

THE Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter

OCTOBER, 1943

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EDITORIAL NOTES

Members will be sorry to hear that Mr. J. T. Looney, who had been making a good recovery from his recent illness, has had a relapse, and has been very ill; as his daughter, Mrs. Boden, kindly tells me, in a letter dated September 13 last: "He has turned the corner and although very weak is certainly showing signs of recovery." Good wishes will go to him from both sides of the Atlantic.

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Our valued member, Mr. F. L. Ranson, of Lavenham, informs me that his wife, Florence Kitty Ranson, died on March 9. Mrs. Ranson was much interested in the Oxford theory, and was her husband's "reader" of the many articles written by him on that subject. Members will join with the Editor in a message of warm sympathy to Mr. Ranson, who has done much good work for our cause in East Anglia.

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The tragic death of Leslie Howard, the actor and producer, early in June last, was a great loss to the Oxfordian cause, as well as to stage and screen. Howard was a convinced Oxfordian; and his excellent film, "*Pimpernel Smith*," was the first picture to bring the Oxford case, even though briefly, before the millions. The Editor, who had met Leslie Howard in New York, was about to send him an invitation to join the Fellowship, when the news of his death came through.

In May, 1937, the American writer, Mr. Alden Brooks, kindly sent to the Editor a copy of his then recent book, "*Will Shakspere, Factotum and Agent*." Shortly afterwards, Mr. Brooks joined the Fellowship, of which he remained a member for a year or two. Now, as our members know, he has published a lengthy volume, "*Will Shakspere and The Dyers Hand*," which has been deservedly castigated by Mr. Wisner Barrell, in the American News-Letter, April, 1943. All who have read Ralph M. Sargent's, "*At The Court of Queen Elizabeth: The Life and Lyrics of Sir Edward Dyer*," will assuredly agree with Mr. Barrell, that Mr. Brooks, in his Elizabethan studies, has gone seriously astray.

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Mr. R. L. Eagle informs me that his book, "*Shakespeare: New Views For Old*," reviewed in this issue by our President, is nearly sold out, and that a second edition may be called for. Our President tells me that a Dutch scholar, a monk, has published, in English, a beautifully illustrated book on Bacon as author of "Shakespeare," and it seems, as son of Queen Elizabeth! I have not seen, as yet, any reviews or notices of it.

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The Editor is always glad to receive articles, letters, press-cuttings, or other communications, from members and their friends, on subject's likely to be useful for the News-Letter. Articles should not usually exceed 600 words in length, and letters must be brief.

Stolne and Surreptitious Copies

A Comparative Study of Shakespeare's Bad Quartos by *Alfred Hart*.

Melbourne University Press, in association with Oxford University Press. (Melbourne and London, 1942. 12s. 6d.)

Prof. Alfred Hart will be remembered by many members of the Fellowship as the author of a valuable little book, "*Shakespeare and The Homilies*," which was fully reviewed in the News-Letter. Now Prof. Hart has followed up his earlier work with another and much longer one, in which we are given, for the first time, a complete investigation of the many problems associated with the relation between the "stolne and surreptitious copies," of which Heminge and Condell complain in their "Address to the great Variety of Readers," and the corresponding plays of Shakespeare printed by them in the First Folio. These corrupt versions known as the "Bad Quartos" are *Contention, True Tragedy*, and the first quartos of *Romeo and Juliet, Merry Wives and Hamlet*, the two plays first cited being "stolne" versions of the 2nd and 3rd parts of *Henry VI*.

The theme of the book is to show conclusively, "once for all," that the bad quartos are *not*, as has been argued by Dover Wilson and others, rewritings by Shakespeare of his own immature sketches, but are garbled abridgements of the official acting versions, which—as Prof. Hart contends—had been made, by order of the company, from Shakespeare's own MSS. These official acting versions, from which the bad quartos were garbled—usually by actors memorizing old parts—had already been cut down by the official play adaptor to about 2,300 lines, the average length of an Elizabethan play. The failure of commentators to recognize, hitherto, the fact that the plays were officially abridged for the stage, accounts, in Dr. Hart's opinion, for the now exploded, though still widely held, supposition that Shakespeare revised or rewrote the bad quartos. Dr. Hart derides, as "absurd nonsense" the supposition that a man of Shakespeare's mind and genius began dramatic work as a play-cobbler, and was busy at cobbling *Hamlet* Q.I. "between writing *Twelfth Night* and *Othello*."

How does Prof. Hart prove his case? He does so—and does it up to the hilt—by meticulously tabulated comparisons between each bad quarto and its corresponding Shakespearean play, and by carefully collating the results, under such headings as *Vocabulary, Word-Groups, Abridgement Blunders, Verse-Structure, Rhymed and Composite Lines*, etc. This method, though it makes the book somewhat jerky for the reader has been worked out with assiduous care; and the result is a reference book to the relation between the genuine texts and the bad quartos, which can never, I suppose, be superseded. Most striking is the revelation of the ubiquitous corruption which Prof. Hart points out as affecting some three out of every ten lines of verse in the bad quartos. Dozens of "protean deviations from normality," ridiculous textual blunders, jolting, unmusical lines and

fragments of lines, and other such rubbish in which the bad texts are imbedded, could not possibly have been honoured with Shakespeare's personal revision. "If thus he sank into the pedant," then "the less Shakespeare he." Further, as Mr. Dwyer has reminded me, much of Dr. Hart's argument applies to the good quartos equally, which also are actors' abridgements of plays too long for the stage.

Specially important, in establishing the priority of each play to its quarto, is the demonstration that many of the blunders and omissions in the latter can only be explained after examination of the authentic texts of the corresponding passages. Incidentally this fascinating book throws light upon many points in connection with Elizabethan plays and play-acting, which may have escaped even students of the period.

There is one remarkable omission. Though Dr. Hart gives full recognition to the work, in this field, of Messrs. Pollard, Greg, Alexander, and others, he fails to mention that very important work, *The Problem of Hamlet*, by A. S. Cairncross (1936), in which, by applying to *Hamlet* Q.I. the "memorizing" argument, precisely as does Dr. Hart, he, Cairncross, shows conclusively that *Hamlet* was written during the 1580's. At the reasons for this omission, I can only guess, but my supposition is that Dr. Cairncross's book, throwing *Hamlet* chronologically back into the fifteen-eighties, was too devastating to the orthodox case to be endorsed by an author who is a convinced believer in Will of Stratford, and who still maintains that even such plays as *Titus Andronicus* and *Cymbeline* are the genuine work of "Shakespeare." *Hamlet*, nevertheless, however much the orthodox may shrink from that fact, was written during the 80's, probably in 1583.

"Shakespeare— New Views for Old"

By R. L. EAGLE (rev'd by Col. Douglas)

The book was reviewed by James Agate in the *Sunday Times*, and Ivor Brown in the *Observer*. Mr. Agate has "half joined the Baconians," "in spite of the evidence, nine-tenths of which is piffle, one-tenth overwhelming." Mr. Ivor Brown commends those who work for the solution of the "Shakespeare Mystery;" and condemns petulant Stratfordians who regard the latter "as a kind of outcast miscreant rabble." He is "a moderate Shakespearean."

Mr. Eagle relies mainly on Dr. Wilmot's (1726-1807) recognition of the "Similarities of thought, diction, and even error" to be found in both "Bacon and Shakespeare," as also the many parallel passages. Stress is laid on Bacon's travels in Italy. The Earl of Oxford also visited Italy and lived for several months in Venice.

He submits a good case for Bacon's collaboration in the Poems, *Venus* and *Lucrece*. Bacon as *Labeo*, the lawyer, and *Mediocria firma*, his motto, is told to "better write, or write alone." Reference is also made to the fifteenth stanza of *Lucrece*, obviously Baconian.

Of *Love's Labours Lost*, Dover Wilson wrote: "To credit the authorship to a butcher boy, who left school at 13, is to believe in miracles, or disbelieve in the man of Stratford." Mr. Eagle attributes the play to Bacon.

Professor Gilbert Slater (*Seven Shakespeares*) supports Professor Abel Lefrane, in a strong case for Stanley as the author of the original Play. "What connects the play with Stanley rather than Bacon is the character Holofernes (Tutor of Gargantua) identified with Lloyd, Stanley's Tutor, a lover of long phrases and Latin words." Holofernes presents "the Pageant of the Nine Worthies" in the Play (tapestry in Navarre). Lloyd in 1584 published "A brief discourse called the Nine Worthies." Oxford and Derby (his son-in-law) were probably authors of the Play of 1598, "Newly corrected and augmented." The Northumberland MS. of 1860 provides evidence for Bacon in respect of the Plays Richard II and III, Greenwood and Slater assenting. The letter considers that Bacon was the probable author.

Mr. Agate refuses Bacon the *Sonnets*. Apart from the evidence provided in the Poems, and in Thorpe's dedication, the Oxford hypothesis, alone, supplies obvious persons to whom *Sonnets* were written: such as Anne Vavasour, the dark Lady; her brilliant illegitimate son by Oxford, Edward Vere, knighted by King James; Southampton, Oxford's friend, and Henry the 18th Earl. Nor is there evidence for Bacon as the author of *Hamlet*. Says Slater: "Oxford's authorship of *Hamlet* is practically proved. *Hamlet* is as autobiographical as David Copperfield, and the Prince of Denmark, the author's mouthpiece, a self portrait." And the cast is significant: *Hamlet*, Oxford; *Polonius*, Burleigh; *Ophelia*, Ann Cecil, Lady Oxford; *Horatio*, Sir Horace de Vere; *Francisco*, Sir Francis de Vere; *Marcellus*, Prince Maurice; *Barnado*, Barneveldt, in a German version of 1778, actually Bernefeld.

Mr. Eagle makes a case for *Timon of Athens*, and claims the much edited *Tempest*, with Bacon as Prospero. Slater and Captain Ward favour Raleigh, in view of his knowledge of the Strachey Letter, of seamanship, and of the West Indies; and find a link in Prospero—Raleigh from his cell, appealing to King James, present at the first performance, "As you from your crimes would pardoned be, let your indulgence set me free."

Members who support Professor Slater's Group hypothesis will readily accept Mr. Agate's "one-tenth," which implies that Bacon collaborated; and he probably edited the Plays for the Folio. But, said Greenwood, there were "many pens and a Master Mind;" and the latter was surely that of the Author of the *Sonnets* and *Hamlet*, Edward de Vere.

A Note on the Authorship of Lucrece

The Editor of the News-Letter has asked me for my views on the statement that Bacon probably wrote *Lucrece* and on the much more cautious proposition in the April, 1943, News-Letter that "the inclusion

of Bacon in the Group would appear to be justified." It appears to me that *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, and the *Sonnets* are a trilogy of works so manifestly interconnected that whoever was the author of one of them was almost certainly the author of the others. Moreover, the evident resemblance between all these poems and the known poems of Edward de Vere was—unless I am much mistaken—not the least of the considerations which led Mr. J. T. Looney to the discovery of the real Shakespeare (v. *Shakespeare Identified*, pp. 174-207). Equally emphatic is Mr. Percy Allen (*The Case for Edward de Vere*, etc., p. 138), when he says that he has "shown conclusively the intimate though subterranean connexion traceable between the poems of Oxford, Shakespeare's *Venus*, his *Lucrece*, and many Shakespearean plays."

The external evidence, clearly summarised in the April News-Letter, is not more important than the internal evidence. Even if *Labeo* was in fact Greenwood's Great Reviser (and Greenwood's Great Reviser was either Bacon or someone very close to him), that does not prove him the original author of the poem. The statements of Bishop Hall and of Marston about *Labeo* are no more conclusive than those of Francis Meeres—or for that matter, of Ben Jonson, Hemming and Condell—about Shakespeare. The "scribblings" and even the quoted line:

Revealing day through every cranny peeps

do not prove that Bacon wrote the whole poem any more than the "scribbled" word *honorificabilitudinitatibus* establishes Bacon's authorship of *Love's Labours Lost*. Even if Bacon tampered with *Lucrece* by altering lines or inserting whole stanzas (e.g. No. 15) he did not thereby change the general tone and character of the poem. To "the striking series of verbal and stylistic conformities," to quote the admirable phrase of Mr. Percy Allen (Op. cit. p. 96).

We may also add the observations that while *Venus and Adonis* has fifty-two examples of the hyphenated double epithet, *Lucrece* has seventy, and that Olivia in her verses to "the unknown beloved" (*Twelfth Night* I.5) alludes to both poems:

Jove knows I love: but who?

Lips do not move, No man must know—

and

"A Lucrece knife,

With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore."

I think that the date and circumstances of publication are part of the whole apparatus of mystification, and that both poems were probably written long before 1593 or 1594. They appear to be the work of a young man drawing his subjects from his reading and from pictures seen during his Italian travels rather than from his actual experience; both works are the still immature efforts of a sensuous young aesthete who can indeed write, but is not yet perfect in the rare devices of poetry. It looks as if *Venus* had been attempted already in various forms: see *The Passionate Pilgrim* IV, VI, IX, XI. *Lucrece*, equally prolix, has, for all its lurid subject, really a low temperature, much of it being exceedingly artificial; only here and there does it come to life and

goes with speed and energy. These poems are the work of a young enthusiast, not of a mature man.

Lucrece shows a development of metrical form; the author has discovered that the extra line makes for greater ease and flexibility than the familiar *Sestina* and that the seven-line stanza already tried in *The Lover's Complaint* is more convenient for sustained narrative. The Oxfordian character is very evident in the damask-rose and lily (or red and white) motive, seen in stanzas 8, 9, 10, 11, 37, 56, 69. There are many repetitive passages which, as Mr. Looney has demonstrated, have striking parallelisms in the *de Vere* poems and in the plays, e.g. stanzas 95, 122, 127, 128, 132, 135, 136, 137, 141 and 142. The numerous parallelisms with the Sonnets have been fully and ably dealt with by Mr. Percy Allen in Chapter IV of the work above quoted, so attention need be called only to stanzas 13, 121, 125, 135 and 136 without mentioning the various expressions echoed in the Plays. Curiously enough, Sonnet XXVI looks very like a verse paraphrase of the Dedication to Southampton.

Nothing of all this, however, excludes the possibility of subsequent interpolation. For instance, the absurd forensic question put by *Lucrece* (stanza 68) and the judge and prisoner stuff in stanza 236 and other pedantries could all be insertions just as well as the acrostic stanza 15. So could other stanzas which interrupt the narrative with sage reflections. These gnomic verses contain little of the characteristic imagery: such are stanzas 4, 5, 15, 20-22, 36, 103-5, 154, 158, 178-181, 244; nearly all the legal jargon in the poem will be found in those same stanzas. I would not positively assert that these are interpolations: but it may be noticed that an experimental elimination of them gets rid at one and the same time of nearly every legalism and everything that tends to halt the narrative.

There are other singularities in *Lucrece*. One is the strangely material view of her misfortune put into the mouth of the heroine: she blames herself and talks about her "sin," her "loathsome trespass," her "reproach," her "infring'd oath"—as if she were in any degree guilty! She even rejects (stanza 245) the exculpation formulated in 236 and 237. Such agonised insistence on the crude objective fact is quite mediaeval in tone and is much akin to the standpoint of *Measure for Measure*. It is more likely to be that of the excited young virtuoso than of the cool and sagacious lawyer-philosopher. Another is the fantastic anachronism in stanzas 82 and 242-3, viz. the talk about the obligation upon *Knighthood* "to right poor ladies' harms." Bacon knew better than that! Another is the long detailed description of the Siege of Troy pictures (196-223). These paintings are those which were executed (1525-35) by Giulio Romano for the Gonzaga family, and hung in the Palazzo del Tè at Mantua. Now, Oxford knew Mantua. He had evidently seen and had been struck by those pictures and could not resist dragging in (or subsequently putting in) this full description of them. Bacon, who did not travel in Italy, could not have seen them, and there were no art-manuals then.

I conclude, therefore, that Oxford was the true author of *Lucrece*, even though it may have been subsequently revised and published by Bacon.

J. J. DWYER.

The Game of Chess in "The Tempest"

Excepting *Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, its companion play, is the most symbolical of all the Shakespearean dramas; and I have long held that the game of chess with which at the close Ferdinand and Miranda are found to be amusing themselves in Prospero's cell, is a symbolical game, wherein the pieces on the board are the characters of the Shakespearean plays; those lovely and ever-living works which are typified by Miranda herself, precisely as Perdita typifies them in *Winter's Tale*. Reading, the other day, that interesting Elizabethan anthology, *The Phoenix Nest* (1593), I came across a poem entitled "*The Chesse Play*," by N.B. (Gent.), who is Nicholas Breton. The last stanza before the *Envoy* runs thus, and is interesting as showing how, long before *The Tempest* was written, another Elizabethan poet conceived the game as a "play."

The King is stately, looking hie,
The Queene, doth beare like majestie;
The Knight, is hardie, valiant, wise;
The Bishop prudent and precise;
The Rookes, no raunger out of raie,
The Pawnes, the pages in the plaie.

Who were the Dark Lady and Fair Youth of the Sonnets?

Mr. Percy Allen, after a long and close study of this difficult subject, has written, under the above title, an Essay of some 12,000 words epitomizing briefly his conclusions, originally drafted in much longer form. This study ranges over some 200 years of Elizabethan literature, from the first Shakespearean output to the *Life and Adventures of Common Sense* published in 1769. The sonnets and several Shakespearean plays are brought into the argument, together with certain comedies by Jonson and Chapman, and *Sir Thomas More* supposed to be, in part, Shakespearean. Evidence from Elizabethan plays and poems is strongly supported by an examination of certain contemporary portraits and prints, including the Ditchley portrait of Queen Elizabeth (1592), and Camden's print of her funeral procession (1603). Barclay's allegorical romance, *Argenis* (1621), also supplies corroborative evidence.

Mr. Allen proposes to have a certain number of copies typed, for sale to members and their friends, at 2/6 each post-free. As it is desirable to ascertain in advance the approximate number of copies that will be needed, the Editor asks all members who would like to secure a copy, or copies, kindly to notify him, as soon as convenient, on a post-card addressed to 99 Corringham Road, N.W.11.