

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP NEWS-LETTER, APRIL 1939

Two years ago Mr Percy Allen and Capt. B. M. Ward published a pamphlet entitled "An enquiry into the relations between Lord Oxford as 'Shakespeare,' Queen Elizabeth, and the Fair Youth of Shakespeare's Sonnets." The purpose of the pamphlet was to show contemporary documentary evidence existed which pointed to the fact that in the mid-fifteen-seventies the relations between Lord Oxford and Queen Elizabeth resulted in the birth of a son, who subsequently became the Fair Youth of Shakespeare's Sonnets. Since then Mr Allen has amplified this theory from internal evidence of allegorical passages in 16th and 17th century books and plays.

Some members, however, have disagreed with the evidence and the deductions advanced in the pamphlet and articles. This is all to the good, because we all feel that free and open discussion is the surest way to arrive at the truth. It was felt, however, that all members of the Fellowship are not particularly interested in this rather specialized and intricate aspect of the Shakespeare Problem, and that it would be unfair to many members to devote a whole "News-Letter" to it. Accordingly we

are issuing a "Supplement" to the April 1939 "News-Letter." This Supplement contains: (1) Criticisms of the Pamphlet by Canon G. H. Rendall and Mr T. M. Aitken; (2) Replies to these criticisms by Mr Percy Allen and Capt. B. M. Ward.

NOTES AND COMMENTS ON "AN ENQUIRY"

By Dr G. H. Rendall, B.D., Litt.D., LL.D.

The main objectives of this "Enquiry" are to show that the Fair Youth of the Sonnets was an illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth, born at Richmond Palace in February 1575, as the result of a liaison with Lord Oxford, and that the Dark Lady was the Queen.

No documentary evidence for the birth, existence, doings, or death of this alleged bastard is produced, but the supposed proofs are summarized on pp. 4-5. Most of these are inferences derived from incidents which the authors regard as insoluble enigmas, but which admit of easy and natural explanation. For instance, the detention of Lord Burleigh in London, the "flight" of Oxford to Flanders in 1574, his tour on the Continent in

1575-6, the visit of the Queen's physician to Spa in attendance on Christopher Hatton, all of which seem irrelevant to the main issue. "The sad and pensive apprehensions" of the Queen in June 1574 are expressly assigned to "weighty causes of state." And at this juncture, her relations with Leicester, with Mary, Queen of Scots, and the situation in the Low Countries, afforded ample grounds for anxiety.

Consideration of the more circumstantial data may begin with the Bower House at Havering, on which the chronological fabric of the thesis is constructed. On p. 7 it is stated that in 1568 "The Queen stayed - presumably with Lord Oxford - at his house at Havering Bowre." Next comes a quotation of a supposed visit in July 1572 to the Earl at Havering, "who doubtless entertained his Queen magnificently." On page 8 "doubtless" and "presumably" become an assertion that in May 1574 "The Queen passed six days in retirement at Havering." The history of Havering has been studied in full by Dr Harold Smith, and though the descent of the numerous manors in the Liberty of Havering are dealt with, there is no evidence that Lord Oxford owned a house there. The reverse is implied by the claim made by him to the Hereditary Keepership of Havering House and Park and Stewardship of the Forest of Essex, in the later years of the Queen's reign. Any such residence, if it existed, was distinct from the Royal Manor of Havering-atte-Bower, which (probably from Saxon days) had been held by the Crown. Queen after Queen, including Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, and Jane Seymour, used it as a Royal residence; and it was here that Princess Elizabeth received Queen Mary on her accession. In 1568 it was largely extended for the reception of Lord Leicester and others of her Privy Council, of which Lord Oxford was not a member. For the 1572 visit, mentioned by Majendie, there is no sufficient evidence; while that for the "six days retirement" in May 1574, to which the date and occasion of paternity is referred, is inconclusive, and seems precluded by Privy Council records.

The atmosphere and manners of the Court, combined with the Queen's barefaced indiscretions, produced endless rumours, some of which were relished rather than resented by the Queen, and used as counters of policy. At what exact point she drew the line, biographers will never agree. Much depends on the reading of a strangely complex character. But among the many scandals promulgated by Jesuits, rebel Lords, plotters, and agents of the Queen of Scots, Lord Oxford seems remarkably free.

The Queen's gift of appreciation for brilliance of every kind, in Art, Learning, Poetry, or Adventure, made her Court the symbol of national greatness. At an early age, Lord Oxford as a Royal Ward, by reason of his many gifts, took his place as one of its outstanding ornaments. This is the clue to the "jealousy" on which the enquiry lays misdirected stress: but the "scandal letter" referred to on p. 12 is dismissed, except as malicious gossip, by nearly all capable historians and biographers. To the Queen, Cecils and Walsinghams were members of the bourgeois, to whom she could extend patronage, and impose her will: but to Anne Cecil, at her wedding (1571), she showed marked kindness; and later assigned to her chambers at Hampton Court. Beyond this there is no evidence of personal susceptibilities or amours: on the contrary, as the period of tutelage drew to its close, Lord Oxford chafed continually at the restrictions imposed on the freedom of his movements. For the existence of a bastard son, no single direct statement is produced; though, if the authors' contentions and allegations are true, the matter could not have escaped notice. On the other hand, the writers accept without demur the incredible story of a stratagem, "laid apparently by Lord Burleigh" and others, for securing renewed intercourse of his daughter with Lord Oxford. In Burleigh's own careful and minute memoranda respecting the birth of Elizabeth, there is no hint of any such occurrence, nor did Lord Oxford himself entertain doubt as to the true paternity until his return from the Continent in April 1576. On the contrary, he had received with unfeigned delight in Venice the news of his wife's safe confinement and delivery.

In Shakespearean chronology there is no more assured index than the publication of "Venus and Adonis," dedicated to Southampton in 1593. It was the first published work bearing the pen-name of William Shakespeare and ran through six editions before 1604. Mr Allen refers to a first draft in 1568-70 (p. 7), a figment of his own invention. To him (p. 7) the keynote of the poem is the attempt by a mature woman to seduce a reluctant youth: and the flower that springs from the blood of Adonis is the illegitimate son of the Venus-Adonis union, born in 1575. Venus in previous works by Mr Allen is the Queen, while Lord Oxford is alternatively Adonis and "the boar," the "Verres" badge of the de Veres. It would be hard to imagine a more obtuse interpretation of a poem comparable in parts with the "Faerie Queene." Allegorically, Venus, like Aphrodite in Plato's "Symposium," covers the entire range that intervenes between ideal beauty and sexual desire - a role often filled by

the Queen in Court revels, and in the stanzas of sonneteers.

Turning to the Sonnets, we find that Capt. Ward dates them from the 1580's, while Mr Allen assigns their beginning to 1592, with supposed reminiscences from earlier years. In his "Case for Edward de Vere" he regarded them as addressed to the infant son born in 1593 (p. 154-8). He now substitutes the bastard son of February 1575, and favours Sir D. Bray's order based on rhymed links. No reference is made to the marriage theme, which occupies Sonnets 1-16, and connects them inseparably with the composition of the "Venus and Adonis" ("Personal Clues" by G.H.R. Chap. III). The evidence, so far as divulged, consists of (1) a supposed "dynastic quality" (p. 5), based apparently on a forced interpretation of

"In sleep a king, but waking no such matter," Son. 87
(2) the amazing suggestion, that the Queen might be induced to acknowledge the imaginary bastard as her successor, (3) inferences derived from Son. 153-154. These Sonnets, appended at the end of the whole series, are the least Shakespearean of the whole number, and on that account rejected by Knox Pooler, and questioned by Tucker and other leading editors. In any case, they are not biographical, but a poetic pleasantry, based on a Marianus epigram in the Greek Anthology. The reference to Bath, if biographical, can only refer to the visit of the Queen in 1574, at a time when the supposed bastard was yet unborn; but what could be more inappropriate than to describe the Queen as a "Maid of Dian" (S. 153), or than the paraphrase "nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep," in Sonnet 154? The supposed implication in "Sovereign cure" is explained and refuted by Hotspur's

"And telling me the sovereign'st thing on earth
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise" (I Henry IV
1, 3, 58-9).

The cryptic significance of Tudor crowns on the front page of the 1640 Sonnets (pp. 5, 12), in which the whole series is treated as addressed to a woman, is inscrutable.

The natural son is said for a time to have been unaware of his parentage. He then becomes a page among his father's retainers; as such, he took part in the "Triumph" celebrated at Whitehall in November 1584, and as prologue to the "Tree of the Sun" pageant, devised by Lord Oxford, he addressed an appeal to the Queen for recognition of filial rights and claims! (p. 12). He then became an actor, the "certain" evidence of which is withheld. In Sonnets 23 and 110, the simile refers clearly to the writer, not to the recipient of the Sonnet. Thereafter he falls into bad company and except by implication fades out of

history. Supplementary proofs are drawn from supposed word-plays, such as that in which Mr Allen suo more degrades Sonnet 33 into a vehicle for a double entendre between "sun" and "son," reiterated in Sonnets 24 and 35, and elsewhere.

The identification of the Dark Lady with Queen Elizabeth (pp. 10 and 12) is still more unconscionable; some of the implications are beyond the range of discussion, but initial objections are obvious. To regard the medley of Sonnets comprised in the appended section Nos. 127-154 as a series addressed to the Dark Lady, is a fundamental error. The designation is derived from the opening Sonnet, which contrasts the charms of various types of beauty, blonde or black, and is resumed in Sonnets 131, 132; but there is little reason to connect the theme with the Sonnets concerned with the false mistress of Sonnet 133 and its companions, a group which cannot be dissociated from the unpleasing episode of Sonnets 33 to 42. Praise of black beauty cannot be applied to Queen Elizabeth, whose hair was brownish red, though in old age her teeth turned black! But it is inconceivable, either that the charms implied should have been exercised by the Queen after her sixtieth year, or that Lord Oxford should have at any time addressed such terms to the Sovereign, on whose bounty depended the annual grant of £1,000, which enabled him to retain some semblance of his hereditary status.

A CRITICISM OF "AN ENQUIRY"

By Mr T. M. Aitken

The N.L. of November last raises the question whether Queen Elizabeth and Lord Oxford were at one time mistress and lover, as a consequence of which a son was born.

This theory was put forward in a pamphlet by Percy Allen and Capt. Ward some time ago, and so far as I am aware, no reasoned refutation of the evidence given in the pamphlet has been published. One result of this is that it is now being assumed in recent issues of the N.L. that members of the Fellowship, or a material number of them, accept this theory.

I am no scholar, but have spent some time in looking into contemporary evidence to support or refute this thesis, and am confident that the balance of evidence is decisive against the authors. What follows therefore is an attempt to show that

there is no credible foundation given in their contribution, or available from reliable sources, to support the extraordinary theory put forward.

The pamphlet starts with an introduction signed by Percy Allen. He points out that the Sonnets have a mysteriously "dynastic" quality, and in consequence claims that the author must have experienced "some close connection with Q.E." There is no evidence given to substantiate this, and it seems curious that this mysterious quality has previously been missed by the many hundreds of thousands who have studied and enjoyed these Sonnets. The introduction then goes on to give the conclusions of the joint authors, namely, that "Shakespeare," the Dark Lady, and the Fair Youth are none other than Oxford, Queen Elizabeth, and their son, who later became "a professional actor known as Will Shakespeare." We are then told that, if we accept this, everything becomes crystal clear, all the well-known difficulties and mysteries are explained and all is, in fact, "pike-staff-plain." Reject this solution, and you can explain nothing so far as understanding much of the text is concerned; you are, in fact, sunk in shallows and in mysteries. Therefore it appears to the authors their solution must be the correct one!

They then proceed to give a "Chronological Epitome of the Evidence, Internal and External" for their conclusion. As regards what they call "Internal" evidence - I propose to ignore this altogether as absolutely valueless. Who can possibly decide what passages in the 37 plays and the poems have special reference to the personal experiences of the author? To give selected short passages from many thousands of speeches, or verses, in order to bolster up preconceived notions regarding the life of the author is not evidence, but merely guess-work.

This takes us to the external evidence and it will be found, I think, to be extremely thin. I regret to add that it contains many mis-statements and wholly unjustified conclusions.

It is stated that on Lord Oxford's marriage, "Immediately we begin to get contemporary evidence that the Queen is keeping the young husband and wife apart." Nothing that deserves to be called evidence is quoted in support of this.

Stress is then laid on a report in May and June 1574 that the Queen was now melancholy and remained sad and pensive, and it is assumed that this was due to a love affair with Oxford.

There is nothing whatever given to justify this preposterous assumption. The annals state that this melancholy was occasioned by "some weighty causes of State," and it must be remembered that the Queen was then a woman of great experience and responsibility, and 41 years of age. According to the authors, the love-making took place largely at Oxford's house at Havering Bower in 1568, 1572, and especially in 1574, during the summer months. It so happens, however, that according to the best authorities, Oxford did not own a house there, and as proof of this, it is well-known that about 1600 he put forward a claim to be hereditary keeper of the house and park of Havering by descent from Thomas de Clare - see p. 73 "History of Havering" by Harold Smith, 1925. Why did he forward this claim if he was already owner of the property? Havering was, of course, a Royal manor to which the Queen paid many visits.

As for Oxford's flight to the Continent, he had been long anxious to have service abroad, and the suggestion that this was due to an "affair" with the Queen is not supported by any contemporary records, but is simply a very bad guess.

This brings us to the date September 13th, 1574, and the pamphlet states: "On this date, three days before Lord Oxford's arrival at Theobalds, Lady Oxford wrote to Lord Sussex, the Lord Chamberlain, asking for a third chamber near her husband's rooms, in Hampton Court Palace, where the Court would gather, on the Queen's return from progress."

We are then referred for confirmation to pp. 97 and 98 of Ward's "Oxford," and what do we find there?

Lady Oxford wrote not for a chamber near her husband's, but "in consideration that there is but two chambers in your order to the ushers for my lodging, it would please you to increase it with a third chamber next unto it, which was reserved last time . . ." She then proceeds to explain that "the more commodious my lodging is, the willinger I hope my husband will be to come thither, thereby the oftener to attend Her Majesty." This seems a most reasonable request for people of their standing at Court.

The Earl returned to Lord Burleigh's house at Theobalds on September 16th, where there is no evidence to show that he did not live amicably with his wife, as also at Hampton Court, as Burleigh in his diary tells us that the Earl and his Countess spent the month of October there.

There is therefore no foundation for the statement that about October 2nd a stratagem was carried out by means of which husband and wife were brought together without the former's knowledge, and no necessity for it. It is true that such an incident is referred to in Wright's "History of Essex," but we do not know when it was supposed to have taken place and we have Ward's authority for stating that "the stratagem alleged to have been contrived has no historical foundation whatever" - see p. 387 of his "Seventeenth Earl of Oxford."

Most of the remainder of the pamphlet consists of Court gossip and scandal, due to political and religious hatred, including what is said to have passed between prisoners in the dungeons of Newgate!!

There is even a reference to matter in the Howard-Arundel papers, "probably in Chas. Arundel's handwriting." The value of this testimony is given in Ward's book, p. 222:

"It is to be hoped that in future all right-minded historians will follow the example of King James and will never again advance the disgusting lies of the 'suborned informer' Chas. Arundel as reliable historical evidence."

I would submit therefore that the authors have failed to prove their case, and it remains quite reasonable to believe that Oxford was the writer of the Sonnets, and at least had some hand in the plays without the slightest necessity for accepting the extravagant views put forward in their pamphlet.

But I have not yet referred to an unhappy feature of this pamphlet. It assumes throughout that in private life our greatest Queen was a woman of very doubtful morals. I would recommend any normal and unprejudiced reader to turn to much the most thorough inquiry into the whole question of Q.E.'s morality. I refer to a book entitled "The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth," by F. Chamberlin, LL.B., M.R.I., F.R.H.S., etc. It will be found like a breath of fresh air after this pamphlet. When he started his inquiry, the author had never doubted that Elizabeth was the mistress of Leicester, Essex, Raleigh, Hatton, and other favourites.

He gives a most exhaustive collection of all the contemporary evidence for and against the morality of Elizabeth. Every public and private library that offered hope of new

material was searched. Not a paper in Rome was left unseen, and every possible source of information in this and every other country was examined so as to exhaust the subject on both sides. He gives the complete medical record of her whole life. Then follows the opinion on the medical evidence of Dr Arthur Keith (now Sir Arthur) and many of his distinguished colleagues, and similar evidence from Sweden, Denmark, Spain, and elsewhere. Sir Arthur Keith's opinion will be found of interest: "In a medical sense her sexual system was blasted; she had neither the instinct of sweetheart nor mother."

Chamberlin tabulates and examines every direct and indirect contemporary charge made against the Queen. Then he proceeds with her defence and quotes in all 19 contemporary records, all indicating that the writers believed that the Queen was a chaste woman, and among the writers are Burleigh (4), Sir Thomas Chaloner, Sir Christopher Hatton, Bacon, Catherine de Medici, three French Ambassadors, including de Foix and de Castelnau, two Spanish Ambassadors, de Silva and de Quadra, the Austrian Ambassador, the Chancellor of Sweden, Mundt the English political agent in Germany, and the French historian, de Thou. To any unbiased mind, the medical evidence, together with those letters, surely constitute overwhelming evidence in the Queen's favour.

The author then goes on to point out that the reason that so many, including even himself, were misled is a simple one.

The only sources of information open to the general public are some 53 biographies of the Queen, including all the important histories of England. These have printed everything that could incriminate her, but only 11 of them include a single one of the defences just mentioned, six of these defences are not quoted by any of them, and the largest number that any one of them has referred to is five. Little wonder that a false impression prevails in so many quarters.

Chamberlin fittingly concludes his work with these words from the great Queen herself:

"I am young, and he (Dudley) is young, and therefore we have been slandered. God knows, they do us grievous wrong, and the time will come when the world will know it also. My life is in the open, and I have so many witnesses that I cannot understand how so bad a judgement can have been

formed of me. But what can we do? We cannot cover everyone's mouth, but must content ourselves with doing our duty and trust in God, for the truth will at last be made manifest."

MR PERCY ALLEN'S REPLY

With some reluctance - because I am very much occupied, and because word-shaking events are taking place in Europe - I take up my pen to reply briefly to the criticisms made by Dr Rendall and Mr Aitken to the pamphlet published some years ago, by Capt. Ward and myself, concerning the relations between Queen Elizabeth and Lord Oxford.

First let me take the question of Havering Bower House; where, if I am right, the intimacy between Queen Elizabeth and Oxford took place, in May 1574. I quoted a letter from Gilbert Talbot to Lord Shrewsbury, May 10th, 1574:

The Queen's Matie goeth of Saturday cum se' night to Havering of the Bower, and their remeaneth until she begins her progress.

My opponents make great play with the fact that the Havering Bower House was the property of the Crown; but they have failed to realize that the question whether the property was owned by the Crown, or by Oxford, is wholly irrelevant to the issue. My case is that the Queen, who wore the Crown of England, and Lord Oxford, came together, at that time, apparently in Havering Manor; but if it can be proved that the Queen entertained Oxford, instead of vice versa, my argument remains unaffected. As a matter of fact, however, we can show from documentary evidence, Oxford's loose connection with Havering.

In Morant's "Essex," under the title Havering, I read:

The Vere family having been attainted and two of them beheaded for their adherence to the House of Lancaster: in 1485 John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was restored by Act of Parliament to his honours and estates, and to the Office of Grand Forester of Essex.

It is, therefore, certain that, by the close of the 15th century, the Earls of Oxford had estates at Havering, which may have included Havering Bower. Further, Nichols, quoting from Morant's "Essex," l. 59, states:

When Queen Elizabeth was here in 1572, Havering was the property of her Lord High Chamberlain, Edward de Vere . . . the lands are still in the Crown, but let upon lease. Besides the palace there was another at Pirgo (adjoining), which belonged to the Queen of England, where they resided at their convenience . . . Havering being usually part of the Queen's jointure.

We are here told that there were, at Havering, in 1572, two residences close to one another, one of them it seems belonging to the Veres and the other to the Queen. Majendie repeats the statement that Havering Bower was Oxford's nearly 100 years later, in 1572, and adds that the Earl "doubtless entertained his Queen magnificently." Of all men, Majendie was in a position to know, since he had access to the many boxes of records, relating to the Vere lands, which are now preserved at Castle Hedingham.

But this is not the end of our evidence. Capt. Ward informs me that, in his notes from the Patent Rolls, concerning Oxford's sales of land, he has the following:

4th May, 1586. Pardon to the Earl of Oxford for alienation to Robert, Earl of Leicester, of lands in Essex, including Havering, at Trinity 27 Eliz. 1585.

The meaning of this document - Capt. Ward tells me - is that, in the summer of 1585, Oxford sold lands to Lord Leicester without permission; and that, in May 1586, he was formally pardoned. The explanation is that these lands in Essex, including Havering, were held by Oxford under direct lease "in chief" from the Crown, because it was only when lands were held "in chief" that permission to sell had to be obtained from the Government authorities. Oxford, therefore, was not the freeholder of his lands, and property, at Havering; but he was lessee from the Crown, this confirming Morant.

To conclude this question of Oxford, and the Queen, at Havering. We know that Elizabeth was a frequent visitor there during her progresses - 1568 in and 1572, again in the year we are concerned with, 1574; and again in 1578, when we know that Lord Oxford was there; that being the famous progress which, as I have shown in articles and in lectures, is intimately connected with the play, "Love's Labour's Lost"; the very comedy which, as I allege, tells us cryptically of the intimacy

between the Queen and Oxford there. That Havering Manor is the house aimed at is emphasized in the play, by the punning allusions to "Man," "woman," "Manor," and "manner" (Manor), including "the manner of a man with a maid."

I submit, therefore, that my opponent's case, in this matter of Havering, falls utterly, whether considered from the factual or logical viewpoints.

Turning to the matter of external evidence generally pointing to the birth of this son to the Queen, Dr Rendall states that I have brought no "documentary evidence." What does he expect in a case such as this? I should have thought it unnecessary to remind him that the publication of "documentary evidence," of such matters, was mortally dangerous to those who might do so. Need I remind him that Platter tells us, after his travels in England (1599), that among the things prohibited, on pain of death, are "enquiry whether she (the Queen) be still a virgin"? If death was the penalty for "enquiry," what was the penalty for bringing forward evidence of the Queen's maternity? The country, nevertheless, teemed with rumours. I recall, at random, the man who lost his ears; the young woman who was burned alive; Stubbes, who lost his right hand for publishing a pamphlet concerning the Queen's affair with Alencon; the comments of the Spanish Ambassador, de Quadra (Simacas Papers) concerning the Queen and Lord Leicester, etc.

The "Scandal Letter," by Mary, Queen of Scots, is dismissed by Dr Rendall as "malicious gossip." I agree wholly that it was "malicious"; but I am concerned not with its malice, but with its truth; and I maintain that, when you add to it the additional words concerning "taking so young a man as Lord Oxford to church," also according to contemporary evidence spoken by the Scottish Queen, you have a strong case for supposing that here was no malicious lie, but a malicious truth, based upon known fact.

There is now developing - though Dr Rendall may not be aware of it - another series of facts of great importance, of the existence of which I was unaware when I wrote the pamphlet, namely that contemporary portraits are corroborating the story of the Earl's secret relations with the Queen. There exists, in the National Portrait Gallery, a painting of the Queen standing upon the map of England, with "Oxford between her feet."* I am

*This wording is from a letter by Lord Dillon, from the National Portrait Gallery, to the Editor of "The Times."

aware, of course, that my opponents may protest that this picture means nothing more than a symbolical expression of the Queen's deep interest in the historic city, and University, of Oxford; but, in addition to the patent inadequacy of such a reply, they are further faced with the fact that the portrait bears, on the right hand side, verses (which I have not yet been able to examine) with the "sun-motive"; and that, above, are symbolic storm and sunshine effects, fitting in closely with the rainbow-motive, in the "Rainbow" portrait of the Queen, at Hatfield, which shows her holding the Rainbow, close to which is the inscription, "No rainbow (reine beau) without a sun,"* meaning, as I read it, that "No Queen is beautiful without a son." The fact seems to be that "Nature" was one of the names for the Queen, with the Rainbow as a part of the manifestation. Further, the "Oxford-under-her-Feet" picture shows two roses on the dress and a glove in the Queen's left hand, thus linking up with the Rose-motive at the opening of the Sonnets, and with the glove (cheverell), motive in the play, which again links up with Oxford. (See "Romeo and Juliet" 2.4.87 and "Twelfth Night" 3.1.11 for the Cheverell glove puns. The inside of "Cheverell" is "E. Vere.") A third portrait, that of Lady Pembroke, painted in 1614, bears the inscription "No spring (Ver) till now," and shows the glove inside out. The portraits are thus being linked importantly into the chain of our evidence; and it is, in my judgement, idle to pretend that these interpretations are merely one more in the endless chain of coincidences.

Our pamphlet, for reasons of space, could touch but briefly upon the points of external evidence, and with the remainder of those that we presented, or had in mind, Dr Rendall makes no attempt to deal. There is the statement by Poole that "the Queen wooed the Earl of Oxford, but he would not consent"; there is the mystery of the unprecedented annuity of £1,000 granted to the Earl; the equally great, and significant, mystery that we know nothing of any will by Oxford, nor of any administration of his estate (a fact at once comprehensible were he quasi-royal); the further mystery that, according to the contemporary evidence of his own cousin, Perceval Golding, his body was, it seems, secretly removed from Hackney Church and buried in Westminster Abbey; the further mystery of the unlifted shadow that, somehow, still hangs over his name and life - all utterly unaccountable facts, unless upon some hypothesis, such as that which we claim

*This sun (son) motive is frequent in Elizabethan literature. I can give many examples. "Beau" is used for "Belle" for the purpose of maintaining the pun.

to have established. All these vital matters my opponents lightly ignore. To them the whole matter, as also to the Stratfordian, is simple. It is not simple. Little is simple in Shakespeare, or in the work of his fellows. Elizabethans were not simple people.

Let us turn for a moment to these Sonnets and their "supposed dynastic quality," at which both my opponents mock - Mr Aitken suggesting that this mysterious quality has been missed by hundreds of thousands of readers, who have read the Sonnets with enjoyment. I agree. The inner meaning of the Sonnets is not easily reached, and was certainly intended by their author to be dark and mysterious; but both my opponents are apparently unaware that I am not the first to make this "dynastic" discovery, which has been voiced by, at least, one man-of-letters, whose position certainly entitles him to a hearing - I mean Mr Alfred Noyes, the well-known poet who, at the dinner of the Elizabethan Literary Society, some years ago, said, in the presence of a hundred of us, "The Sonnets are dynastic through and through." The President, Dr F. S. Boas, asked me, immediately upon the close of the dinner, whether I agreed? I replied that the only difference between Mr Noyes and myself was that, whereas he admittedly did not know who were the persons concerned, I believed that I did.

The Sonnets open thus:

From fairest creatures we desire increase
That therefore beauty's rose might never die.

"Beauty" is, I suggest, a name for Queen Elizabeth in the Sonnets, as it is also in "The Phoenix and the Turtle"; and the rose is the Tudor rose, as you see it on the "Oxford" portrait of the Queen referred to some pages back. There follow, throughout the Sonnets, a stream of dynastic references, such as the "Marigold" (the Queen's symbolic flower in 25), the "sun" and "sovereign eye," and "region (regina) cloud" in 33; the "beauty-rose-truth" (Vere) motives of 54; the "ever the same" ("semper eadem," of the royal standard, a double pun) of 76; and a number more - some of the later ones, in the "Hamlet" Sonnets, linking up with the words of Queen Gertrude, in "Hamlet," who - in part, Queen Elizabeth - is Hamlet's (Oxford's) mother in the play. He was her Ward, in historic fact. Lastly the 1640 edition of the Sonnets shows the crowns and the Tudor rose. Why? Dr Rendall complains that the "certain evidence" of the

Fair Youth being an actor is withheld. This interpretation, now widely held, even by the orthodox, was first promulgated years ago by Oscar Wilde and others; and is, in my judgement, unanswerable. I fail to see how any intelligent person can read the group of Sonnets round 40-45, and come to any other conclusion than that the youth addressed was an actor. I have argued many times, in London, without serious contradiction from any member of the audiences, that the boy was probably the first player of Puck - those Sonnets containing a stream of references to "Midsummer Night's Dream" - and we now have important corroboration from Lawrence's book, "The Life and Adventures of Common Sense," wherein "Wit," the character representing Oxford, is the father of "Humour," the Fair Youth, whom "Wit" trains, as a very agile comedian. Several other passages in Elizabethan drama, in and out of Shakespeare, provide complete corroboration; the most striking perhaps being the passage, at the close of Chapman's "Humorous Day's Mirth" - a skit on "Love's Labour's Lost" - wherein Verone's son (Vere's son), the Fair Youth, is mentioned as being very clever at speaking his father's speeches; meaning lines from "Shakespeare's" plays. Incidentally, let me add here that neither of my opponents seems to have any understanding of the workings of the Elizabethan mind, or of their constant use of puns, double meanings, symbolic, and topical allusions, and elaborate word-play, sometimes in three languages, all methods which the Elizabethans looked upon as a legitimate form of art. As Mercutio says to Romeo, after a series of most elaborate and revealing puns:

"Now art thou what thou art by art as well as by nature."

Until our opponents begins to understand the facts - for facts they certainly are - these gentlemen will never be able to agree with my interpretations. We think, and speak, in different languages; though, even so, I am astonished at the simplicity of such criticism as that directed - for example - against my identification of the "Dark Lady" with Queen Elizabeth, despite the fact that the Queen had red hair. Unquestionably she wore, always, in public, a red perruque, which set an imitative fashion for red hair, among the fashionable ladies of her time; but, since my case is that the Sonnets, though topical, are deliberately intended to mystify the readers, it is clear that to write of the Queen, therein, as "the red lady," would have instantly identified her. For that reason the poet tells you (131): "In nothing art thou black save

in thy deeds," meaning, obviously, that the use of the word "black" or "dark" is symbolical - an interpretation which is borne out, again and again, in the Shakespeare plays, wherein the characters standing for the Queen are usually dark ladies, just as Britomart (Queen Elizabeth), in Spenser's "Faerie Queene," is the "knight of the ebon spear," meaning that she is the "dark lady." Further, her names, such as Titania, Cynthia, and so forth, are those of Diana, the moon goddess, or goddess of the night. In two Shakespeare plays, not far apart in period, the Queen is "Rosaline," and in each case she is the dark lady. Thus Biron (Oxford) and the King in "Love's Labour's Lost," 4.3, concerning Rosaline (Elizabeth):

Biron: O tis the sun that maketh all things shine.
King: By heaven thy love is black as ebony.

In "Romeo and Juliet" 1.2, Benvolio speaks to Romeo (Oxford) of Rosaline:

Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

A little later on, Romeo meets Juliet (Anne Vavasour), and compares her, at once, to a "snowy dove trooping with crows." Let me add that there is no question, as Dr Rendall supposes, of the Queen's sexual charms having been exercised upon Oxford "after her sixtieth year." The Sonnets are largely reminiscent; they are intentionally mystifying; and, as Dr Rendall very well knows, the later ones bitterly attack the "Dark Lady."

With the complicated question of "Venus and Adonis," I have no space to deal. If my opponents wish to deny that Venus and the Boar are not Oxford and the Queen, they are free of their opinions; but it may interest them to know that, not long ago, I challenged a very orthodox vice-president of a well-known Shakespearean Society, in London, with the following question, concerning verse 152, of "Venus and Adonis": "Do you, or do you not, agree that the following words are a very accurate description of Queen Elizabeth; and are aimed directly at her?:"

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways;
She treads the path that she untreads again;
Her more than haste is mated with delays,
Like the proceedings of a drunken brain."

That vice-president, who is rigidly orthodox, looked rather disconcerted, and then answered, "Yes, I do." Nobody among the audience, or on the platform, challenged me. May I add that Dr Rendall's tendency to explain difficult passages, by pointing out that they are drawn from the classics, provides no escape from an, unwelcome to him, topical explanation. On the contrary, the ability of the Elizabethan writer, when challenged, to plead classical origin, or allusion, was the most convenient way of escape, when challenged by the censor, or other authority. Substantially, all Elizabethan literature was topical; and, as even orthodox professors, such as Dr Harrison and Dr Sissons, now admit, topicality was looked for both by readers and by audiences. Alike on the stage and in the study, it was the custom of a day which had no newspapers.

I have no space with which to deal, at any length, with Dr Aitken's criticisms, some of which, including Havering, I have already answered. He, playing for safety, rejects utterly all internal evidence, and concerns himself only with the external evidence. I have already pointed out to Dr Rendall that, in the very nature of the case, conclusive external evidence of a "documentary" kind is not to be looked for; but, even then, the external evidence is very strong, and is being slowly added to. I will deal in a moment with the relations between the external and internal evidences, but first I wish to touch for a moment upon two points raised by Mr Aitken: the first of which is the stratagem by which - as I assert, in October 1574, at Hampton Court - Lord Oxford became, without his knowledge, the father of a legitimate child, when he supposed that he had been with a mistress. My opponents say that "there is no foundation for the statement" - and I rub my eyes, because the fact is that the statement is recorded by two writers - one of whom, as Mr Aitken admits, is Wright, in his "History of Essex," where I read:

He (Oxford) forsook his lady's bed, but the father of Lady Anne (Burleigh) by stratagem contrived that her husband should unknowingly sleep with her, supposing her to be another woman. She bore him a son in consequence.

Secondly, we read in "Osborn's Traditional Memoirs," 1689 (p. 546) of:

The last great Earl of Oxford whose lady was brought to his bed under notion of his mistress . . . and from such a virtuous deceit she is said to proceed.

The "she" is Lady Elizabeth Vere, born early in July 1575, some nine months after the coming together of the Earl and his wife at Hampton Court; and this lady, I allege, is none other than Perdita in "Winter's Tale," whose story fits in, in every substantial detail, with that of the birth of Lady Elizabeth Vere, to her legitimate parents, Lord and Lady Oxford, who are Leontes and Hermione. Further, this exact incident - as Mr Aitken must very well know - is dramatized in two other Shakespearean plays, which deal with this period of the 1570's, namely "All's Well" and "Measure for Measure."

It is all very fine to tell us, as Mr Aitken does, that all the internal evidence in this matter is "absolutely valueless"; and to deny, as again he does, that we can anyway determine what particular passages in the plays, or in the poems, can refer to personal experiences of the author. That is a very easy escape from an unarguable position. and the indisputable fact is that the personalities and incidents of the Shakespeare plays of this period fit, with astonishing accuracy, the recorded facts of contemporary history, with such accuracy that the "coincidence" solution becomes ludicrous. Let us look at the facts all round.

I have dug out, with considerable pains, an unusual incident in the life of this extraordinary man. I find that incident confirmed in two historical records, which I have quoted; and, lastly, I find it confirmed in no less than three Shakespearean plays, which corroborate the story, even to such elaborate detail as the presentation of the baby to Leontes-Oxford, to see whether "nature would work in him to recognize his own offspring." Thus it happens in "Winter's Tale," and that is precisely what happened, in December 1577, when the Duchess of Suffolk tells Burleigh that she will bring the child, Lady Elizabeth Vere, to Oxford for recognition.

Mr Aitken tells me that I select these "short passages" to "bolster up preconceived notions"; and he further adds that my methods provide no evidence, but are "merely guess-work." My reply must be that I have not, nor have ever had "preconceived notions," concerning the Shakespeare mystery, and that I have passed, during the last 30 years of my life, through Stratfordianism to agnosticism; thence to Baconianism; thence back to agnosticism; and, finally, to the Oxford creed; changing my views in a hundred and more points of detail, almost from day to day, as my tireless search among the evidences gradually forced me into opinions which, nevertheless,

continuously from time to time, I have been compelled inexorably to modify. A good example of my change of attitude is found in the fact that I am now coming round to the conclusion that the Fair Youth - though I have long denied it - may be Lord Southampton, because, during the last year or two, further evidence has come to light. No man can successfully investigate this problem, who is not always ready to modify his opinions, precisely as the detectives of the C.I.D. have to do, when unravelling complicated cases. To state that I work on "preconceived ideas" is utterly untrue, and the statement should at once be withdrawn by my critic. I adopted the Fair Youth - Oxford - Elizabeth theory very slowly, and very reluctantly; but also very deliberately, because I perceived that it was the only solution which fitted in with the known facts and with what seemed to Capt. Ward and myself to be the legitimate and satisfactory inferences. It is remarkable that both the Baconians and the Derbyites have been compelled to adopt a solution involving Queen Elizabeth with Shakespeare.

There is, in my judgement, no possible logical escape from the Fair Youth explanation. He fits, simply and easily, into play after play, in and out of Shakespeare; and in several of the instances he is an actor. He is, for example, William Page in "Merry Wives," Florizel in "Winter's Tale," Fungoso in "Every Man Out of His Humour," Asotus in "Cynthia's Revels," Quicksilver in "Eastward Hoe," and so forth; and in every instance, linked with the Oxford character, in each play, he slips easily into his place, and is otherwise unidentifiable among characters which can be recognized at once. In and out of the Shakespeare plays, he is usually introduced by an elaborate series of puns, often in French, Latin, and English, jumbled together - precisely as in the pictures to which I have already referred - one of the most usual series of puns (which mystified me for years, until I got hold of the clue) being those on "Hare," "Hair," "heir," and "lock" (of hair); also the "word that begins with an H (Heir)" introduced always in connection with secret and usually "bawdy" talk, concerning or between characters who stand for Oxford and the Queen. Corroborative discoveries come along so fast that, in literal truth - as in the case of "Argenis" - I cannot keep pace with them. To give another instance, the important discoveries in Lawrence's "Common Sense" book, were immediately amplified by the discovery that the "Sir Thomas More" play was telling us the same story - the very story at which, after years of study, I had arrived. If my opponents are going to say that all this is merely a

series of "coincidences," I reply that, if you go before a judge with a series of coincidences which are sufficiently numerous, and hang sufficiently well together - which those we have unearthed quite certainly do - that judge will give you judgement. Precisely in this manner are many of the most important criminal trials solved; and the criminal is brought to justice. They do not leave behind them "documentary evidence" of their misdeeds. The truth must be sought, and is found, partly at least, in circumstantial evidence.

Lastly, both Capt. Ward and myself deprecate the tone of moral superiority adopted by our opponents. This is, in our judgement, a matter in which no question of ethics is involved. The C.I.D. men are not charged with moral obliquity, because their duties have compelled them to investigate matters unpleasant or obscene. Capt. Ward and I set ourselves to solve a very difficult, and mysterious, problem; and we believe that we are in process of solving it. We naturally regret, in a certain sense, that we were compelled to come to conclusions that we would rather, for obvious reasons, not have been forced to. But we had no option. History was not to be changed to suit us. The Elizabethan noblemen, in general, were, with all their culture, cleverness, and charm, a coarse and somewhat dissolute lot of men; and their French and Italian contemporaries were worse. But those facts are not directly relevant to this controversy. Capt. Ward and I have no axe to grind. We are endeavouring, single-mindedly, to ascertain the truth, in the most fascinating, mysterious, difficult, and important literary-historical problem with which students for hundreds of years past have been confronted. Many people have said to me of late, "This is the best detective story I have ever come across." We agree.

REPLY TO THE "REFUTATIONS" OF CANON RENDALL AND MR AITKEN, IN SO
FAR AS THEY AFFECT CAPT. WARD

By B. M. Ward

Mr Aitken says that Ward (17th E of O) states that "the stratagem alleged to have been contrived in 'All's Well' has no historical foundation whatever." Quite true; Wright's "History of Essex" was written about 200 years after the event, and as he gives no documentary authority the story is presumably based on oral tradition. But traditional evidence is not necessarily

untrue - rather the opposite. The point is that Mr Aitken has evidently quite misunderstood the whole case.

When Mr Looney wrote "Shakespeare Identified," he described the passage in Wright's "History" as "a sensational discovery." And so it was. But I disagreed with Looney's interpretation. He assumed that Oxford was the author of "All's Well," and that it was a piece of "dramatic self-revelation." It was to me incredible that a man should choose such a particularly unsavoury episode to self-reveal himself dramatically. So I sought another explanation, viz. that when "All's Well" was first published (Folio, 1623), people in the know were aware that it was written by Oxford and not Shakespeare: that they at once noted the parallel between Oxford, the Royal Ward, who ran away to the Low Countries in 1574, and Bertram, the Royal Ward, who ran away to the wars: and that they concluded (erroneously) that the substitution in the bed was an actual incident in Oxford's life. That was the explanation that I offered in my "Life."

Since then I have thought of another explanation, viz. that "All's Well" was not written by Oxford, but was the work of one of his enemies (he had plenty) who knew of the substitution in the bed, and wrote the play in order to ridicule and humiliate Oxford. Oxford dared not complain openly because his enemies would say that the play was based on an Italian story and had nothing to do with him, and would have added exultantly, "if the cap fits, wear it." (The position is exactly similar to that when Hamlet, presenting the play before the King, exclaims "It is writ in choice Italian, the story is extant".)

Now, Mr Aitken, you can take your choice. I stick to No. 3. I suppose you will stick to No. 2, because if you adopt either 1 or 3 you will have to accept the substitution in the bed story as true, which would upset one of the main arguments of your "refutation." But there are big difficulties in the way of accepting No. 2, the chief being that if Oxford wrote "All's Well" he must have consciously portrayed himself as Bertram; and even if the bed episode had no foundation in fact, Bertram is surely too unpleasant a character to have been a self-portrait.

In passing, Canon Rendall makes the utterly untenable assertion that the circumstances of the birth of Elizabeth de Vere are perfectly straightforward and simple, and admit of no mysteries or difficulties. Just the reverse - the whole case

simply bristles with difficulties. The crux of the matter is this: what made Oxford suddenly change his mind on April 4th in Paris? He obviously received some startling news. What was it? We can only guess. All that the documents tell us is that Oxford wrote to Burghley of "certain mislikings," but not specifying them. It is sheer nonsense to say that from October 1574 to April 1576 the relations between Oxford, Anne Cecil, and Burghley - to say nothing of the circumstances of the birth of Elizabeth de Vere - were all perfectly serene and happy and straightforward. This foolish idea that everything in Oxford's life is perfectly simple and straightforward reminds me of the Stratfordians who say blandly that they can see no difficulty whatever in supposing that Shakspeare of Stratford wrote the plays. I shall return to this point later.

Lastly, Mr Aitken says:

There is even a reference to matter in the Howard-Arundel papers "probably in Chas. Arundel's handwriting." The value of this testimony is given in Ward's book, p.222: "It is to be hoped that in future all right-minded historians will follow the example of King James and will never again advance the disgusting lies of the 'suborned informer' Chas. Arundel as reliable historical evidence."

I am ready to admit here and now that that para of mine is an over-assertion. But I will explain the circumstances in which it was written. Before Looney wrote "Shakespeare Identified," Oxford had received little or no attention - and such attention as he did receive was always derogatory. The worst example was in a "Life of Sir Walter Raleigh," by St John, in which there was a chapter called "Raleigh's London associates". St John says that Raleigh had the misfortune to fall into the society of Oxford, who was a devil in human form. He was always drunk, spent most of his time trying to murder people like Leicester and Sidney, and habitually practised unmentionable vices. St John gave as his reference documents in the Public Record Office. I went to the P.R.O. and transcribed these documents. They cover nearly 100 closely typewritten pages. They are the charges and counter-charges of Oxford and Arundel. Now, when I wrote my "Life," my object was to rehabilitate Oxford, and I think perhaps I overdid it. There is no justification in saying that Arundel was "lying" - "exaggerating," yes. After all, Arundel had been one of Oxford's closest friends, and knew his human frailties and

weaknesses. And when it came to open war between them, Arundel was in a position to launch an attack of half-truths and exaggerations. "A truth that's told with bad intent, beats all the lies you can invent." There are some people who want to make out that Oxford was a sort of Sir Galahad and Little Lord Fauntleroy rolled into one: a teetotal, vegetarian, non-smoker; who went to Church once on week-days and three times on Sundays; who always turned the other cheek when attacked; and went about with his head encircled with a permanent halo. I wholly disagree. I think Oxford, in addition to his many sterling qualities and his supremacy as a poet and master of language, was full of human frailties, given to bouts of drunkenness, quick-tempered and quarrelsome, a thoroughly bad husband, an atheist, and had from time to time fallen into the temptation of other vices. I know this view is not popular, but I can't help that. It happens to be true, which is much more important than a lot of smug wishful-thinking and snivelling sentimentalism. Moreover, no-one in his senses believes that the author of the Sonnets was a little plaster saint. On the contrary, he definitely says he is not. The plays are full of the seamy side of life, and I defy any one to write about the seamy side of life without having had, at least, some experience of it. But when I wrote my "Life" I was out to re-habilitate Oxford from the appalling slanders about him perpetrated by St John, etc. I agree that I may have gone too far, but I am sure you will agree that I was justified. Now that he is re-habilitated, there is no reason to pretend that he was a "very parfait knight, sans peur et sans reproche."

Mr Allen is answering other matters, but I should like to make a few general and very frank remarks. I regard the two so-called "Refutations" as lamentable failures. No attempt has been made to meet any of the external evidence except over Havering, which, as Allen has shown, is a pure mare's nest. It is true that you reject the evidence of the scandal letter as "malicious gossip." But that is neither here nor there. Of course it is "malicious gossip"! The point is, is it true? The same applies to the Charles Arundel evidence. Malicious gossip is almost invariably true, or largely based on truth, hence its potency. No attempt has been made to meet and rebut the evidence of Gilbert Talbot, Burghley, Christopher Hatton, or Dr Masters.

As for Chamberlin - that delightful "breath of fresh air"! - if you have not read his subsequent book, "The Private Character

of Henry VIII," I suggest you do so at once. In it he entirely changes the whole foundation of his case as given in "The Private Character of Q.E." It is too long to go into now; but I may say that he (Chamberlin) has a new array of distinguished medical men who dutifully assert that the new evidence is quite conclusive, beyond all doubt, etc. Personally I agree with "The Private Character of Henry VIII." We all have our ideas about fresh air: but to me the picture of Henry VIII having the misfortune to develop chronic blood poisoning in the leg as the result of a riding accident is much "fresher air" than the picture of Henry VIII's children having their health ruined and their sexual lives blasted as a result of the hereditary taint they received from their diseased father.

Let me return to the subject of Oxford's life. I have already said that the idea that everything is beautiful and lovely and simple is absurd. His life is full of mysteries. I will state a few:

1. Why did the Queen give him an allowance of £1,000 a year? Please do not say, because he was bankrupt. He was not bankrupt. And in any case, the maximum ever received by really penniless courtiers and favourites like Hatton and Howard de Walden was £400. Why the big difference? Work that one out.

2. Why is there no will or administration in Somerset House of Oxford's estate? The officials there told me that they had never known a case of a nobleman, who left substantial property in London and Essex, leaving no will or administration. Please do not tell me they have been lost, because I am not referring to the original will or administration, but to the copies which were scrupulously kept in the prerogative court of Canterbury. Without either a will or administration no property can pass. But - and here's the rub - you may have noticed recently that when Prince Arthur of Connaught died his will was presented to the authorities and was sealed up and not transcribed into the records of Somerset House. Why? Because all wills of Royalty are sealed up and not made available to the public. Now then, Mr Aitken, work that one out.

3. Oxford married Elizabeth Trantham - a maid of honour - in 1591. At almost the same time men like Raleigh and Southampton who dared to marry maids of honour were sent to the Tower. Not so Oxford. Why?

QUEEN ELIZABETH - OXFORD - SON THEORY

Reply by Mr Aitken

Referring to the Supplement to the News-Letter of April last, Dr G. H. Rendall tells me that he does not propose to continue controversy on the side-issues raised in the rejoinders of Mr Percy Allen and Capt. Ward.

I would like to make the following comments:-

Havering. No reliable evidence has been given that the Queen visited Havering in May 1574. Gilbert Talbot refers to a proposed visit, probably postponed, as the Royal Progress was delayed until July. Dr Harold Smith, in his careful study of original sources, points out that, among the Queen's numerous visits to Havering, the evidence for that of 1574 is doubtful.

Detailed records make it certain that the Royal Mansion was never occupied by Oxford, and the neighbouring house of Pyrgo was in the possession of Lord John Grey throughout the whole reign of Elizabeth.

Mr Allen quotes Morant, but the contents of the quotation have been disproved by later researches.

The quotation from Majendie is a passing remark devoid of authority; it is improbable that the family held any De Vere documents, but merely the title deeds of Hedingham Castle. The Rev. Severne Majendie gives no valid references, and makes mis-statements supported by incorrect dates. His descendant Lewis evolved a theory regarding the Earl which is described as "utter nonsense."

The Enquiry laid marked stress on the supposed visit of the Queen to Oxford's house at Havering Bower, but Mr Allen now states that it does not matter whose house it was so long as they met.

The extract from the Patent Rolls of 1586 probably refers to lands in Essex, part of Oxford's estates within the Liberty of Havering. The Liberty contained thousands of acres, and only the northern portion including the Royal demesne and Pyrgo was known as Havering-atte-Bower.

To sum up:

1. In 1574 the Earl possessed no Manorial Lordship and no residence at Havering.
2. The supposed visit of the Queen in 1574 is contradicted by more valid evidence.
3. At no time is there credible evidence for the entertainment of the Earl at the Royal Bower House.

So far as time and place are concerned, therefore, the case crumbles into dust.

Stratagem. This alleged occurrence is apparently brought in to account for the Queen's supposed jealousy. It is dated 1574, but is disproved by Oxford's pleasure on hearing that he was about to become a father, and later, after the birth of his daughter in 1575. Are we to believe that he was duped in October 1574 and not disillusioned till April 1576?

The crisis of the 4th April, 1576, was more likely to be in part due to groundless reports of Anne's conduct in his absence. Wright, quoted in confirmation, is an unreliable guide and mentions a son, not a daughter. His History of Essex has been referred to as "a good example of the persistent calumny which has pursued the memory of Oxford since the time of Arundel's unfounded charges."

The Queen's Jealousy. The Queen, according to Dr Masters' letter, seems to have shown surprise, not jealousy. Apparently Anne had concealed the state of affairs as long as was possible, and she may have been upset by reported remarks by Oxford.

The "enquiry" states:

"7th March, 1575 - The Queen hears that Lady Oxford is with child, but is lamenting the absence of her Lord, and Oxford's repudiation of the child as his daughter - a natural conclusion, if he were in ignorance of the trick played him at the child's begetting in October 1574... The Queen's jealous displeasure is very natural. Some ten days after the secret birth of her own child, she is angered by the birth of a child to Anne."

What can be made of above? We are asked to believe in the anger and jealous displeasure of the Queen - of which there is no evidence - at the birth of a child to Anne some 4 months before it occurred.

Southampton. Mr Allen states that after all he is now

coming round to the conclusion that the Fair Youth may be Southampton. As he is convinced that the Sonnets are dynastic, we can only infer that he now believes Southampton was the son of Oxford and the Queen! There seems no other conclusion.

"All's Well." It is interesting that Capt. Ward considers that one of Oxford's enemies was the author of this Play, and I agree that, if the stratagem took place, the Play was probably written by a rival courtier. The stratagem, however, may have been malicious rumour, not fact.

According to Mr Allen, a similar episode is referred to in "Winter's Tale" and "Measure for Measure." Are we to understand that some other courtier also wrote these? If so, what of the case for "Winter's Tale" being an elaborate allegory concerning the lost plays?

Capt. Ward's Reply. Capt. Ward has done yeoman service in rehabilitating Oxford from slanders, but I think he is now being unfair to both the Earl and the Queen.

I do not agree that "malicious gossip is almost invariably true, or largely based on truth" and would remind him of those words from "Hamlet":-

"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny."

Capt. Ward states that no attempt has been made to meet and rebut the evidence of Talbot, Burghley, Hatton, or Dr Masters, and my reply is that not one of these supplies a shred of evidence to support the theory propounded.

Chamberlin's Evidence cannot be lightly ignored. I have read both his books on Queen Elizabeth and Henry VIII, and disagree with Capt. Ward. I submitted the latter's remarks to Sir Arthur Keith, who gives no support to any change of opinion by either Chamberlin, who died about six years ago, or doctors consulted. On this subject Dr H. M. M. Woodward writes:

"At this distance of time, and having regard to the fact that contemporary evidence is unreliable and contradictory, it is impossible to be dogmatic. But this is clear - a variety of opinions are expressed by medical men, and I do not think that one book contradicts the other.

"From such evidence as there is, I am bound to agree with Sir Arthur Keith."

We have it therefore on excellent medical authority that Queen Elizabeth was incapable of bearing children.

Capt. Ward asks why the Queen gave an allowance of £1,000 a year to the Earl. We do not know; nor indeed why James I continued it, but it can hardly have been for the support of a bastard child who one day might be king.

As for the reason Oxford was not committed to the Tower for marrying a Maid-of-Honour, surely Capt. Ward does not suppose that every successful suitor for the hand of a Maid-of-Honour received such harsh treatment.

Finally, I deprecate the unintelligible protest against a "tone of moral superiority."

The authors claim to be single-minded seekers after truth, but this provides no excuse for defaming and branding the illustrious dead on such paltry and unreliable evidence as that given in the Enquiry.

[Note - The Patent Roll refers to Crown property only and not to privately owned land. Capt. Ward has never suggested that the £1,000 a year was for the support of a bastard child. It is notorious that towards the end of her reign Queen Elizabeth bitterly resented any of her Maids-of-Honour marrying].

[This controversy must now cease. - Editor].