break my troth.

Is study's gain be thus, and this be so,  
Study knows that which yet it doth not know . . .  
delights are vain . . . to pore upon a book  
To seek the light of truth, while truth the while  
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look.

Biron and the King - Biron being Oxford-Shakespeare himself - are talking cryptic stuff concerning the secret authorship of the plays, the inner meanings of which are "hid and barr'd from common sense." Lawrence says, "Perhaps from ordinary common sense - in our day from that of the orthodox commentators - but not from my Common Sense, who has special information, and already "knows the things he us forbid to know," including even the identity of Oxford's "mistress fine" - in this play Rosaline-Elizabeth - which ordinary common sense may not have discovered.

Oxford, no doubt, had sworn an oath of secrecy, which, in the plays, he "studies to break without breaking his troth"; and he does it by subtle word-play. The words,

pore upon a book

To seek the light of truth -  
are very close to Jonson's in the Folio, opposite the Droeshout picture, informing the reader that whoso wants the truth of the matter must

look, not on his picture but his book -  
despite that the fact that "truth the while" is "falsely blinding the eye-sight."

#### OCCASIONAL NOTES

Members are reminded that the "Shakespearean Page" in the "East Anglian Magazine," under the editorship of Mr F. L. Ranson, is still going strong. The October issue contained an appreciation of the late Dr Gilbert Slater by Colonel Douglas. The magazine can be obtained from any branch of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son, price 1/- monthly.