

The Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter

MARCH 1952

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NOTICE

The Annual Dinner of the Shakespeare Fellowship will be held at the premises of the English Speaking Union, 37 Charles Street, W.1, on 24th April at 6-45 for 7-30. The Chair will be taken by Mr. Christmas Humphreys, and the speakers will include Mr. A. S. Frere, C.B.E., Mr. T. L. Adamson, Mrs. M. H. Robins, Mr. Geoffrey Handley-Taylor, F.R.S.L.

Tickets (15s.) can be obtained from Mr. T. L. Adamson, who is acting temporarily as Treasurer of the Fellowship owing to the regrettable resignation of Mr. J. Shera Atkinson on the grounds of ill-health. The Editor wishes to tender him thanks on behalf of the Fellowship members for the excellent work he has done during his term in office.

MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting was held on 6th October, 1951.

The President, Rear-Admiral H. H. Holland was unanimously re-elected, after which the Chairman, Mr. T. L. Adamson, said that a letter of resignation from the office of Vice-President had been received from Dr. Demant, who regretted that his residence at Oxford prevented him from keeping in sufficiently close touch with the Fellowship. He remained, however, a member and a firm believer in the Oxfordian case. The three other Vice-Presidents were re-elected and three more added to their number: Mr. J. Shera Atkinson, Miss K. Eggar and Mrs. M. H. Robins. The other Officers and the Committee were re-elected, and it was decided that all Vice-Presidents should be *ex-officio* members of the Committee.

The meeting concluded with a reading by Mr. H. Cutner of three articles written by T. J. Looney, in reply to critics, shortly after the publication of *Shakespeare Identified*.

On 10th November there was a Brains Trust, with Mr. J. W. Russell as Question-Master, and Mr. W. Kent, Mr. G. Phillips and Miss G. Bowen as Trustees.

The following are the questions with brief summaries of the answers:

1. Is it the view of the Brains Trust that the poems in the Shakespeare canon were not by the composer of the sonnets?

Mr. Phillips was of the opinion that the poems were of a very inferior order both morally and

artistically, and were not by the same author as the sonnets (i.e. Oxford). Miss Bowen thought that they were by the same author, but Mr. Kent intimated some misgivings about *Venus and Adonis* by reason of the sycophantic tone of the dedication.

2. (a) Is it the opinion of the Brains Trust that the young man addressed in the sonnets was an illegitimate son of the poet?
(b) Is there anybody who believes that this boy may have been an illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth?
(c) Does anybody believe that he was the Earl of Southampton?
(d) Is anything known about the parents of Southampton?

Mr. Phillips thought the young man *was* the son of the poet (Oxford), but was neither the Earl of Southampton nor the son of Queen Elizabeth. He said that Mr. Allen identified him with Southampton and, at the same time, believed him to be the illegitimate son of Lord Oxford and Queen Elizabeth, but few shared this opinion.

Miss Bowen thought that he *was* Southampton, but not the son of either Oxford or Elizabeth. There was no time left to go into the lives of his real (or nominal) parents.

3. We know that Oxford desired anonymity as a dramatist, so we do not expect any direct references to his plays or characters in his letters, many of which are solely of a business character. Yet the plays were his life work—they must have been constantly in his thoughts. Would you not expect some hint to creep into a letter here and there?

It was pointed out that comparatively few of Oxford's letters survive, and though no actual references to the plays can be found in them, there are many verbal parallels. He would probably studiously avoid allusion as did Scott to the Waverley novels in his correspondence.

4. Why did the Incomparable Pair of Brethren allow the spurious plays to be included in F.1? Is it likely that the manuscripts of these plays were filed with those of Oxford?

It was questioned whether the Incomparable Pair really had much to do with the editing, or merely financed the publication. Miss Bowen was doubtful whether there were any *wholly* spurious plays in F.1. Oxford probably left his papers in a muddle, and the editors had to do the best they could with the aid of quartos, prompt-books, etc., which might contain spurious matter.

5. What—or how much—is known of the *life* of any comparable dramatist or poet (apart from his writings) at the time, Marlowe for instance? Was he not as elusive historically as William of Stratford?

Mr. Kent said that, in the first place, there *was* no comparable dramatist or poet, but that we knew more about many less important authors than about William. Miss Bowen gave a summary of the life of Marlowe.

On 8th December Mr. Ridgill Trout read an excellent paper on *The De Veres and Shakespeare's Historical Plays*.

He brought evidence from the plays to prove that the author had a keen interest in the Lancastrian side of the Wars of the Roses, as must have been the case with the family of de Vere, and that wherever the Earls of Oxford are introduced into the plays they are treated with particular partiality, being often introduced where the action of the play does not make their appearance necessary. Mr. Trout's studies and contribution to our knowledge of the de Vere family as forebears of Shakespeare made this lecture of great help to the student of the Oxford-Shakespeare Problem.

On 12th January, 1952, Miss G. Gowen, in "The Merchant and the Jew" gave reasons for identifying *Merchant of Venice* with the "lost" play called *The Jew*, referred to in Gosson's *School of Abuse* in 1579, when William of Stratford was fifteen.

Owing to illness, Miss R. Wainwright's lecture on *Promps and Cassandra*, arranged for 9th February, had to be postponed. Miss K. Eggar kindly came to the rescue, at short notice, with "An Elizabethan Humorist on Earthquakes," originally planned for 19th April. The Humorist was Gabriel Harvey, who wrote at some length on the earthquake of 1580 in one of his letters to Imerito (or, as Miss Eggar believes, the Earl of Oxford).

Miss Wainwright's lecture will be given on 19th April.

On 30th November, 1951, Mrs. Helena Normanton, Q.C., debated with Miss Katharine Eggar, A.R.A.M., under the auspices of the Poetry Society at 33 Portman Square, W.1.

Miss Eggar opened the debate by endeavouring to prove that many of the early works of de Vere were hidden under various nom-de-plumes, such as Gascoigne and Lyly, and gave her reasons for so believing that Oxford was a possible, adequate and suitable claimant for the honour of having written the so-called Shakespeare plays.

Mrs. Normanton made no attempt to answer this, but swept the idea aside as being "nonsensical," so that really no debate was possible and the audience disappointed.

Mrs. Normanton stigmatised the Oxford case as nonsensical on the ground that the names of those who were "the best for comedy"—headed by the

Earl of Oxford—in Meres's *Palladis Tamia* were like an examination pass list in which a number of candidates, with equal marks, are bracketed. Oxfordians were not justified in maintaining that Meres gave priority of merit to de Vere. Where is the evidence for the bracket? If a compendium of English literature states that amongst the greatest English dramatists were Shakespeare, Sheridan and Shaw, are we to regard them as, in the writer's opinion, on a level? Mrs. Normanton, apparently, did not know that in *The Art of English Poesie* (1588) the author says "that noble gentleman, Edward, Earl of Oxford" is "first amongst those who have written excellently well if their doings could be found out."

Mrs. Normanton's methods were wide open to criticism. She referred to the Shakespeare Allusion Book and, it is feared, led some of her audience to believe that this contained many references to Shakspeare of Stratford. It does not contain a single one. There is no allusion inconsistent with "Shakespeare" being a nom-de-plume.

Mrs. Normanton was pleased to inform her audience that she had known personally Mrs. Charlotte Carmichael Stopes. Why, therefore, was there no reference to that lady's fine book, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron* (1922)? Mrs. Stopes discovered no evidence to justify the last part of her title, and admitted it.

"I must confess I did not start this work for his sake, but in the hope that I might find more about Shakespeare, which hope has not been satisfied."

Yet, Mrs. Normanton had an amazing theory of a knowledge of Sussex dialect being apparent in the plays, this being acquired at Titchfield Place, the Earl's seat. From there, too, he might have boarded a ship bound for Italy, and thus picked up Italian—an easy language to learn! This is a rich addition to the Editor's collection of mythology.

Then Mrs. Normanton repeated an argument used at the City Literary Institute. It was, she averred, ridiculous to say that a nobleman could not associate himself with the drama. Look at *Gorbuduc*. Let Mrs. Normanton look at a note in Sir Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*:

"Thomas Sackville, the author of the Introduction to the Mirror of Magistrates and other poetic pieces, and part author of *Gorbuduc*, was born plain 'Thomas Sackville' and was ordinarily addressed in youth as 'Mr. Sackville.' He wrote all his literary work while he bore that and no other designation. He subsequently abandoned literature for politics, and was knighted and created Lord Buckhurst."

So much for noblemen acknowledging the dramas they had written, and, as Miss Eggar pointed out, *Gorbuduc* was never intended for the common players of Bankside.

Mrs. Normanton revealed her ignorance of the controversy. This is not surprising, as she candidly avowed she really did not care who wrote the plays. Very well, then—why not Lord Oxford?

EDITORIAL NOTES

ABUSE NO ARGUMENT

On 14th November, 1951, Mr. A. L. Rowse, F.R.S.L., Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and author of a deservedly praised book, *The England of Elizabeth*, gave a lecture to the Royal Society of Literature on the subject "The Elizabethan Age and To-day." He took this opportunity to trail a provocative coat before those who decline to accept the orthodox Shakespeare. "Those harmless lunatics who think that Shakespeare did not write his own plays." How dogmatic! They were "his own plays"—because I say so. Henceforth let no Baconian or Oxfordian dog bark! How pusillanimous, too, knowing that there was to be no discussion.

The Editor of the *N.L.* wrote to Mr. Rowse suggesting that there might be a debate under the auspices of the Oxford University Heretics Club, to which the former had lectured. This would entail no journey for Mr. Rowse, but a long one for the Editor. He also asked for the book or pamphlet in which the authorship of the "Shakespeare" plays had been attributed to Queen Elizabeth. This stale joke had won a cheap laugh at the R.S.L. Neither this nor a subsequent letter was answered.

"WHY NOT SHAKESPEARE?"

Under the above title, Mr. Alan Keen gave a lecture at the City Literary Institute on 17th December, 1951. As mentioned in the last issue of the *N.L.*, Mr. Keen has discovered a copy of Hall's Chronicle which he considers is annotated in the handwriting of William Shakspeare. His lecture had little to say about this. It was devoted to revealing another discovery—as he considered it—how the great bard's "hidden years" might have been passed. It appears that Sir Thomas Hesketh of Rufford (Lancs.) had in his company of players one "William Shakeshafte." He had been commended to him by the deceased Alexander Hoghton of Lea, Lancashire, in the latter's will. There was no reason, according to Mr. Keen, why, for theatrical reasons, Shakspeare should not have called himself "Shakeshafte." There is equally no reason why he should! It is admitted that his father is never known to have called himself this, and the only thin thread of connection is that his paternal grandfather once appears in Snitterfield Records as Shakespeare and Shakeshafte. Sir Edmund Chambers (*Shakespeare Gleanings*, 1923) hazarded the suggestion that "Shakespeare" and "Shakeshafte" might be identical.

Supposing they were, why the excitement? It no more helps to solve the authorship question than if the "hidden years" were passed at Stratford. Is it suggested that Lancashire air had certain tonic qualities lacking in Warwickshire?

The audience was promised that Mr. Keen would be assisted by Mr. L. G. Pine, Editor of

Burke's Peerage. The assistance was not apparent. It was interesting to know that Shakspeare's mother, Mary Arden, could trace her descent back to pre-Conquest times, but this is barren of any suggestion regarding "Shakespeare." Still, as Oxfordians and Baconians are frequently accused of feverishly hunting for an aristocratic author, perhaps it may now be retorted that the orthodox love an old genealogical tree!

Miss S. O. Neill presided. Asked by the Editor if she still adhered to a former statement that those who believe in the Stratford "Shakespeare" have an organic predisposition to credulity, she said she did; she was neutral. It hardly appeared so from her remarks which implied that some valuable light had been thrown upon a controverted question by Mr. Keen's quest. She naively spoke as if no other suggestion had ever been made regarding those "hidden years." Arthur D. Gray, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, wrote a book expounding the theory that they were spent at Polesworth. If any Stratfordians went to the City Literary Institute praying that Mr. Keen would lighten their darkness on the question of the authorship of the plays, they must have felt their attendance was entirely futile.

Oxfordians had been invited to send in questions, and these were most superficially "answered" by Mr. Keen. Two specimens may be given. Asked why, when in 1607 Shakspeare's company were at Oxford, he did not induce them to go on to Stratford to perform one of his own plays to his fellow townsmen, Mr. Keen said that it was not financially worth while; there was box-office objection. Dr. John Hall made no reference to his father-in-law because doctors want to conceal patients they kill!

However, Oxfordians had great satisfaction from Mr. Keen's answer to the question about "the ever-living poet." He thought Oxford was responsible for some of the sonnets! This induced Mr. John Russell to ask whether he might not have had a hand in the plays, whereupon Mr. Keen thought that probably Shakspeare did owe something to him. What a surprise! How disappointing to those of the orthodox who came hoping to see Mr. Keen give a knock-out blow to Oxfordians. So the difference is in proportion. Mr. Keen thinks there was collaboration. We think Oxford was the master mind; he thinks Shakspeare was.

After the meeting Mr. Keen intimated his willingness to debate with the Editor on the authorship question, but being invited by the Oxford University Heretics Club, he said he was not ready!

OXFORD/SHAKSPER DEBATE AT
STRATFORD-ON-AVON

The debate on the Shakespeare authorship, between Mr. Percy Allen, for Lord Oxford, and Mr. Ernest Burbridge, under the auspices of *The Stratford Wranglers*, was held at the Town Hall,

Stratford-on-Avon, on 16th October. The Magistrates Court was packed for the occasion; and the function went well. Mr. Allen opened with some twenty points, all pointing, directly or indirectly, to Oxford as "Shakespeare," and said that, failing satisfactory answers, he should claim victory. Mr. Burbidge made no attempt to answer, and *did not even mention a single one* of the points; but merely suggested that his opponent lived in a poetical cloud-cuckoo-land of his own, which, however pretty, had small relation to truth. His only argument was that the people of Stratford had *known*, for three and a half centuries past, who "Shakespeare" was, and had no need, in consequence, to look about them for other claimants.

An animated discussion followed; and the subsequent vote showed about fifty for Mr. Burbidge and about ten for Mr. Allen. Many, however, refrained from voting, for pretty obvious reasons. Mr. D. W. Newport was an excellent, and wholly impartial, chairman. The evening was much enjoyed by the audience and by Mr. Allen.

CECIL PALMER

It was a great pleasure to the Fellowship to welcome to its Annual General Meeting Mr. Cecil Palmer who, as a publisher, had lavished much of his capital in producing books of Shakespearean scepticism. He related how he came to publish Thomas Looney's book. More than thirty years before he had been rung up by William Heinemann, who informed him that he had a manuscript which he thought was very good indeed. He could hardly publish it because of his associations, his principal reader being Sir Edmund Gosse. He thought that nobody would give it more sympathetic consideration than Mr. Palmer. The latter, on receipt, at once read it. There were points to correct; the kind of errors that only a schoolmaster could commit. The pedestrianism of the style was rather irksome. Mr. Palmer wrote to Mr. Thomas Looney, describing it as a lovely book—one of the best Anti-Stratfordian books he had ever read. Would the author like a revision to be made along lines suggested? Mr. Looney's reply was that Mr. Palmer could do what he liked. The latter then revised it without changing any of the arguments. It was then less like a schoolboy's essay, and more resembling an undergraduate's thesis. With these alterations the book was duly published. Sir William Richmond, K.C.B., R.A., said: "I think the man's right, but why has he got such an awful name. Is it a hoax? Did you write it?" Mr. Palmer denied the authorship, but had difficulty in persuading Sir William that this denial was genuine. The *Sunday Dispatch* began some hostile reviews of *Shakespeare Identified*, and Mr. Palmer concluded by saying that he had never been able to live down the moment when he became unorthodox.

On 1st January, 1952, Mr. Palmer died suddenly, a few days before he was due to leave for U.S.A. As, in addition to being a publisher of

note, he had several books to his name, it is surprising that hardly any notice was taken of his death. There was in *Truth* a eulogistic paragraph in which it was said he "came early to public repute as a young publisher of vision and enterprise, and especially interested in the Shakespearean controversies."

"STARRY VERE"

The last story written by Herman Melville was *Billy Budd, Foretopman*. First published in 1924, it was re-issued in 1946 with an Introduction by William Plomer. It has now been made the subject of a libretto by Benjamin Britten. In the story (the incidents belong to the year 1797) there is the following account of one of the characters—the commander of *The Indomitable*. In this ship Billy serves, as a victim of the Press Gang, and eventually comes to a tragic end.

"Captain the Honourable Edward Fairfax Vere, to give his full title, was a bachelor of forty or thereabouts, a sailor of distinction, even in a time prolific of renowned seamen. Though allied to the higher nobility, his advancement had not been altogether owing to influences connected with that circumstance . . .

In the Navy he was popularly known by the appellation *Starry Vere*. How such a designation happened to fall upon one who, whatever his sturdy qualities was without any brilliant ones, was in this wise: a favourite kinsman Lord Denton, a free-handed fellow, had been the first to meet and congratulate him upon his return to England from the West Indian Cruise; and but the day previous turning over a copy of Andrew Marvell's poems had lighted, not for the first time however, upon the lines entitled 'Appleton House,' the name of one of the seats of their common ancestor, a hero in the German wars of the seventeenth century, in which poem occur the lines:

'This 'tis to have been from the first
In a domestic heaven nursed,
Under the discipline severe
Of Fairfax and the starry Vere.'

And so, upon embracing his cousin fresh from Rodney's victory, wherein he had played so gallant a part, brimming over with just family pride in the sailor of their house, he exuberantly exclaimed, 'Give ye joy, Ed; give ye joy my starry Vere!' This got currency, and the novel prefix serving in familiar parlance readily to distinguish *The Indomitable's* captain from another Vere, his senior, a distant relative, an officer of like rank in the Navy, it remained permanently attached to the surname."

Members of the Shakespeare Fellowship know very well what the adjective "Starry" meant. Of course, nobody has connected "Starry Vere" with Shakespeare.

MORE MYTHOLOGY

The Borough of Southwark can rightly claim to be the most historic in London. It is, therefore,

fitting that, at various places therein, notices indicating this should be prominently displayed. One, however, in Newington Butts, is most questionable. It informs the passer-by that at the once adjacent theatre William Shakespeare acted, and adds a quotation from *Twelfth Night*: "At the Elephant in the south suburbs is best to lodge." On this being challenged, the Town Clerk cited William Poel, an authority on Elizabethan stagecraft not on London topography. This writer had cited Philip Henslowe—whose silence gave Sir George Greenwood matter for a chapter in *The Shakespeare Problem Restated!* All that Henslowe recorded was that the Lord Chamberlain's Company—in conjunction with the Admiral's Company, which Sir Edmund Chambers says was the more important of the two—acted for about ten days at the Newington Butts Theatre in the early part of June. The only documentary evidence of Shakspeare's association with the Lord Chamberlain's Company is in connection with the performances at Greenwich Palace in the last days of December. So because Shakspeare acted at Greenwich at the end of December, 1594, the public can be assured that he acted at Newington Butts in June!

As to the Elephant, a well-known book on Southwark Inns by Rendle and Norman (1888) says that in 1650 the site of the present Elephant and Castle tavern was waste land, and the Town Clerk quoted H. H. Furness, Editor of the Variorum edition of Shakespeare, as saying: "If it were not an anachronism, I should like to suggest that Shakespeare might be thinking of the Elephant and Castle at Newington which is in the south suburb; but I have been unable to trace that inn further back than the middle of the seventeenth century."

The above facts have been given to the Town Clerk of Southwark by the Editor of the *N.L.*, but to no avail. Evidence is of no importance to orthodox Shakespeareans; their wishes are facts.

MORE ANTI-STRATFORDIAN CONVERTS

A few months ago Mr. Gilbert Frankau, the well-known novelist, speaking at a Foyle Lunch at Stratford-on-Avon, expressed the opinion, to the horror of the audience, that the "Shakespeare" plays did not derive from anyone who lived in that town. The Editor sent him a pamphlet which, Mr. Frankau said, he had "read with the greatest interest—especially as the Oxford theory is more or less new to me. But whoever wrote Shakespeare it certainly wasn't the moneylender of Stratford."

A valued member of the Fellowship is Mrs. Elsie Holden, of Colorado, U.S.A. She writes:

"I was delighted to have the extra copies of the *News-Letter*. One of the copies I have given to Dr. Florence R. Sabin (did I mention my having converted that very great woman to the Oxford-Shakespeare theory?). She is the joy of my heart. She is one of our finest research anatomists (U.S.) and just now she has received

her eighth honor—the Lasker award, at 80. When she went to New York to receive the award, her old associates asked her if she had a hobby. She replied, 'Yes, the Oxford theory of the authorship of "Shakespeare".' There was horror on the faces of her hearers."

Sir Gordon Craig, son of Ellen Terry, has joined the Fellowship. He is resident in Paris.

SOOWTHERNE'S TRIBUTE

A member of the Fellowship, B. R. Saunders, has drawn attention to a remarkable verse in a volume published in 1584 under the title of *Pandora*. The author was one Soowtherne, of whom little is known. It is a dedicatory epode as follows:

"I promise to builde thee a glorie
That shall ever live in memorie,
In meanwhile take this litle thing
But small as it is Devere
Vaunt as that never man before
Now in England knew Pindar's string."

It is impossible to say if Soowtherne ever did "builde" his "glorie," but the poem is, at any rate, further evidence of De Vere's fame as a literary gentleman.

BEARDING THE BACONIANS

In November, 1951, the Editor lectured to the Discussion Circle of the Francis Bacon Society on the subject "Oxford, alternative to Bacon." The President of the Society, Miss Durning Lawrence, was present, but the chair was taken by Mr. Comyns Beaumont, Editor of *Baconiana*. The meeting was an amicable one, and the lecturer was warmly thanked. Perhaps the presence of an Oxfordian kept the wilder Baconian spirits quiet. At any rate, nothing was heard of the post-dating of the sonnets to make them refer to incidents in the life of the great Lord Chancellor; of the suggestion that he did not die in 1626; that he was of royal birth.

The substance of the lecture appears in the New Year number of *Baconiana*. Of course, there is editorial animadversion. "Mr. Kent disappointed some of his audience by raising doubts regarding Bacon's authorship, instead of sticking to his last and telling this audience what claims could stand expert criticism in the contention that Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was the author of the Shakespeare Plays." Readers are informed that he "told us very little about his hero, Oxford." Yet about half of the lecture, as reported, was devoted to giving the facts of de Vere's life.

SHOTS BY THE EDITOR

In the new edition of his *Encyclopaedia of London* (1951), several references are made to the 17th Earl of Oxford as Shakespeare, whilst attention is drawn to the fact that Anne Vavasor's portrait is in the Tate Gallery. The *Encyclopaedia* contains half a million words and sixteen pages of photographs; it is published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., at 20s.

The Editor has also published *London Mystery and Mythology* with Staples Press (12s. 6d.) Amongst the fifty-three subjects discussed are "Where were Shakespeare's London Residences?" and "Was the Mermaid Tavern a haunt of Shakespeare?"

NICHOLAS HILLIARD AND EDWARD DE VERE

By H. AMPHLETT

"An hand or eye

By Hilliard drawn is worth a history
By a worse painter made."

Nicholas Hilliard, thus eulogised by Dr. Donne was Court painter of miniatures to Queen Elizabeth and King James, and Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, must have known him all his years at Court.

In the possession of the Duke of Portland there is a portrait which Hilliard made of the Earl at the age of 38. It was painted in 1588, the year of the Armada: hence the armour which Oxford is wearing, and possibly the reason for the painting—a commemoration of that vital year. The longer hair and turn-down collar are typical of the last quarter of the century.

During the painting of a portrait the sitter comes into very close contact with the painter, for they spend many hours alone together in the studio, and the artist talks to make his sitter look lively and display his personality, whilst the sitter has time to study, not only the artist himself but the methods he uses in his work. De Vere's exquisite tastes, exemplified in his dress, behaviour and selection of presents for the Queen, would have made him appreciate these little works of art, and what he saw in the artist's studio reappeared in his plays.

Thus I believe, without any doubt, that it was of such portraits that he spoke when he made Hamlet say to his mother, "Look here upon this picture and on this—the counterfeit presentments of two brothers," especially as in a previous scene we have Hamlet's remark to Rosencrantz: "And those who made mows at him while my father lived, give 20, 50, and a 100 ducats apiece for his *picture in little*." (My italics.)

Oxford knew that Hilliard's charges were high and also that he "copied out" portraits of notabilities for sale, for Hilliard had been allowed a special licence from the Queen, which was renewed by King James and which granted "To our principal drawer of small portraits a monopoly for 12 years to invent, make, grave and imprint any pictures of our image" and also gave to him the privilege of granting to others to publish portraits of the King, "and that no one presume to do so without his licence."

This meant that Hilliard had a monopoly of royal portraits and could charge 50 or 100 ducats apiece.

Those who wish to give Shakespeare an actual knowledge of the Danish Court through a personal visit, believe the reference, quoted above, to be to

large tapestries which had been recently woven and hung in the royal palace, and which represented all the past kings of Denmark. A few examples of these tapestries have survived a fire, such as the one of Frederick II and his son, Christian IV, but the fact that they are referred to as "pictures in little" refutes this argument. Certainly most actors follow the quite English trend of thought and appear with two miniature portraits, one of which Hamlet probably wears round his neck, suspended from a blue ribbon, quite a normal form of ornament as is to be seen in a number of contemporary portraits, of which Hilliard's portrait of "A lover against a background of flames" (to be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum) is an example. Certainly, John Henderson, the famous eighteenth-century actor, understood the reference to miniatures, for we have a fine portrait of him in the rôle of Hamlet, wearing a black satin suit, a white powdered periwig of his own period and holding in his hands two miniatures, one of which is tied with a ribbon.

In passing, I must mention that Decker, in his *Satiromastix* (1602) gives a line to his character, Tucca, as he comes upon the stage, "My name's Hamlet revenge! Thou hast been at Paris Garden, hast not?" and he is followed by a boy who carries under his cloak two pictures as a skit of Hamlet's speech to his mother about the two portraits of her first and second husbands, and these must have been large or the joke would have been lost upon the audience.

But this is only a farce, and the more unlike the original the funnier, so that it does not alter my contention that Shakespeare—writing *Hamlet* at the end of 1588-9 as is now accepted by Cairncross and Hotson, had in mind his recently finished portrait, and those other delightful "pictures in little" by Nicholas Hilliard which he had seen and admired in the artist's studio.

It is not impossible that William of Stratford should have seen one of these beautiful and very expensive portraits at the home of one of Thomas Russell's distant relatives, but I think we have in Shakespeare's work a closer familiarity with the miniaturist's art, for again, in *The Merchant of Venice*, we get an even more detailed description of Hilliard's work:

Thus, when Bassanio finds Portia's portrait within the leaden casket, he is amazed by its beauty and exclaims:

"Fair Portia's counterfeit. What divine God
Hath come so near creation? Move these
eyes?

Seem they in motion? Here are severed lips
Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in
her hair

The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
A golden mesh t' intrap the hearts of men,
Fresher than gnat in cobweb; but her eyes
How could he see to do them? Having made
one

Methinks it should have power to steal both
of his

And leave itself unfurnished."

If anyone, in painting a miniature, has had to remove one eye to adjust its size or position, they will know just how devastated an artist feels when the first eye is left "unfurnished." I have no doubt at all that the writer of that charming description had seen that artist or his assistant in just such a predicament during the painting of a portrait.

Hilliard, attending a Court production of the Tragedy, must have smiled at the writer's microscopic insight; he may even have loaned the locket and caskets used.

Turning to the Sonnets, we find Shakespeare returning again and again to imagery drawn from the artist's work and studio, or to choice paintings in his own possession, amongst which were, undoubtedly, portraits of the Earl of Southampton, which, with his treasures, he kept under lock and key whilst he was away.

We know of two miniatures of the Earl of Southampton which Hilliard painted, one, aged twenty, where we see him with his dainty love-lock on his shoulder, and again, rather older and slightly bearded.

Although Shakespeare loved these charming remembrances of his friend, he said, "I never saw that you did painting need" (Sonnet 83 and in Sonnet 67).

"Why should false painting imitate his cheek
And steal dead seeing of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow since his rose is true?"

And again:

"Truth needs no colour, with his colour fix'd
Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay
But best is best if never intermix'd."
When absent from his friend and no longer able
to see him in person (Sonnet 47):

"Betwix't mine eye and heart a league is took
And each doth turn now unto the other
When that mine eye is famished for a look
O heart in love, with sighs himself doth
smother

With my love's picture then my eye doth feast
And to the painted banquet bids my heart."
Or better still (Sonnet 24):

"Mine eye hath played the painter, and hath
steel'd

Thy beauty's form in table of my heart."
One would like to think that Edward de Vere actually owned this early miniature of Harry Wriothesley, even if he isn't quite all the lovely things to us that he was to the poet.

When beseeching the young man to marry he says that a child of his would be:

"Much liker than your painted counterfeit"
and he even refers to the other side of Hilliard's work where he says:

"She (nature) carved thee for her seal and
meant thereby

Thou should'st print more, not let the copy
die"

which reminds us of the licence "to invent, make, grave and imprint any pictures . . ." etc. Hilliard engraved the great seal of Ireland for Queen Elizabeth, in which she is shown seated on her throne and holding the orb and sceptre.

To conclude with a conjecture. There is in the Victoria and Albert Museum a painting by Nicholas Hilliard of a young man in a very *outré* black and white suit, who leans against a tree in a nonchalant, rather theatrical manner, which, by close comparison to the known portrait of de Vere by Hilliard, I believe to be another portrait of the Earl. The dates given by the Museum authorities do not tally exactly with the Earl of Oxford's life, but dating is usually open to dispute, and there were so few noblemen in Elizabeth's Court whose features are not known to us, less still who are likely to have worn such an "Italianate" costume, that I have no hesitation in saying that this is another of Hilliard's portraits of the Earl, painted perhaps for a special occasion—his wedding to Anne Cecil, or more likely for a Court function after his return from the Continent, when he was labelled by his friends as an "Italianate Gentleman."

Miss V. Sackville West, who is *not* an Oxfordian, writing an introduction for a catalogue of Tudor paintings, shown at the Arcade Gallery in 1947, says of this miniature:

"A lover he may be, but that is natural to his years. A poet he may be, and in the 16th century is almost a certainty; not a very considerable poet perhaps, not even one whose name will be recorded to posterity—he himself will put every obstruction in the way—by refusing to allow his name to be attached to his poems. They may find their way into some song-book, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* possibly, or *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, but his fastidious reticence will not permit him to acknowledge them openly—that is *not* in the mode."
A shot in the dark, but how true!

THE LIBRARY

Now that, through the kind offices of Mr. John Russell, the Library is in working order, it may be useful to mention a few of the books most effectual for propaganda:

Is there a Shakespeare Problem? by Sir George Greenwood.

Shakespeare Identified, by Thomas Looney (1920).

The Case for Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as Shakespeare, by Percy Allen (1930).

The Oxford-Shakespeare Case Corroborated, by Percy Allen (1931).

The Life Story of Edward de Vere as William Shakespeare, by Percy Allen (1932).

Shakespeare's Sonnets and Edward de Vere, by G. H. Rendall, B.D., Litt.D. (1930).

The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, by B. M. Ward (1928).

Seven Shakespeares, by Gilbert Slater (1931).
Lord Oxford was Shakespeare, by Lt.-Col. M. W. Douglas (1934).
Shakespeare's Plays in the Order of their Writing, by Eva Turner Clark (1930).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Among a collection of poems of Sir Walter Raleigh by Agnes Latham (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951 edition) I came across the following poem:

THE ADVICE

"Many desire, but few or none deserve
 To win the Fort of thy most constant will:
 Therefore take heed, let fancy never swerve
 But unto him that will defend thee still.
 For this be sure, the fort of fame once won,
 Farewell the rest, thy happy dayes are done.

Many desire, but few or none deserve
 To pluck the flowers and let the leaves to fall;
 Therefore take heed, let fancy never swerve,
 But unto him that will take leaves and all.
 For this be sure, the flower once pluckt away,
 Farewell the rest, thy happy days decay.

Many desire, but few or none deserve
 To cut the corn, not subject to the sickle.
 Therefore take heed, let fancy never swerve,
 But constant stand, for Mowers mindes are fickle.
 For this be sure, the crop being once
 obtain'd
 Farewell the rest, the soil will be disdain'd."

Le Prince d'Amour, 1660.

My first impression was that this poem was distinctly Oxfordian—that is, its reflective quality is original, paradoxical, reminiscent of de Vere's poems on Desire, the poem preceding the Beddingfield letter (Cardanus's Comfort), and number XV of Mr. Looney's collection of poems by Edward de Vere. The style of it is Shakespearean—the six-line stanza, a.b., a.b., c.c.—with characteristic repetitive refrain.

Therefore, I referred to the notes relating to it at the back of the book and this is what I found:

"Le Prince d'Amour, 1660, p. 133, 'The Advice' subscribed W.R. MS., Rawl. Poet 85, f. 116, anon. At the end is: 'Finis written to Mrs. A. V. . . . B.M. MS. Add. 22601 f. 71, headed 'To A. Vavasour,' anon. . . . She (Mrs. Vavasour) is mentioned in a scurrilous book printed abroad in 1584, and known as *Leicester's Commonwealth*. In November, 1590, a letter from Sir John Stanhope to Lord Talbot says, 'Our nue mayd Mrs. Vavasor folorishethe lyke the lylly and the rose.'"

These notes will bring to the mind of Oxfordians many ideas from Shakespeare's sonnets and the records of the life of Edward de Vere, his acknowledged poetry and his entanglement with Anne Vavasour, the "Dark Lady," to convince them that here we have a poem which may well be

added to our collection of poems by the 17th Earl of Oxford.

KATHLEEN LE RICHE.

Dear Sir,

It has been objected to my explanation of Shakespeare's Sonnets that these are not such sonnets as would be addressed by a father to his son. Since this objection shows that my explanation has not been understood, can you kindly grant me space to answer it?

I do not hold that these sonnets were addressed by a father to his son. I think the notion absurd. I cannot imagine any circumstances in which a father would write sonnets to his son.

I assert that these sonnets were not written by the poet to his son; and that they were not addressed to his son, except in outward form, as if he was speaking to him, whereby he has given them an intimacy and vivacity which could by no other means have been attained. I assert that he did not mean his son so much as to see them, except perhaps after his own death, as is plainly apparent from S. LXXXI.

I assert that he addressed them to *all posterity*; and wrote them for all posterity; because he had determined to leave to all the world, and to all times, a true and living record of his love. This fact (which is wholly undeniable) makes it absolutely certain not only that he had nothing at all to be ashamed of in the love he so movingly depicted, but that it was his by right of nature.

He would have been a fool, if he had written these sonnets to his own son: he would have been worse than a fool, if he had written them to someone else's son. For that would have exposed them both (as they have been exposed, and still are) to a very unpleasant imputation, which is totally false.

I assert that a very great poet, for very good reasons, chose to reveal to us the secret of his heart, concerning himself, his son, and his son's mother. Is there anything foolish about that? Ought not the truth rather to be warmly welcomed than treated with contempt? At any rate, it would be a pity if it were rejected because of a mere misunderstanding, which I can only attribute to my own incompetence in the use of words.

G. W. PHILLIPS.

Peter S. Porohovshikov, of the Foreign Languages Department of Emory University, has written to the Editor of the *N.L.* as follows:

"Thank you cordially for sending me the last copy of your *News-Letter*. It is full of excellent information and the Shakespeare trial is delightful. Reminds me of Bardell *v.* Pickwick."

JUST A LITTLE COINCIDENCE

In Edward de Vere's biographies we are told that most of his ancestors, the old Lords of Oxford, had been buried at "Earl's Colne," not far from Hedingham Castle.

Now, when we read *Macbeth*, Act II, Scene II, we find these words:

Ross asks: "Where is Duncan's body?"

Macduff: "Carried to *Colme-kill*,

The sacred store-house of his predecessors,

And guardian of their bones."

How strange that Mr. Shakspeare of Stratford should have written this.

(Let it be said that the term "kill" in "*Colme-kill*" is an expression no longer used. It means something like a "shallow," or a "river," or simply a settlement or village, as preserved in the well-known American "*Cats-kill*.")

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

In a full-page editorial on Elizabethan Shorthand and Shakespeare, published by the Lugano paper *L'Impiegato*, the editor, Professor Aristide Isotta takes issue with a recent book of this same title, and discusses the question whether the pirated texts of Shakespearean dramas such as *King Lear* may have been taken down during the representations by shorthand, or not, that is whether they may have been compiled from the texts in the hands of the actors or stage-managers. Professor George Ian Duthie of the University Montreal, in his brilliant study "*Elizabethan Shorthand and the First Quarto of King Lear*" does not think that with the use of the three shorthand systems known at that time the exacting and complicated texts of Shakespeare's works could have been taken down. Mr. Isotta is of the opinion that such delicate a question should not be decided by hasty conclusions and left to the judgment of times to come.

At the end of his long article, Professor Isotta says that instead of deciding whether the author was the grain-dealer of Stratford, or the Earl Edward de Vere, or the philosopher Francis Bacon, we prefer, for the moment to express our thanks to the highly-esteemed Professor John Richard Mez, of Ruvigliana, who has given us this material, and we wish him all success in finding new proofs supporting the thesis which he defends as opposed to the Legend of Stratford, so as to reveal Edward de Vere as the authentic "Shakespeare."

In October, 1951, there died in Geneva, Switzerland, at the age of 82, Madame W. Boissevain-de-Vos, the widow of Mr. Boissevain, who had died about seven years ago. Mr. Boissevain was known in Switzerland as one of the best and most scientific photographers. In the year 1940 he had read Mr. C. W. Barrell's article in the *Scientific American* of January, 1940, in which the latter had shown that the Ashbourne portrait of Shakespeare, owned by the Folger Library in Washington, D.C., was nothing but an overpainted portrait of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. Mr. Boissevain translated that article and had it published in a

Dutch magazine, with a reproduction of the photographic proofs. Already, before this, he had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Oxfordian thesis, and had acquired all the books available at that time referring to Oxford being Shakespeare, about 30 to 40 volumes.

When I visited Madame Boissevain in 1950, I induced her to leave these books to the Library of the University of Geneva, Switzerland. Her daughter now informs me that this invaluable collection has been given to that Library, and it is comforting to know that future students of the Shakespeare problem will be able to find at Geneva, as probably the only place on the Continent, all those admirable studies, starting with those by J. T. Looney, and continued by such familiar names as B. M. Ward, Percy Allen, Admiral Holland, Miss Eva Turner Clark, Gilbert Slater, Canon Rendall, and all the rest who have so gallantly contributed to the discovery and establishment of de Vere as the author and playwright.

J. R. Mez.

A SUGGESTION

By H. AMPHLETT

When de Vere visited Padua on his tour abroad in May, 1575, the sights of interest in that town, for an intellectual traveller, would have been the Basilica of St. Anthony, with Donatello's statue of Gattamelata in the forecourt, the University, founded in 1222, and the Orto Botanico or Botanical Gardens, situated just behind the Duomo.

These gardens, originally planned for the testing of herbs for their medicinal properties, were conceived by the Venetian senate (under whose government Padua had then fallen) who inaugurated a chair of "*Lectura Simplicium*" in 1533, appointing, as the first occupant, Francesco Bonafede, and a few years later commissioning Andrea Moroni to design and lay out the gardens. These were filled with simples and strange or rare plants brought from abroad, and a director was appointed to supervise them. Being the first of its kind in Europe, and already famous in 1575, de Vere would have visited them, if only to report to Burghley, and his highly esteemed friend the botanist John Gerard, that they might get ideas for the gardens at Theobalds, for which the Lord Treasurer imported plants from time to time.

In 1589 there was appointed a new director of the Orto Botanico at Padua, one Prospero Alpino, who wrote two books on botany, *De plantis Aegypti* and *De plantis exoticis*, both lengthy treatises dealing with his travels in search of botanical specimens in the Near East and along the Islands of the Dalmatian Coast—an adventurous occupation in the days when the Turks were harrying all the coast towns of the Adriatic.

Would not de Vere have read with avidity these books written by the director of the unique gardens he had visited in Italy? Is it not possible that this

"Prospero," on his Dalmatian Isle, with the sea and plants around him, so close to nature, so used to shipwrecks, was the original of the magician of *The Tempest*?

Can these books of Prospero Alpino be procured now? Is there an English translation?

(For location of *The Tempest* read *Prospero's Isle*, a charming book about the Dalmatian Coast by Laurence Durell.)

NEW PAMPHLETS

Shakespeare's Farewell, by Gwynneth Bowen. 1951, 20 pp.

The Tempest is, by common consent, almost if not the last play by "Shakespeare." It is not only the poet's farewell to the stage, but the farewell of Shakespeare himself.

The orthodox Stratfordian "authorities" claim that *The Tempest* cannot have been written before 1610, because it contains a report of a shipwreck near the Bermudas which has reached England only in that year. Triumphantly they assert that this fact alone is sufficient to show how absurd it is to assign the Shakespearean plays to any author like de Vere, because he was dead when this play was written!

Mr. Looney, in his *Shakespeare Identified* accepted the traditional view that this piece originated in 1610, and tried to convince his readers that it had not been written by the same poet as the rest of the plays. Strangely enough, he was not unaware of the fact that divers authorities had assigned the origin of this troublesome *Tempest* to entirely different dates. Thus he mentions: Hunter, 1596; Knight, 1602-1603; Dyce and Staunton, after 1603; and Karl Elze, 1604. Miss Bowen, in her admirable paper, declares that, in her opinion, Mr. Looney has taken a "disastrous course" in excluding *The Tempest* from the canon. If he had closely read Professor Elze's arguments, written 75 years ago—with not the slightest inkling of the Oxford thesis—he would have seen that *The Tempest* was known in England before 1605. When Ben Jonson ridiculed a drama for its extensive references to Montaigne he can only have referred to *The Tempest*, the only known drama in which such references occur. And this he does in the year 1605!

Miss Bowen is quite right when she says that the "Bermudas," on which the Stratfordians rest their case so frantically, are referred to only once in the play and that "Bermuda" is the only place where Prospero's could *not* be, because the king's ship, when wrecked, was on its way back from Tunis to Naples.

It is impossible to present in this brief review all the brilliant arguments presented by Miss Bowen in her elucidating pamphlet. There exists not a single convincing proof that Lord Oxford could *not* have been at least the main author, granting the possibility that others may have added some extensions and interpolations. The author of *The Tempest* was, as he knew, a dying man. It is not

only a farewell to poetry and the stage, it is also a *Nunc Dimittis*.

Miss Bowen deserves our thanks and commendation: she has contributed a signal corroboration to the Oxford thesis in a singularly scholarly and extremely well-written essay.

J. R. Mez.

Shakespeare in his True Colours by Katharine E. Eggar.

For those who wish to study the salient points of the Oxford—*Shakespeare* authorship question at a glance nothing could be more helpful than the new pamphlet by Miss Katharine Eggar entitled *Shakespeare in his True Colours*. In it she answers the obvious questions of the newcomers to the subject, and elucidates several new knotty points.

The price of the booklet is 1/- and it can be obtained from R. Ridgill Trout, Bookseller, 39 Store Street, W.C.1, or from the author at 40c Palace Street, Westminster, S.W.1.

THE FELLOWSHIP STUDY GROUP.

The Shakespeare Fellowship Study Group, which was started on 23rd April, 1949 (surely a date of happy omen) is still continuing to work regularly, and has just had its twenty-third meeting.

The Group usually meets at The Cowdray Club, W.1, or sometimes by invitation a one of the member's homes.

Much useful work is being done, not only in research, but in establishing a knowledge of Elizabethan literature and its history.

Misses Eggar, Bowen, Wainwright, and Amphlett, and Messrs. Trout and Freedman have all given excellent papers during this period. If Country members would like to send any research work to help the Group, or would like the Group to help them, please contact the Hon. Secretary (Mrs. M. H. Robins, 5 Rusham Court, Egham) who will bring forward any new ideas at the next meeting.

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