

The Shakespeare Fellowship

News-Letter

SPRING 1955



NOTICES

THE ANNUAL DINNER will be held at the Commonwealth Headquarters of the English-Speaking Union, 37 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1, on Saturday, 23rd April, at 6.45 for 7.30. Tickets 17/6.

The Chair will be taken by Mr. Christmas Humphreys, M.A., LL.B. (CANTAB.), J.P., and the toast to the Ever-Living Memory of Edward de Vere will be proposed by Dr. John R. Mez. The toast to the Fellowship will be proposed by Mr. A. J. W. Hill, and Miss Gwynneth Bowen will reply. Mr. F. L. Nichols will propose the toast of the Guests, and Mr. W. A. Fearnley-Whittingstall, Q.C., will respond.

Applications for tickets should be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. T. L. Adamson, 6 Upper Cavendish Avenue, London, N.3.

THE LAST MEETING of the Session will be on Friday, 22nd April, at 8 p.m. at the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, W.1. LECTURE by Christmas Humphreys, M.A., LL.B. (CANTAB.), J.P.: "Who wrote Shakespeare? A Lawyer enquires".

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Committee much regret to announce the resignation of Mr. W. Kent, F.S.A., from the honorary editorship of the *Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter* on account of his continued ill-health. Mr. Kent writes: "I need hardly say it gives me great grief to write this letter, as I have enjoyed so much, when well, the editorship of the periodical."

Mr. Kent was solely responsible for the issues from September, 1947, to September, 1953. He was not well enough to deal with the 1954 issues. He was often faced with difficult problems of selection from the wealth of varied material sent to him by contributors at home and abroad but he never failed to produce a well-balanced *Newsletter* expressing the activities not only of the Fellowship but also of the literary world that knows not Oxford. His editorial notes, always lively and often pungent, revealed the bonnie fighter for the truth.

All members will join with the Committee in wishing Mr. Kent a speedy recovery to that vigorous health and strength which have enabled him to make such a unique and valuable contribution to the cause he has so deeply at heart.

The Committee have appointed an Editorial Board to be responsible for the issue of the present Spring Number and the following Autumn one.

The members of the Editorial Board are: Mr. T. L. Adamson, Miss Hilda Amphlett, Miss Gwynneth Bowen and Miss Katharine Eggar.

Back-numbers of News-Letter Wanted

Birmingham Public Library and Cambridge University Library both applied recently for back-numbers of the *News-Letter*. Birmingham has already been supplied, but we were not able to assemble a complete set for Cambridge. We do not ask members to sacrifice their own collections, but would be most grateful if anyone with copies to spare would communicate with the Assistant Hon. Secretary, stating the *dates* of the copies they can offer, previous to April, 1948.

MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, at 3 p.m., on Saturday, 9th October, 1954, when the Chair was taken by Mr. T. L. Adamson. An apology and good wishes were received from the President, Rear-Admiral H. H. Holland, who is now living in Devonshire.

The President and Vice-Presidents were re-elected and one new Vice-President, Mr. J. W. Russell, was added to their number. All other officers were re-elected, with the exception of Miss H. Amphlett, who had resigned from the post of Assistant Hon. Secretary owing to pressure of other work. Miss N. Loosely was elected in her place, and a vote of thanks to the retiring Assistant Hon. Secretary was proposed by Mr. Cutner, seconded by Mrs. Le Riche, and carried unanimously. Miss Ruth Wainwright was elected to the new office of Hon. Librarian.

Mr. T. L. Adamson, (Hon. Treasurer), Mr. Kent, (Hon. Editor), and Miss Bowen, (Hon. Secretary) being ex-officio members of the new Committee, the following members were then elected: Mr. J. Shera Atkinson, Mr. J. W. Russell, Mr. F. L. Nichols, Miss K. Eggar and Miss R. Wainwright.

The proposal to hold a week-end Conference sometime during the summer of 1955 was discussed. The Hon. Secretary suggested Colchester as the most suitable meeting-place. It had good hotel

accommodation and was only fourteen miles from Castle Hedingham. She said that she had heard from one or two members in Essex, who had kindly offered to help with the local arrangements, but apart from this, the response from country members had been disappointing—though Dr. John R. Mez had written enthusiastically from Switzerland, and at least one American member had hoped to be able to attend.

Nearly all those present at the meeting expressed a wish to attend the conference if, and when, it was decided to hold one, but it was felt that it would not be worth while launching the scheme unless there was a widespread demand for it. The matter was referred back to the Committee.

Autobiography in Measure for Measure.

BY GWYNNETH BOWEN. 13th Nov., 1954.

In his "Life-Story" of Edward de Vere, Mr. Allen claimed that *Measure for Measure*, considered as a topical work and "fashioned out of the most bitter experience of Oxford's life", was almost enough in itself to determine Oxfordian authorship. And, Miss Bowen, in the above lecture, presented, with her usual scholarly regard for documentary evidence, the political-religious and personal events which confirm Mr. Allen's claim.

As M. Lambin's recent lecture was also concerned with this play, Miss Bowen was at pains to show that the coincidence of Lord Derby being in Paris at the time of the Tonard affair, hardly weighed against Oxford's deep interest in a story, which had, of course, been told before in several other literary forms, and which he had altered significantly to suit his own purposes.

She felt that the Howard-Arundel events and Oxford's affair with Anne Vavasour, telescoped together, had formed a most striking "objective correlative" to the drama of *Measure for Measure*. M. Lambin had, in the present writer's opinion, forgotten the important fact of the lovers' *imprisonment in the tower*, when he dismissed the above love-affair as of common occurrence amongst poets.

Miss Bowen supported Mr. Allen's claim that the leading characters in the play all show some aspect of Oxford's personality, though actual identifications are dangerous. For all Shakespeare's characters have been transformed by his imagination, whilst always owing something to their prototypes.

It may be suggested, for instance, that *Isabella*, in her fierce integrity both challenging and repelling, is a symbol of Oxford's ambivalent attitude towards the Catholicism that he had renounced.

Miss Bowen's interpretation of the main themes of the play was very illuminating, and showed, how some of these have been somewhat neglected by the critics, who have tended to concentrate on the sexual "plot" centering round *Isabella's* dilemma.

Oxford and his Forebears.

BY CAPT. RIDGILL TROUT. 11th Dec., 1954.

"My task," said Captain Trout, "is to correlate some of the historical factors which form the background of the plays of Shakespeare, to show . . . what a genuinely ancient and aristocratic screen is at the back of them all, and how the whole plays and poems are the products of one mind".

He traced Oxford's pedigree back to the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, whose grandfather was named Verus. The "meditations" of this Emperor, lost for several centuries, were available in 1534 in Lord Berners's translation, "The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius". As Lord Berners was of the family of the Earls of Essex, friends of the de Vere's, this book of "high level thinking" was almost certainly known to his descendant who was so proud of his ancestry. Capt. Trout then outlined the pedigree after the Emperor until he came to another world-famous name, Roland, Charlemagne's great paladin. He emphasised that Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" was a favourite of de Vere's, who bought both the Italian and the French editions, and suggested that "when in Italy in 1575-6 de Vere realised the consummate art of Ariosto in changing names, places and characters, in the weaving of the story of Roland, and took his cue for his own comedies".

Capt. Trout said, in conclusion "I say definitely that there was no person about Elizabeth's Court or in England, who without such a background could have written these plays."

A remarkably interesting lecture.

The Stratfordian Case Examined.

BY WILLIAM KENT, F.S.A. 22nd Jan., 1955.

Mr. Kent gave us a rousing discourse on those many aspects of the orthodox authorship of which he is such an able and, indeed, celebrated opponent. He reminded us of the weighty work of earlier iconoclasts, notably Professor Georges Connes and Sir George Greenwood, and of his own untiring labours in exposing the absurdities which are involved in the orthodox arguments for Shakespeare of Stratford as The Author. He pointed out that American writers are in the majority when we consider literary sceptics and gave instances of his failure to extract any response from his own countrymen either to debate on the subject in general, or to answer the particular challenges of a Questionnaire.

No short report can do justice to Mr. Kent's easy style and piquant retorts, but it was gratifying to notice how, though disobeying doctor's orders in keeping his engagement to address us, he seemed to gather strength and fire as he went on and won most cordial applause from his audience.

The Poems of Edward de Vere.

By RUTH WAINEWRIGHT. 19th Feb., 1955.

This subject is not only of immense importance in the investigation of de Vere's claim to Shakespearean authorship, but it also had on this occasion the additional merit of charming the audience.

She stressed the point that it was not surprising that we had so few poems signed with the name or initials of Lord Oxford, but that we had so many (twenty-three, in fact) in defiance of the public opinion of his day that it was infamous, subject to scorn and derision, and rather a reproach than a praise for a Lord to publish his poetic effusions.

Great pleasure was experienced in listening to the reading of the often well-known verses, and in following the analogies she drew to the Shakespeare works, the autobiographical matter contained in the lines, and a study of the imagery in these and other anonymous poems published in the last half of the 16th century.

Miss Wainewright also dwelt at some length on the fascinating volume entitled *The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, badly printed by two Welshmen, R. Jones and R. Williams, in 1577, in which pirated works by Nicholas Bereton, and probably of de Vere, together with other poets appeared without their consent.

The interest being thus aroused it is to be hoped that this mysterious volume will be eventually secured for the Shakespeare Fellowship library.

Our Debt to Ben Jonson.

By KATHARINE EGGAR 19th March, 1953.

Although Miss Eggar described her lecture as "a straightforward piece of historical-biographical deduction undertaken with sympathetic imagination", a brief summary of her arguments, based, as they were on many points of cumulative evidence, is bound to be both inadequate and unfair.

Most Oxfordians have accepted the belief, argued so convincingly in Canon Rendall's pamphlet, that Ben Jonson was the Editor of the First Folio. In Miss Eggar's view, however, he was not only this, but was merely editor and presenter of the series of plays beginning with "Every Man in His Humour", which she believes were written by de Vere, during his retirement at Hackney, when he was in close touch with the theatres. She thought that Ben Jonson was his protégé, and secretary, but argued that the latter, on account of his youth, upbringing, and rough way of life as a soldier—in her opinion, he never went to Cambridge—could not have written the first of these plays, presented in 1596/7, which showed such sophistication, theatrical experience, and command of the English language. She commented on the extraordinary way in which these "Workes" were presented, with their enigmatic introductions, prologues and epilogues, and identified Jonson with "The Boy of The Theatre", and de Vere with the absent "Poet of the day", referred to in the Induction to *The Magnetic Lady*.

ENGLISH HISTORY IN THE SALEROOM

By FRANCIS W. STEER

On 3rd November, 1954, a sale—believed to be the first of its kind—was held in London, and on that winter afternoon several hundred men and women from all walks of life came to witness the auction of some of the manorial lordships offered by order of the Trustees under the Will of George Frederick Beaumont deceased.

The Beaumont Collection of Manorial Lordships had been made by three generations of the Beaumont family over nearly a century. Joseph Beaumont, a London solicitor who settled in the small Essex town of Coggeshall in 1856, acted as Steward for a number of Lords of Manors; he began to purchase manors as an investment for himself, and this practice was continued by his son, George Frederick Beaumont, whose executors acquired the half-share in certain other manors which had been held by him jointly with another solicitor.

Publicity for this sale was well organized. The catalogue may be described as a superb production;* the foreword to it emphasises the glamour attached to the title of lord or lady of the manor; the description of each lordship is a useful historical record; there is a glossary of unusual words and phrases used in connection with manors; and lastly, an index of family names.

The scene was set in a large hall furnished with rows of chairs under the glare of powerful electric lights; there was the usual buzz of conversation before the proceedings opened, the comings and goings of officials, and then the hush as the auctioneers, their attendants and the other chief players in this drama mounted the rostrum. The auctioneer made his introductory remarks at some length, he dealt with the conditions of sale and then invited questions which, one need hardly say, came in quantity from the company. Information was sought by potential purchasers some of whom, it appeared, were not quite sure what they hoped to buy; other questions of a more technical nature came from people who deplored the sale and who wanted to know what precautions had been taken to ensure that precious documents would not leave the country; a third group asked "awkward" questions about titles to the manors and about the claiming of certain rights.

Eventually all enquirers were satisfied and there was a flutter of catalogues as Lot 1 was put up. "What am I bid for the Manor of Laver Breton otherwise Laver Barley", asked the auctioneer. To the astonishment of many the bidding quickly passed the £100 mark, almost as quickly it reached £200, with mounting excitement we hear £300 offered, and we wait with bated breath until the sum of £360 is bid, once, twice, and for the last

* A copy of this catalogue is in the Shakespeare Fellowship Library; also, one of *Picture Post* with illustrations of the Auction.

time, for the lordship of this Essex manor with its court rolls dating from 1668. So the pace is set. There is a murmuring throughout the assembly; each man seems to confer with his neighbour; we are all surprised at this figure; someone (we wonder who it is) has paid £360 for the privilege of being a Lord of a Manor!

Lot 2 was the Essex Manor of Wivenhoe with its Members which was once part of the possessions of John de Vere, 12th Earl of Oxford according to the catalogue; this statement is followed by one explaining how the Earl cast, in Morant's words, an envious eye upon the fishery belonging to Colchester Corporation, and got it by a grant from Henry VI and, after three trials, "he was forced to desist from his pretensions". In the church of Wivenhoe on the banks of the Colne is the magnificent brass to Elizabeth, widow of William Viscount Beaumont and the second wife of John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford. The manor changed hands at no less than £430, no doubt because the archives date from 1307 and the catalogue entry is particularly fulsome. The manor of Great Bromley and that of Crepping Hall in Wakes Colne and Chappel also came under the hammer and fetched £320 and £450 respectively despite the fact that the Crepping Hall records date only from 1784. These two manors also once formed part of the de Vere estates.

The proceedings were punctuated from time to time by the whirr of cine cameras and by the flash of bulbs as pictures of the "new lords and ladies" were taken by an army of press photographers.

We soon got used to the bidding in hundreds of pounds, and after fourteen Essex lordships had found new owners for over £5,500 there was a change of county and auctioneer. We were transported in mind to Suffolk and told something of its beauties both from a manorial as well as a scenic point of view. Eight Suffolk manors were offered and found purchasers who paid over £2,600 for them. One of the manors was that of Earls Hall in Cockfield which was held by Aubrey de Vere, 1st Earl of Oxford, and his successors in the title until 1548. But this lordship, with its documents dating from 1578 and regardless of its history, fetched only £300.

Suffolk was soon disposed of and we were offered five lordships in the neighbouring county of Norfolk. Buyers were found for these at a figure of over £1,400; we (buyers, and I presume, spectators) were thanked in the usual way for our attendance, and the company dispersed. Some of us were sad at heart that English history should become a marketable commodity in this fashion; some (probably most) of us were in urgent need of tea and aspirins and an opportunity to relax and cogitate on the significance of the afternoon's proceedings away from the harsh glare of the lights and the flashes of photographers' bulbs.

What had really happened? For a sum not far short of £10,000 a number of people bought for themselves a title which will not help them one iota

in this world or the next! There are thousands of manors in England so the title of lord of one of them is in no sense a great distinction. The title is not granted as an honour, no unique precedence is given to a lord or lady of the manor by virtue of his or her possession, and the days of manorial courts held by a steward on behalf of the lord are over. The titles seem, to the writer, to be of very doubtful value. Attached to some of the manors are small rights which may be difficult to establish and still more difficult (and perhaps expensive) to exercise. That disposes of the second attraction and we are now left to consider the third and last inducement to spend money on the scale mentioned above.

This third point is the question of documents. Reference has been made to the antiquity of some of the archives which the purchaser of a lordship receives, but it is surely wrong to assess the monetary value of the very essentials of English local (and, perhaps to a lesser degree, national) history at such an inflated figure. These archives are, for the greater part, written in Latin in a hand which only the palæographer can interpret; the contents of the rolls are, generally speaking, only intelligible to the trained historian. It is to be hoped that the purchasers of these manorial lordships will be content with their titles, and that they will observe the Manorial Documents Rules, 1926, dated 23rd December, 1925, made by the Master of the Rolls under Section 144A (7) of the Law of Property Act, 1922 (12 and 13 Geo. 5, c.16). These strict Rules set out the conditions under which all manorial documents must be kept, and by far the safest place is an approved County Record Office or similar repository where these and other historical treasures will be stored under ideal conditions, catalogued, repaired if necessary, and made available for the research worker or local historian. The export of manorial documents is prohibited, and we must see that, whenever possible, our national and local records are kept here for all time.

Seldom has a sale attracted more general interest than that of "The Beaumont Collection of Lordships of Manors". The national press, local papers, magazines, the B.B.C. and other mediums for diffusing news made reference to this event, but none of them seemed to treat it as anything but an item of "news value", and a headline, "History under the Hammer", in *The Times* made at least one reader wince. Let us hope that we shall not see this experiment repeated.

This is, I fear, but a very brief version of what happened. Glancing through the catalogue one sees names famous in English history—the Gernons, Mandevilles, FitzGilberts, Hastings, Gates, FitzRalphs, and many others including, as I have said, the de Veres. The de Veres of whom Philip Morant, the great Essex historian, described as "justly reputed one of the most ancient and illustrious [families] in the world, and that continued longest crowned with honour and riches".

We can only hope that the purchasers of these manorial lordships which once formed part of the inheritance of these noble families are conscious of the history which lies behind them, and that these new owners will see to it that the records of past generations who have lived, worked and died on these manors will be preserved for posterity in the country of their origin.

WILLOBIE HIS AVISA

By H. AMPHLETT

Owing to the rarity of this little volume it has not received the attention it deserves, not even that accorded to *The Hundredth Sundrie Flowres*. For most students its interest lies in the few verses so often quoted, which are believed by some to be a poetic paraphrase of words spoken by William Shakespeare.

Yet a careful reading of this short, amusing poem—or collection of poems—with its attendant introduction and editorial “asides” (reprinted in 1904* by Sherrett and Hughes) will well reward the labours of an inquiring Oxfordian.

Willobie his Avisas, or in modern colloquial language *Willoughby's Avisas* was first published in 1594 under the title *Willobie his Avisas or the true picture of a modest maid and a chaste and constant wife. In hexameter verse. The like argument whereof was never heretofore published. Read the Preface to the Reader before you enter farther.* This is followed by a verse from Proverbs and the whole enclosed in a line drawing representing symbolical figures, and a miniature picture wherein Actaeon, surprising the chaste Diana in her bath, is transformed into a stag.

Over the page is an address to all constant ladies and gentlewomen, disclaiming authorship by someone signing himself Hadrian Dorrell. Then follows the address to the Reader which one has been advised to peruse, wherein Hadrian Dorrell explains that his friend, Henry Willobie, having departed abroad on Her Majesty's service, had left him the key of his study and the use of his books until his return and therein he found “many pretty and witty conceits—I suppose of his own doing” which he took upon himself to publish during their author's absence. Regarding the name *Avisa*, he says he believes it to be feigned and not to be any real woman, this opinion being strengthened by finding amongst his friend's papers the following anagram—A amans V vxor I inviolata S semper A amanda. But then there follow some hints that the name hid a real person beloved by the young undergraduate. And so Dorrell leaves us mystified.

The book, which is divided into sections of about eight verses in each, with alternate sections devoted to a proposition on the part of the lover and a reply from *Avisa*, follows the conventional rhyming contest, and sets out to show how *Avisa* is sought,

first as maid and later as wife, by a German, a Frenchman, a Spaniard and so on, who use such logic as they possess to override her scruples, imploring her to relinquish her vows of constancy and return their passions, to which she, at equal length and usually with more logic gives cogent reasons why she should not.

The amusing repartee is kept up until Willobie himself, similarly smitten, is likewise rebuffed. He then appeals to a friend whom he knows to have had a like experience and whom he designates as W.S.

“———this miserable comforter comforting his friend with an impossibilitie, eyther for that he now would secretly laugh at his friends folly, that had given occasion not long before unto others to laugh at his owne, or because he would see whether it would sort to a happier end for this new actor than it did for the old player. But at length this Comedy was like to have growen into a Tragedy, by the weak and feeble estate that H.W. was brought into by a desperate vewe of an impossibility of obtaining his purpose.———In all which discourse is lively represented the unwrely rage of unbridled fancy, having the raines to rove at liberty, with the dyvers and sundry changes of affections and temptations. which Will, set free from Reason, can devise &c.”

This is the advice of W.S. who is an old hand at the game—

Well met, friend Harry, what's the cause
You look so pale with Lented cheeks?
Your wanny face and sharpened nose
Shews plaine, your mind some thing mislikes,
If you will tell me what it is,
He helpe to mend what is amiss.

What is she, man, that works thy woe,
And thus thy tickling fancy move?
Thy drousie eyes, and sights do shoe.
This new disease proceeds of love,
Tell what she is that witch'd thee so,
I sware it shall no farder go.

And then follows the advice—
She is no Saynt, She is no Nonne,
I thinke in tyme she may be wonne.

Willobie, thus encouraged, makes another assay to win the fair *Avisa*, fails, but continues to bombard her with amatory epistles, until her refusals finally wear him down and he retires from the contest.

It is a charming setting for some light-hearted poems and an allegory typifying a devoted and chaste wife.

Yet Charles Hughes, who edited the 1904 reprint, set himself the task of discovering a real life *Avisa*, and this despite his editor's assurance that the *Avis* was a rare bird!

His researches led him to the discovery that a certain Henry Willoughby was at Oxford in 1591, and that he came of a family who lived at West Knoyle in Dorset. From descriptions of the

* Now in the Shakespeare Fellowship Library.

countryside contained in the poems he then selected the town of Mere, not too far from West Knoyle, as the home of *Avisa*, and when he found, in the baptismal registers for the years 1563 to 1588, no less than six *Avisas* he was convinced he was on the right track. The lines—"Seest yonder howse, where hangs the badge of England's Saint" he believed referred to an inn called "The George", and that *Avisa* was daughter and later wife to an innkeeper, and this despite the author's aside that D.H. the Englishman, went to *Avisa's* house and found her amongst her maids spinning—not selling drinks!

(The innkeeper's daughter theory was started by one Peter Colse who added some verses to the 1596 edition of the *Willobie* and libelled the chaste *Avisa* the more to glorify his own selection, a certain Edith Horsey (another poetic convention.)

Faced with the problem of *W.S.*, Mr. Hughes, who never doubts but that the initials refer to William Shakespeare, reasons that Henry Willoughby or H.W. may be Mr. W.H. of the Sonnets (the reversed initials cause no impediment), and he is therefore to be identified with Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. In this way he kicks away the stool that supported his hypothesis—the assumption that Henry Willoughby, who lived at West Knoyle went to Mere to court the innkeeper's daughter, thus providing the *mise en scene*. But having decided that H.W. is Southampton he finds no difficulty in imagining that Shakespeare would have travelled down to Mere with his patron (reason not given) and that they called at Wilton on the way (reason also not given).

So is the hypothesis raised on a quicksand and dissolves like a mirage on the first breath of sane enquiry

If we examine the publication of 1594 as a whole we shall be surprised by the likeness it bears to *The Hundredth Sundrie Flowres*. To begin with, it was published by someone who repudiated authorship and declared the real author to be overseas, and that he did so without his consent, a ruse that protected everyone. The poems are preceded by an exhortation to the Reader, with a discussion as to their merits and meaning. Two years later (1596), as with the *H.S.F.*, there was a reprint with an apology proving that someone had taken the *Willobie* as a personal affront. Furthermore, it concludes with a poem on Contentment couched in the much-used fourteeners of the *H.S.F.* which is signed *Ever or Never*; each poem has a Latin tag at the end, and the book is concluded with three stars arranged in a triangle, which may or may not be a printer's device, but are to be seen on the pages of the *H.S.F.* and are more likely to be the author's monomark!

If then we believe Edward de Vere edited *The Hundredth Sundrie Flowres* himself, and wrote some, if not all, of the poems therein, and that he used the amusing pseudonym *Ever or Never*, we must conclude that he had a finger in the *Willobie* pie, especially in view of the fact that Hadrian Dorrell tells us that in the last example 'the author

was unknowne' despite 'his true name being open on every Page'.

A closer investigation of the poems reveals a similarity of style and imagery that is not just coincidental, and the mention of a Spaniard as one of the suitors places the date of writing before 1588.

Thomas Looney found the lilies and roses—the red and white comparison when describing female beauty—common to both Shakespeare and Oxford; and here it is again:

The lillie and vermillion strove
In maiden-like and lovely face.

The liming and snaring of birds as a simile found in Oxford appears again:

Thus did I mount, thus did I flie at will
Thus did I scape the foulers painted skill
Thus did I save my feathers from their lime
Thus did I live a long and happie tyme.

This repetition of the first word is common to both Shakespeare and Oxford and is seen again in the words of *Avisa*:

Send me no tokens of your lust
Such gifts I list not to receive
Such guiles shall never make me trust
Such broad-layde baytes cannot deveice.

Throughout the poems there are references to classical tales, fables and bible stories flowing from the pens both of the suitors and the so-called innkeeper's daughter, whose "fingers set with rings" indite these pithy replies.

Repeatedly we get the similes of hawking and the "silly kites" of the *H.S.F.* as in—

They do but fruitless paine procure
To haggard kites that cast the lure.

And no one can doubt the familiarity of:

I saw your garden passing fyne
With pleasant flowers lately deckt
With Causlops and with Eglantine
When woeful Woodbyne lies reject

Yet these in weeds and briars meet
Although they seem to smell so sweet.

Reminiscent, also, of de Vere's thoughts, are the lines:

This I will count my chiefest blisse,
If I obtaine, that others misse.

The need for brevity in this article makes me break off here, but instances of similarity are legion and I hope readers will be encouraged to read and judge for themselves.

To conclude—if *W.S.* can be identified with the Stratford actor, then this is the nearest connection yet known between him and his patron, the Earl of Oxford. And in passing it is interesting to note the conclusion of H.W.'s aside "Which Will set loose from Reason can devise", and the use of the capital letters, for I find in the *Spenser Anthology* that de Vere's poem "On Women" has the variant reading:

And how, like haggards wild, about they range,
Scorning after Reason to follow Will;

With *Avisa* I echo:

All hidden truth tyme will bewraie
This is as much as I can say.

SHAKESPEARE AND OXFORD IN THE LECTURE ROOM

BY T. L. ADAMSON

It has been my privilege to give series of lectures on Shakespeare for over thirty years. In the early days I did not give much attention to the author's life, and concentrated on his writings. Understanding and appreciation broadened and deepened as year after year the study of the plays went on. But with increasing knowledge came a growing doubt. With other great writers, both foreign and domestic, I had always found recognisable links, admittedly of varying strengths, between their lives and their works. Between the Stratford man and the plays I could find no link of any kind, despite a prolonged and intensive study of many orthodox biographies. Somerset Maugham has recently reminded us that in the long run an author can only write out of himself. I came to the conclusion that nothing of Shakespeare was written out of Shakspeare of Stratford, and that the writer of the plays was veiled in mystery. Then in 1937 I came by chance to read J. T. Looney's *Shakespeare Identified*. Three weeks of fascinated absorption in this book of revelation brought me the sure knowledge that Edward de Vere the 17th Earl of Oxford was the real Shakespeare. Here was the perfect accord between a man and his work. Mr. Looney had given me the greatest literary thrill of a lifetime. My mind "smoothed itself out a long cramped scroll". The plays and poems at last came fully to life with the personality of Oxford as their inspiration and explanation. Many readers may accuse me of exaggeration when I say that my understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of "Shakespeare" increased by 25 per cent thanks to Mr. Looney.

I will now say something of the effect of this great discovery in the classroom. It happened to synchronise with discussions on the sonnets in which many of the students had only a general interest. I referred first to Sonnet 125 beginning "Were it aught to me I bore the canopy", which Oxford had twice borne over Queen Elizabeth in procession. Then to Sonnet 59, written about 1598, when Oxford wonders whether his son was equal to or better than his ancestor "five hundred courses of the sun" ago. The reading of the description by the Chronicler Leland of the great deeds of Albry, the 2nd Earl of Oxford, as a crusader in 1098 created much interest. I passed to the sonnets on the poet's desire for anonymity, and to Sonnet 76 with the lines:

"Why should I write all one, *ever* the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That *every* word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth and where they did
proceed?"

I mentioned that Oxford often signed his name as E.VER, and that a *weed* in this connection is a disguise.

The sonnets were by now becoming very attractive to the students.

Later in that same session I drew attention to a remarkable three-fold expression—in letter, sonnet and play—of one and the same emotion roused by a particular incident in the life of Oxford. I said that in my orthodox days I had sometimes wondered why Polonius in Act II Sc. 1 of *Hamlet* expounds in eighty lines the whole art of the espionage he wanted Reynaldo to exercise on Laertes in Paris. These lines do not develop the action of the play—they suspend it. They are not needed to emphasise Polonius's love of spying—that is crystal clear. The behaviour of Laertes in Paris is a matter of complete indifference both to the drama and to the audience. These eighty lines are usually the first to be cut if the play is not to be given in full. Surely there must be some reason for a dramatist marring his greatest play with such useless superfluity? The reason lies in the heated indignation of Oxford against his father-in-law Lord Burleigh who in *Hamlet* is parodied as Polonius. Burleigh constantly spied on his son-in-law of whose literary activities he was highly suspicious. Oxford wrote:

"The other day you sent for Amis, my man.
And I think it very strange that your lordship
should enter into that course towards me whereby
I must learn that I knew not before, both of
your opinion and good will towards me. But I
pray my Lord leave that course for I mean not
to be your ward nor your child. I serve her
Majesty, and *I am that I am*".

Sonnet 121 voices the same indignation:

"For why should others' false adulterate eyes
Give salutation to my sportive blood?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their will count bad what I think good?
No! *I am that I am*, and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own".

Letter, sonnet and then the play. In a court presentation those eighty lines would be mightily enjoyed by an audience aware of Burleigh's besetting weakness. Thus Oxford's indignation was at last appeased. This triple protest has proved a potent persuader for Oxford authorship. The parodies of Burleigh's actual letters to the Queen shown in the wordy speeches of Polonius were not so readily appreciated by my students.

The new interest in the plays may be summarised in Hamlet's description of the players—"The abstracts and brief chronicles of the time". Oxford was at the centre of the court in one of the greatest periods of English history. A firm favourite of the Queen, a son-in-law of her foremost statesman, he moved easily among the leading men and women of his day, observing them, their actions and their foibles with the recording eye of genius. This recording reappeared in a number of plays with a wealth of topical allusion and many a veiled court personality that must have given a discerning audience the detective joy of identification. The topical allusions that most appealed are in the *Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet*. In 1577 Frobisher

made his third attempt to discover a north-west passage to China. Michael Lok, the chief promoter of the expedition, invited subscriptions on the attractive promise that Frobisher would return with a large consignment of gold ore. Oxford invested £3,000, Queen Elizabeth £1,000. The ore proved to be worthless, and both lost their money. About this time Oxford needed a name for the Jew in the *Merchant of Venice*. In Elizabethan days the adjective *shy* could mean low or cunning. So he named his Jew Shy Lok or Shylock, and turned the £3,000 into 3,000 ducats. Some years later there is a rueful echo of the north-west passage. Hamlet, who is so autobiographically Oxford, says "I am but mad north, north-west". How delightfully Oxford could smile at his own misfortunes.

Another favourite topical allusion is in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Sc. ii, where Romeo says to Juliet:

"Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou her Maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her Maid since she is envious,
That vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it, cast it off".

The Queen was often apostrophised as the Moon. She was notoriously very jealous of the attractiveness of her Maids of Honour. Oxford married two of them and had a liaison with a third, Ann Vavasour, who is probably the Juliet to Oxford's Romeo. The colour of the court livery was white and green. Oxford was greatly daring in writing these lines, for the Queen, who usually enjoyed his plays, would have understood all the allusions, and would not have been amused.

The identification of Malvolio as Sir Christopher Hatton, Oxford's court rival, was easy to explain. Hatton's own posy or motto "Si Fortunatus Infelix" becomes "The Fortunate Unhappy" of the forged letter in *Twelfth Night*. "Will not her Majesty", begs Hatton, "reserve her favour for the Sheep who hath no tooth to bite?" Sir Toby Belch calls Malvolio "the niggardly rascally sheep-biter"—a typical and delightful inversion. —the Queen's pet name for Hatton was "The Sheep".

Before reading the forged letter Malvolio soliloquises "I frown the while, and perchance wind up my watch, or play with some rich jewel". In the National Portrait Gallery are two portraits of Hatton. In each he is holding "some rich jewel" in his hand. In no other Elizabethan portrait have I seen the right hand so occupied. A trifle, this, and possibly of no significance, yet just the kind of personal touch the observant Oxford would have noted down.

It was not long before students were joyously in full cry after topical allusions, and what an exciting and rewarding hunt it always was.

Allusions to Oxford in Chapman's and Ben Jonson's plays did not arouse great interest with the exception of the famous eulogy in Act III of

the former's *Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, which begins:

"I overtook, coming from Italy,
In Germany, a great and famous earl
Of England, the most goodly fashioned man
I ever saw; from head to foot in form
Rare and most absolute . . .
And 'twas the Earl of Oxford".

For this sudden incursion of reality into a scene between two stage characters I could offer no satisfactory explanation.

To sum up. Over the years many students have wholeheartedly accepted Oxford authorship. The strongest resistance to acceptance was due to the 300 years' delay in the discovery of the author. The explanations, including Oxford's oft expressed desire for anonymity, stimulated interest in the literary history of the 17th and 18th centuries. I was surprised that some students, including a few of the most intelligent, confessed complete indifference to authorship. They were content with the plays as such. Surely, the enjoyment of any work of art is enhanced by a knowledge of the artist?

Recently, I met a student who had become an "Oxfordian" many years ago. She is now a teacher. She had not changed her opinion, but she seldom talked about it—"You see, it's all so very complicated and difficult to explain". "So very complicated". It is. We Oxfordians must recognise this, and be patient and persevering when we meet indifference or unreasoning orthodoxy. Truth will triumph in the long run.

A Translation of Horace

BY EDWARD DE VERE

As we well know De Vere has written many *Latin* verses. Hardly any of these, however, have come down to us.

Therefore, I was exceedingly interested to stumble on a beautiful translation of his of one of Horace's Odes. Here it is:

"A race of heroes brave and strong
Before Atrides fought and died:
No Homer lived; no sacred song
Their great deeds sanctified:
Obscure, unwept, unknown they lie,
Opprest with clouds of endless night,
No poet lived to glorify
Their names with light."

It is quoted by A. Toynbee in his *A Study of History* (Abridgement of Vol. I-VI by D. C. Somervell, Oxf. Univ. Press, first published 1946, fifth impression 1954), p. 126.

In a note he says: "Horace: Odes IV, IX (Vixere fortes etc.), *De Vere's* translation".

It would be valuable to be informed where Toynbee found de Vere's translation! Possibly then some more of his versifications or translations might turn up.

S. A. VAN LUNTEREN.

THE COURT OF CHIVALRY

The vitality of our English institutions, and the way the old forms adapt themselves to modern usages, are a wonder and a mystery to our foreign friends. Take, for example, that Coelocanth of the Judicature, the Court of Chivalry. It had not sat for 217 years. But it is not extinct. It sat again on the 21st December, 1954, and decided that the Manchester Palace of Varieties must no longer use the Manchester Corporation Arms as a common seal of the Company, and must take down the Corporation Arms displayed in the auditorium of the theatre. It is the only Court in England which could have entertained the suit at all.

The setting of the Court was like a scene out of Henry VIII. The Earl Marshal, attended by four heralds and two pursuivants, all dressed in full heraldic panoply, sat with his surrogate the Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Goddard. The styles of His Grace the Duke of Norfolk were read and the patent of Charles II whereby he holds office as Earl Marshal, as was his warrant appointing Lord Goddard to be his lieutenant and surrogate. The Earl Marshal, Lord Goddard, and the Officers of Arms then made their declarations. After 217 years the Court was opened according to the ancient practice without a hitch.

It was not all plain sailing. The Palace of Varieties boldly argued that the Court had no jurisdiction. This ancient Court, dating back to William the Conqueror, was without doubt set up as the court of Constable and Marshal. The hereditary office of Lord High Constable was abolished on the attainder of the Duke of Buckingham in 1521, and the Palace of Varieties argued that the Court had properly ceased to exist from that date. Secondly, still the Palace of Varieties, the Court, even if it still has jurisdiction, could act only in relation to armorial bearings when carried to war outside the realm, displayed at a tournament inside the realm, or carried by an army suppressing rebellion, that is, in civil war.

These were indeed grave objections, but against them was the weighty authority of Blackstone, Coke, Comyn and Hawkins. After all between 1634 and 1707 the Court of Chivalry had heard and decided 26 cases. The Court held that it had survived that attainder of the Duke in 1521, and could decide this case, although no tournament or civil war was in contemplation in Manchester. As a result the Court could, and did, "inhibit and enjoin" the Palace of Varieties from any display or use of the Corporation Arms.

The Court of Chivalry, after two centuries of disuse, was still in working order. But in the life of a nation like ours 217 years is not a long time.

J.W.R.

FALSTAFF, TARLTON AND "THE FAMOUS VICTORIES"

BY GWYNNETH BOWEN

In his article on *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, published in the issue of the *Newsletter* for September, 1954, Mr. J. Shera Atkinson supports B. M. Ward in assigning *Famous Victories* to the Earl of Oxford and dating it 1574, on *internal evidence*. He would, I think, freely admit that there is no *external* evidence for the performance of any play dealing with Henry V, either as King or Prince, at so early a date.

The internal evidence consists of the resemblance of the Gadshill episode to an incident which took place in the same neighbourhood (the road from Gravesend to Rochester) in May, 1573, in which the servants of the Earl of Oxford, and possibly the Earl himself, were concerned. But the Gadshill escapade was, as Hal himself says—"a good jest for ever", and there is no need to assume that the reference was topical. The author of *1 Henry IV* or *Famous Victories*, may simply have recalled a similar incident from his own youth when he wanted to portray the mad-cap prince who, as he read in Stow's *Chronicles* (1580):

"Whilst his father lived, beyng accompanied wt some of his yong Lords and gentlemen, he wold waite in disguised araye for his owne receyvers, and distresse them of theyr money: and sometimes at such enterprices both he and his company were surely beaten: and when his receivers made to him their complaints, how they were robbed in their comming unto him, he would give them discharge of so much money as they had lost, and besides that, they should not depart from him without great rewards for their trouble and vexation, especially they should be rewarded that best hadde receyved the greatest and most strokes".

If the Earl of Oxford was indeed the author of *Famous Victories*, I can well understand the desire to place it as early in his career as possible, for it does him no great credit, but the question is— which came first, the *Famous Victories* or the Shakespearean trilogy, 1 and 2 *Henry IV* and *Henry V*? If the latter, the case for Oxford as Shakespeare is immeasurably stronger, for then there would be no literary or dramatic source for the scene at Gadshill.

According to Dr. Cairncross, * *Famous Victories* is an inferior sort of piracy from the Shakespearean plays. We have no clue to the date except that it was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1594 and published in 1598, and that Richard Tarlton, who died in 1588 is supposed to have played in it. The only evidence for this, however, is an anecdote in *Tarlton's Jests*, a book of reminiscences published after his death:

"At the Bull in Bishopsgate was a play of Henry the fifth, wherein the judge was to take a

* *The Problem of Hamlet* (1936).

box on the eare; and because he was absent that should take the blow, Tarlton himselfe, ever forward to please, tooke upon him to play the same judge, besides his own part of the clowne: and Knel then playing Henry the fift, hit Tarlton a sounde boxe indeed, which made the people laugh the more because it was he, but anon the judge goes in, and Tarlton in his clownes cloathes comes out, and askes the actors what newes: O saith one hadst thou been here, thou shouldst have seen Prince Henry hit the judge a terrible box on the eare: What man, said Tarlton, strike a judge? It is true yfaith said the other. No other like, said Tarlton, and it could not be but terrible to the judge, when the report so terrifies me, that methinks the blow remains still on my cheeke that it burnes againe".

As Dr. Cairncross points out, "all that need be understood here is 'a play dealing with Henry V', which would truly describe 1 or 2 *Henry IV*".

Now, as it happens there is no such ear-boxing incident presented on the stage in either part of *Henry IV*, but there are allusions, to it, and it probably once formed a part of 1 *Henry IV*, Act II, sc. iv.

Famous Victories is assigned on its title-page to the Queen's men, to which company both Tarlton and Knell belonged, but—again according to Cairncross—"this means no more than that the plays pirated were acted by that company. It is unlikely, indeed impossible, that the Queen's, the dominant company in 1587-8, should ever have acted a play of the quality of *The Famous Victories*". It is, perhaps, even more unlikely that Dick Tarlton would ever have acted a part of the quality of Derrick, the clown in that play. And who, but Falstaff is the clown in *Henry IV*? Cairncross does not make this point in so many words, but it is incredible that he should have failed to see the implications of his own argument. "Falstaff's sauciness", says Dover Wilson, "is that of 'an allowed fool'; and if . . . he was first played by Will Kempe, the comic man of Shakespeare's company, he would have been accepted as the 'clown' of the play directly he appeared upon the stage".

And now let us look at the question from another point of view. In an article entitled *Shakespeare's Falstaff and the Mantle of Dick Tarlton* (Studies in Philology LI: 2, April, 1954), Joseph Allen Bryant Jr. writes:

"Falstaff, whether by accident or design . . . assimilated and perpetuated the living memory of the greatest clown of them all, Dick Tarlton . . . In proportion as he challenges the prerogative of clowning, Falstaff is an immortalized Tarlton—a Tarlton brought back from the dead to hold in perpetuo the field he dominated during his lifetime".

It is a strange idea that Shakespeare should create for Will Kempe, or any one else, a character

modelled upon the dead Tarlton, but Mr. Bryant is blinkered by a false chronology:

"Shakespeare in working from the anonymous *Famous Victories*, transferred much of the business belonging to the clown Derrick, a character once played by Tarlton, to the Oldcastle of *Henry IV*".

Is it not much more likely that Derrick and the Oldcastle of *Famous Victories* both stem from the Oldcastle of *Henry IV*, later to be called Falstaff, and that this was the part played by Tarlton? Incidentally, Tarlton was a tavern-keeper, and one of his taverns was the *Castle* in Paternoster Row.

Bryant sums up the resemblance between Falstaff and Tarlton as follows:

"We have on the one hand a popular clown noted for his extemporal wit; on the other, a popular character in a play, who behaves like a clown even though he is not actually supposed to be one. Both are given to poking fun at religious extremists. Both carouse in taverns, with the hostess as well as with the jades from the street, and both pay with reluctance if at all. Furthermore, they are both associated with particular taverns, each managed by a hostess who is capable of tolerating a witty rogue in spite of his empty purse. Neither man is one to seek a quarrel, though both occasionally become involved in them; and both are capable of using a sword when forced to do so. Finally, they meet their ends in the same way and in similar surroundings".

It has often been asked why Shakespeare did not fulfil his promise, made in the epilogue to 2 *Henry IV*, "to continue the story with Sir John in it". Well, perhaps he did, but if so, the man whom all London knew and loved as Falstaff must have died while the new play was in production, or just before it was put on. Tarlton was irreplaceable, so Falstaff had to die. Mistress Quickly gives us the simple truth, and the only acceptable excuse for his non-appearance.

They buried him at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, close to Henry VIII's jester, Will Somers, who died twenty-eight years before him, when Edward de Vere was ten years old. But that is another story!

NEW BOOKS

WHO WAS SHAKESPEARE?

BY H. AMPHLETT

(William Heinemann Limited. Price 21/-)

Since the publishing rights of the late Mr. J. T. Looney's book, *Shakespeare Identified*, passed into American hands and it has become almost impossible to obtain a secondhand copy, many have felt a pressing need for a book such as Miss Amphlett has now written proclaiming Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, the real author of the Shakespeare Plays and Sonnets. In these years following the first publication of Mr. Looney's book, so much

research work has been done by certain members of the Shakespeare Fellowship, that the task of compressing the essential knowledge gained into a comparatively small book must have been formidable. Miss Amphlett has managed this successfully.

Let me say at once that some "Oxfordian" members of the Fellowship will find disagreement with her on some minor points, such as her conviction that *The Tempest* is, in the main, not Lord Oxford's work. I feel, however, that none of these points is of such importance at the present time as to lessen our appreciation of this splendid and timely work.

The arrangement of her book is admirable. Dealing with a figure who touched life at so many points and who lived in a crowded era, not to mention his involvement in this tremendous mystery, the author could easily have covered her tracks many times. This she has skilfully avoided. She moves from chapter to chapter with compelling conviction, and any orthodox reader, coming upon this theory for the first time, must find his belief badly shaken, if not entirely undermined. For those of us who share her belief, here is a book which will give much pleasure and be of tremendous use in our hands. One recaptures in this book the delight experienced on first reading Mr. Looney's book and amazement at the paucity and falsity of all that is general knowledge concerning Lord Oxford.

Miss Amphlett builds up, step by step, the deep mystery surrounding Lord Oxford's works, so honoured in his own day. She has brought home to the reader who contemplates this figure for the first time (and how little is generally known about him) this awesome question—if he is not Shakespeare, where are his works? She has captured well the grandeur and fascination of his personality and disclosed the richness of his mind and his terrible sensitivity. More than all else, I think, she has portrayed the haunting sadness of this great man's life mirrored in his writings. Her quotations are apt and beautifully chosen.

The book is amply illustrated, easy to handle and reasonably priced. I like the arrangement of notes at the end of each chapter instead of as footnotes to the page—far less irritating. It has an admirable Introduction by Mr. Christmas Humphreys describing his own approach to the problem, and this alone would compel one to read the book.

We have waited a long time for this publication. Now that it is in our hands, let us pass it on wherever we can. I would plead that we give it especially to the young, to those in their teens and in their twenties, for they have the enquiring mind, the unprejudiced mind. We have to look to them to carry on the research in the distant years ahead—to continue the work to which Miss Amphlett and others are giving years of unselfish and unending labour. Here we have a story begun and continued but not yet ended.

OLIVE H. BROWNING.

THE FIRST NIGHT OF TWELFTH NIGHT

BY LESLIE HOTSON
(MacMillan)

There's many a slip . . .

BY GEORGES LAMBIN

Several of you have certainly read Leslie Hotson's latest book: *The First Night of Twelfth Night*. The author's main point is that Shakespeare's comedy must have been the one acted before the Queen and Court on Twelfth Night, 1600-1 (what we would call 6th January, 1601, or, according to the Gregorian Calendar: 16th January, 1601).

To support his claim L. H. brings in three main "proofs", so closely abutting on one another as to form so to speak the three sides of a pyramid: 1—that the character of Malvolio was conceived as a skit on Sir William Knollys, Comptroller of Her Majesty's Household, and in consequence keeping a rigorous watch over the expenditure of the Court Revels; 2—that Orsino was meant for Don Virginio Orsino, duke of Bracciano, a noble Florentine who had just arrived at the Court of Elizabeth; 3—that the whole conception of the play, where "ladies' law" rules the roost, is in perfect agreement with the traditions of an Elizabethan leap year "when the woman chooses, when the woman woos" (p. 129). Now, since the year 1600, according to the "old style" official calendar of that age, did not conclude till 24th March following, English people were still in 1600, that is to say in a leap year—thus victoriously completing the third side of the pyramid and Q.E.D.

Let us examine these three points one by one: 1—Much might be said *against* the identification of Malvolio with Sir William Knollys. L.H. greatly insists (p. 108) on the name of Malvolio being a sort of (cockney x Italian) pun on "Mal—Voglio" or: "I want Mal" i.e. Mall, i.e. Moll, i.e. Mary Fitton, the giddy maid-of-honour on whom old Knollys was foolishly doting. But, according to strict (French) logic, Benvolio in *R. and J.* should in its turn mean: "I want Ben"—which some might but too readily interpret as an appeal on the part of Shakespeare to the "rare Ben Jonson" with a view to the posthumous publication of the first folio.

2—Orsino=Don Virginio Orsino is very tempting. But the latter reached London only ten days before the supposed first performance of *T. N.*—an extremely short delay for the complete elaboration of a play at Court. Besides, to bring a noble foreign guest on the stage under his very name and nose is extremely bold, if not worse, and quite unique I think.

3—The "leap year" business should settle the whole case. In fact L.H. proclaims it "another indispensable clue" (p. 129). And it would have been—if 1600-1 (or, more exactly, the period between what we would now call 1st January, 1601, and 25th March, 1601) had included a 29th February. BUT IT HAD NOT!

The religious calendar was the only one followed as regards leap years from papal times, England included. And there had already been a leap year in 1599-1600 (1600, according to the religious notation). This it is very easy to ascertain in several ways. The easiest probably is to turn over the leaves of the *Calendar of State Papers* (domestic or foreign series). There you will find a number of documents duly dated 29th February, for the years 1583-4 (=1584), 1587-8 (=1588), etc., and absolutely none for 1584-5, 1588-9, etc.

Consequently, either there are no actual references to a leap year in *T.N.*, or, much more probably as the instances given by L.H. are of sterling quality, *T.N.* was never acted at Court on 6th January, 1600-1. It could only have been given the year before, or five years before, or three, or seven years later, etc.

This utter collapse of L.H.'s "indispensable clue" ruins the whole fabric. Convincing allusions to Sir William Knollys and Don Virginio Orsino are quite annihilated in consequence. And we are left standing, as far as direct Shakespearean research is concerned, exactly where we stood before. "O what a fall was there, my countrymen!"

The Detective on a False Trail

Professor Lambin justifiably shrinks from Mr. Leslie Hotson's atrocious "Cockney plus Italian pun", but the guess of Comptroller Sir William Knollys for Malvolio is at least a better suggestion than that put forward by Looney, Allen and Ward, who think that the Lady Olivia's Steward masks the figure of the benign and generally beloved Sir Christopher Hatton.

The plotting by Maria is near enough to the tricks played by Mary Fitton on her tiresome old lover to have been an adaptation from the knowledge which an Oxford would have of Privy Chamber intrigues and jokes not available to a Shaxper. But none of these "Oxfordian" writers seem to be aware of an episode in real life far nearer to the scene in the play than the Knollys-Fitton-on-goings, namely, the outrage suffered by Mr. Thomas Posthumous Hoby (a nephew of both Lady Burghley and Lady Bacon), at the hands of a small party of hunting friends, who, benighted after a day's sport on the Yorkshire moors, requested the hospitality of his (or rather his wealthy wife's) great mansion for the night. The whole story is most amusingly told by Miss Violet Wilson in her *Society Women of Shakespeare's Time*. (John Lane The Bodley Head. 1924).

With regard to the identification by Mr. Hotson of Don Virginio Orsino with Shakespeare's "Orsino" and the idea that *Twelfth Night* was hurriedly written for the Florentine nobleman's visit to Queen Elizabeth, one may say that it would have been a strange kind of compliment to put the distinguished guest—a married man—on to the stage on the occasion of his reception at the English Court and portray him as a love-sick suitor

who fails to win his lady and is eventually paired with his supposed page. If anything could convince that *Twelfth Night* was not the play chosen it is the use of the name "Orsino". Moreover, the entertaining picture of Shaxper hurriedly "mugging up" particulars of the visitor's background, is dispersed if one knows that Shakespeare was familiar with Italy and would have had every opportunity of hearing about this talented young gentleman whose name was famous.

Dr. Hotson gives legitimate play to his imagination in describing the bustle and jostle of London streets and the hectic excitement of preparation for a Court Show. He writes, as always, with unsurpassable vivacity and gusto, for which one is grateful, though continually wishing that he would employ his detective talents in following the right trail!

His interpretation of Elizabethan word-usage is not always trustworthy, as for instance when (p. 97) "quick" is taken to mean *swift*, whereas it meant *alert, lively*; and again (p. 104) in commenting on the Queen's bitter remark to a dancer "Affection! Affection is false", he translates "affection" as "burning or passionate love", whereas it meant *devotion, loyalty*.

KATHARINE E. EGGAR.

THE RENAISSANCE MAN OF ENGLAND

Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, the authors of *This Star of England*, the detailed story of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as "Shakespeare", have issued a newly corrected and augmented edition of *The Renaissance Man of England*, which they first published in 1947. In this book they impressively summarise the same story in fifty-seven fluent pages, embodying the latest research into the life and times of the author Earl who was first revealed by J. Thomas Looney in 1922. Investigators from many countries have shared in this fascinating research. The outstanding contribution from America clearly comes from Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn.

The Renaissance Man of England, with the Gheeraedts' portrait of de Vere as frontispiece, is published by Coward—McCann Inc., New York at 1.25 dollars.
T.L.A.

NOTICES

So little support for the suggestion of holding a Summer Conference has been received that it has been decided to abandon the idea for this season.

It is very satisfactory to be able to inform members that the sum required for the purchase of Mrs. Philpot's Library has now been fully subscribed.

Members are reminded that the Catalogue (price 6d.) and Rules for borrowing books may be obtained from the Hon. Librarian, Miss Ruth Wainwright, 4 Collingham Road, London, S.W.5, where the Library is housed. Telephone: Frobisher 4419.

BROOKE HOUSE
AND ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH

The demolition of Brooke House, Hackney, is now almost complete in spite of all efforts to save it on the part of the Shakespeare Fellowship and other societies interested in the preservation of historic buildings. No doubt the house had passed beyond repair, but the pity is that it should have been allowed to do so. We are informed, however, by the L.C.C. that full records of the building are being made, and "it is the present intention that they shall be published and placed on sale in due course, when it will be possible for the Shakespeare Fellowship to purchase a copy".

In January, the Hon. Secretary and the Assistant Hon. Secretary together visited the site, and were shown over the ruins by the foreman. On the return journey, they stopped at the old tower which has long been the only remaining feature of the Church of St. Augustine, where, according to the Parish Register, the 17th Earl of Oxford was buried. They were surprised to find men at work here, too, on the site of the old church and churchyard. They were told by one of the workmen that it was to be converted into a children's playground—"here's fine revolution, and we had the trick to see't".

The Hon. Secretary wrote for further information to Mr. Dudley Sorrell, the Town Clerk of Hackney. The following is an extract from his reply:

"As regards the Churchyard and the site of the ancient Church, the Council is taking over the care and maintenance of this ground. No part of the ancient burial ground or the site of the old Church will be used as a Children's Playground. The whole of this part of the site will be tidied up, the paths reconstructed and some flower beds provided. The Council is also acquiring a small parcel of land fronting Mare Street adjacent to the Churchyard; this land . . . will be turned into an ornamental garden. The question of tidying up the whole of the Churchyard will be a very expensive project and the Council are proceeding with their proposals stage by stage.

"This year's programme includes the area of the ancient Churchyard. Future programmes will deal with the additions to the Churchyard which were made about the year 1790. It is on a small part of this site that a grassed area will be provided as a play space for children. This does not mean that organised games will be permitted, it will simply be a space on which younger children will exercise themselves.

We have found no trace of the tomb of the Earl of Oxford. You will, of course, be aware that it is recorded that he died of the plague and I have, therefore, concluded that no cleric in the year 1604 would have dared to inter him inside the Parish Church. My own view is that he must have been buried hurriedly somewhere in the old Churchyard".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

May I thank Miss Ruth Wainwright very much for writing, last September, a notice of my pamphlet, and may I correct a misapprehension? I did not arrange the sonnets according to any "belief"; but according to axioms and principles, stated in the preface to my book, and perhaps more plainly in the pamphlet. Doubtless she could not, in a short notice, discuss their validity, or the arrangement, chronology, or explanation. May I, however, reply to some of her remarks on minor matters.

She contends that the subject of S.8 (Q.114) resembled the cherubins, not by being a child, but by knowledge. This is a pretty high claim. For what knowledge distinguishes cherubins? "It is fourfold in them, perfect knowledge of God, full reception of divine light, contemplation of beauty in the order of things, and copious effusion into others of divine cognition" (S. Thomas Aquinas). I ask—Is there any likeness, even most remote, between this knowledge and that of the "Fair Youth"?

For an answer, she appeals to S.94 (Q.82), "Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue". There, however, knowledge means discernment, as Tucker noted. The youth, by now, discerned his own *worth* so clearly as to see that Shakespeare could not praise it properly. So he turned to others. This was not knowledge. It was pride. By this he did *not* resemble the cherubins.

Moreover, what is it that makes "of monsters" "such cherubins as your sweet self"? It is the poet's *eye*, enabled to do this by his love. It is flattery in his *seeing*. He *sees* that his love is like a cherub; and he sees it with his *eye*. There is no question of anything invisible. But cherubins are invisible. They can be "seen" only in pictures; wherein they always appear as little children. Therefore, his love looked like, and in fact was, a little child—a cherub.

Besides, this line does not stand alone. For instance the language of S.9 (Q.98), and especially of S.12 (Q.99), about "the forward violet", though very suitable to a child, would be insulting to a young man. It could only mean that he was what is called (in vile modern jargon) a "pansy".

There was not, in the seven or eight years covered by the first fifty-five sonnets of my order, any "one-sides paternal love". Their love was then reciprocal. Only after the boy came out into the world, after flatteries by other poets, after living with infection and impiety (S.62: Q.67), refusing marriage, and recklessly indulging in vice (e.g. S.93: Q.95) did he grow more and more estranged: till, at last his "Sweet love . . . losing his property, turns to the sourest and most deadly hate". (K. Rich. II).

She grants that in S.86 (Q.33) "it seems fairly certain" that there is a pun on sun and son. But this is not, as she seems to suppose, the only sonnet

in which the boy is identified with the sun. There are, at least, seventeen others. Now, *entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate*. We really cannot have another sun—the son of Ann Vavasor—butting in without reason. He fits in nothing whatsoever; but space forbids me to enlarge on this.

I have read both Rendall's books. I have even read Ward. I find in neither of them a vestige of evidence from history that Oxford and Southampton were intimate; or even had any contact, except that Oxford was the senior of the peers who condemned Southampton in 1601.

If Miss Wainwright knows of evidence which proves them to have been such extremely close friends as the Sonnets require, perhaps she will kindly say where it may be found.

Yours faithfully,

G. W. PHILLIPS.

Sir,

I wish to correct an error in my article, *The Wounded Name*, published in the last number of the *News-Letter* (September, 1954).

I quoted a letter as written by the Cardinal Secretary of State to the Papal Nuncio at Paris: it should have been Madrid. I was misled in this by Theodore Maynard who also gives the date incorrectly as "early in 1583" (*Queen Elizabeth*, p. 253). I found that J. E. Neale referred to the same letter as written in December, 1580 (*Queen Elizabeth*, p. 251), so wrote to him for confirmation, which he very kindly sent. He did not, however, mention the Nuncio's address either in his book or his letter, and I did not detect Maynard's second error till, on returning to London from the country, I consulted his source—*England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*, by A. O. Meyer. From this it is evident that he was confusing two different conspiracies.

I should like to add that the exact date of the letter was 12th December, 1580; the Cardinal Secretary was Tolomeo Galli, Cardinal of Como; and the Nuncio was Philip Sega, Bishop of Piacenza. A slightly different translation of this letter, together with the Nuncio's request, dated 14th November, is printed in *Rome and the Counter Reformation in England*, by Philip Hughes (1944).

GWYNNE BOWEN.

STUDY GROUP MEETINGS

Subjects of the Study Group, since the Annual General Meeting, 1954:—

3rd November. Report of recent research by Miss Eggar on the "Parnassus" Plays. *The First Two Plays*: "The Pilgrimage to Parnassus" and "The Return from Parnassus".

9th December. The Third Play: "The Return (II) or The Scourge of Simony".

18th January, 1955. A general discussion on the Bacon theory.

CONSIDERED TRIFLES

In the March number of *Books*, the journal of the National Book League, there is given a Quiz of Literary Animals of which the sixth question is:

(f) Who was accused of having a tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide?

Questions set by Francis Meres.

The answer given to (f) is as follows:

(f) Shakespeare, by Greene: *The Groatworth of Wit*.

The 20th century Francis Meres seems to be as little "in the know" about Shakespeare as was his 16th century namesake, and once more this hoary imposture—so vital to the orthodox case—is allowed to flaunt itself in a reputable literary organ. And still the two-fold misrepresentation is perpetuated: (a) Shakespeare—a name not in print at the date (1592) of the work quoted from—is substituted for the contemptuous epithet, "Shakespeare"; and (b) Greene is made the author of an anonymous work of fiction, of which (as usual) the actual title is incorrectly given.

The correct answer to "Who was accused of having a tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide? and by whom?" is "An upstart crow beautified with actors' feathers that . . . is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a country", by the anonymous author of a novelette called *Greene's Groatworth of Wit bought with a million of Repentance*.

Sayings of the Week

Human beings are very difficult to unconvince.—Dr. Sherwood Taylor, Director of the Science Museum, Kensington.

Culture is a hidden hunger easily satisfied by Shakespeare. (The Shakespeare Newsletter, U.S.A.)

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The Half-Yearly "News-Letter":

The Editorial Board will welcome MSS., newspaper cuttings, letters, etc., intended for publication.

Contributions for the next issue should be sent to the Hon. Secretary not later than JULY 1st.