

The Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter

AUTUMN 1955



CONTENTS

	Page
Advance Notices	1
Annual Dinner	1
Reports of Meetings	2
Editorial Notes	3
ARTICLES :	
U.S.A. Report on Shakespeare Scholarship	4
Chronology in the Melting-Pot	5
Anthony Munday's <i>John a Kent</i>	6
The Poet with a Spear (<i>Gascoigne Parallels</i>)	7
The Last of Brooke House, Hackney	8
The Spanish Romances and <i>The Tempest</i>	9
Shakespeare and the General	9
NEW BOOKS :	
<i>Ben Jonson of Westminster</i> , by Marchette Chute	10
<i>Shakespeare Unmasked</i> , by Prof. S. Porohovshikov	10
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	11

ADVANCE NOTICES

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Poetry Society's Rooms, 33 Portman Square, at 3 p.m. on Saturday, 8th October.

The NEXT OPEN MEETING will be held at the Alpine Club at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 8th November, when Mr. Christmas Humphreys will cross-examine a panel of Oxfordians.

In future a charge of 2/- will be made to non-members attending meetings of the Fellowship.

ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Dinner was held at the headquarters of the English Speaking Union, Charles Street, W.1. on Saturday, 23rd April, and the Chair was taken by Mr. Christmas Humphreys.

The Chairman stated that among the messages of regret for absence was one from our President, Rear Admiral Holland, who sent the following amusing telegram :

"Greetings. May your reasons at dinner, with one exception, be like *Holofernes*—Act V, Scene 1."

Reference to the play produced the following :
"*Holofernes* : Satis quod sufficit.

Nathaniel : I praise God, sir ; your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious, pleasant without scurrility, witty without affectation, audacious without impudency, learned without opinion, and strange without heresy."

A message of regret for non-appearance was also received from Mr. Dudley Sorrell, the town clerk of Hackney, who had always proved himself helpful and sympathetic in the Fellowship's endeavour to save Brooke House.

Professor John R. Mez proposed the toast to the Ever-Living Memory of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Great interest was aroused by his description of a play which he and Mr. Klaus Colberg of Munich had written and prepared for radio presentation in Vienna. This play took the form of a court trial in which a student defended his belief in the Oxfordian authorship of the Shakespearean plays. The production was warmly acclaimed by the press in Vienna, the leading Vienna daily paper stating "it was the most interesting and fascinating broadcast for many days past and rarely had one listened with greater interest or closer attention." The play, Dr. Mez informed us, had been offered to one of the German Broadcasting Services. Dr. Mez ended his vigorous speech with a declaration that our Poet will not give us peace until we have solved the secret of his earthly existence and once for all established his identity. For us, he said, the rest is *not* silence.

The toast of the Shakespeare Fellowship was proposed by Mr. A. J. W. Hill of Messrs. Wm. Heinemann Ltd. He referred to the Shakespearean plays as the greatest achievement of the human spirit in the last 400 years of western civilization and stated that any activity which was devoted to establishing the authorship of that wonderful achievement was a very great cause indeed.

Miss Bowen replying to the toast, said that this had been a sad year, for we had witnessed the demolition of Brooke House where the Earl of Oxford had died. She stated that in 1922 a small company of pilgrims had visited the house to honour his memory. Subsequently a meeting was held and the Shakespeare Fellowship formed. This happened to be at a time of year falling under the Sign of Scorpio. Although not professing any personal belief in astrology, she had thought that

it might be interesting to consult Mr. David Freedman, a valued member of the Fellowship, on the horoscope of one born under this sign. The qualities listed were strikingly apt to the spirit of the Shakespearean Fellowship such as—great devotion to a person or an idea—born detectives—skill in discoveries—able to work individually but best in harness with suitable companions. Later in her speech Miss Bowen mentioned the Fellowship Library which is steadily growing and which contains a number of books written by past and present members.

Mr. F. L. Nichols proposed the toast of the guests. He spoke of the impossibility of reconciling the character of the man of Stratford—the shrewd ruthless business man, the hoarder of malt and buyer of land with that of the author of the plays. Lord Oxford, far from being a business man, sold his land to see other men's, to finance poor scribes and died obscure in Brooke House. Mr. Nichols then gave us a compilation of a diary which Shaksper of Stratford might have written. Much amusement was caused by such lines as: "Must teach Judith to write," and "To-day I sued Thomas Hornby as surety for John Addenbrooke for £6 for malt. This evening added a few lines to Merchant of Venice—the quality of mercy is not strained."

A very pleasant speech was given in reply by Mr. Fearnley Whittingstall.

One special and pleasing feature of the dinner this year was the name card for each guest bearing, beside the name, a small reproduction in colour of the Bulbeck crest—a lion rampant holding a broken spear—painted by Miss Hilda Amphlett.

OLIVE BROWNING.

OPEN MEETINGS

"Who Wrote Shakespeare?—A Lawyer Enquires."

BY CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS.

On Friday, 22nd April, the Alpine Club took on the atmosphere of a crowded Court Room as Mr. Christmas Humphreys, M.A., LL.B. (CANTAB.), J.P., presented his penetrating lecture, to introduce Miss Amphlett's new book *"Who Was Shakespeare"*. Mr. Alan Hill of Messrs. Heinemann Ltd., was in the chair and Miss Amphlett herself on the platform.

Probably there is no more gripping sight than that of a leading Advocate tearing a flimsy defence to shreds, and members and visitors thrilled as the orthodox case for William, the Stratford actor, was ruthlessly ripped to pieces. "We are not concerned with tradition, but with evidence," declared Mr. Humphreys, and "as an appraiser of conflicting evidence," he proceeded to "shake a mountain of belief three hundred years old in the dull worthy of Stratford".

Pointing out that John Camden, writing of Stratford, ignored the gifted Will, that Phillip Henslowe never paid him for a play, and that Ben Jonson never mentioned Stratford in his praise of the Poet, the speaker declared that it was quite obvious that to his contemporaries Will Shakespeare was unknown as the writer of unsurpassed plays and poems.

Using the same method as J. Thomas Looney in *Shakespeare Identified* which Mr. Humphreys said he, as a lawyer, had always found effective, he then presented fourteen clearcut points indicating the Earl of Oxford as the author of the plays. Shakespeare's outstanding characteristics may be outlined as follows:

1. He was a cultured linguist.
2. He had musical knowledge.
3. He had great legal knowledge.
4. He was a traveller.
5. He had an ambivalent attitude towards women.
6. He had Lancastrian sympathies.
7. He was a playwright and poet.
8. He was an aristocrat.
9. He was intolerant of injustice and oppression.
10. He had considerable sea and military experience.
11. He suffered from a libellous attack that defamed his name.
12. In money matters he was lax and indifferent.
13. He had a particular knowledge of stagecraft, as producer rather than actor.
14. He was lame.

Each of these attributes, declared Mr. Humphreys applied to the character of Edward de Vere, and not one (with the possible exception of No. 13) could be found in William of Stratford.

As an instance of Shakespeare having travelled and being acquainted with the cities of north Italy, Mr. Humphreys quoted the lines from *The Winter's Tale*, referring to Giulio Romano. "How", he asked, "could Shaksper of Stratford have gained any knowledge of an Italian artist whose name and work was entirely unfamiliar to English people? Only by visiting Mantua and seeing the wall paintings and the tomb of Baltazarre Castiglione and being impressed by their fidelity to life.

The Earl was declared the "best for Comedy". Where are his writings?

Step by step, from his boyhood under the tutelage of his uncle, Arthur Golding, to the Armada Procession at which he "bore the canopy" and to the prospective marriage of his daughter with Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, Mr. Humphreys traced the career of Edward de Vere in relation to the works of William Shakespeare, leaving in the minds of his audience a suspicion, if not an actual conviction, that "here was the man".

The X-rayed Ashbourne portrait is another telling factor in the case for de Vere as the true

author and for Will Shakespeare, as a mask and pseudonym for hiding the noble writer, Earl of Oxford.

Discussion on matters such as the authorship of *The Tempest* and the cipher mysteries of Bacon followed without shaking the unassailable case for Oxford that Mr. Humphreys had brilliantly presented, and for which Mr. Russell proposed a vote of thanks amid enthusiasm.

About sixty members of the London Appreciation Society attended the lecture by invitation of the Fellowship, and the Hon. Secretary has since heard from their Secretary, Mr. H. L. Byrany Peers, F.R.G.S., M.R.S.L., who very much regretted that he was unable to be present himself, but quoted extracts from a number of enthusiastic letters he had received from members of the society. Here are some of their comments:

"The lecture was an intellectual treat".

"How lucky we are to have been allowed to listen to this very brilliant speaker".

"It was a revelation to meet the learned members of the Shakespeare Fellowship, they received us so very warmly".

We, too, were grateful for the warmth of their reception, and are very glad to welcome those who have since become members of the Shakespeare Fellowship. G.M.B.

WORK OF THE STUDY GROUP

A knowledge of the whole world of Elizabethan drama is vitally necessary to the student of *Shakespeare*, and four out of five of the recent meetings of the Study Group have been devoted to this subject.

Following on Miss Eggar's lecture on *Ben Jonson*, the Group arranged a Reading of the latter's "Poetaster", in April. This brilliant satire of Middle-Class Elizabethan London life was much enjoyed, and the understanding of the plot and characters was greatly helped by Miss Eggar's excellent synopsis.

The reading led to a discussion of the play, in May. Questions had been prepared beforehand, so that members did some real research into the problems of "The War of the Theatres". The dangers incurred by playwrights whose "Characters" were identifiable showed the necessity of anonymous or pseudonymous authors, and the covert allusions to "Shaksper", noted by Greenwood, were remarked with interest.

Appropriately enough, Mr. Calvin Hoffman offered to give the Study Group a talk on *Marlowe* in June, which proved very stimulating, and a further meeting was held, in July to discuss the points raised by members, e.g., the dating of the Shakespeare Plays, the contrast between Marlowe's and Shakespeare's Imagery, and the lack of

humour and knowledge of court life shown by Mr. Hoffman's claimant to Shakespeare authorship.

A new line of study was suggested by Mrs. Le Riche, after her talk on Shakespeare in Italy, which was followed at the August meeting. Members were asked to bring the Editorial Notes on *The Taming of the Shrew* from their various editions of *Shakespeare*, for comparison. This produced some very interesting results, and Miss Eggar also read a valuable article by J. T. Looney on *The Induction*, which had been printed in *The Shakespeare Pictorial*, 1935.

The next meeting of the Group, on 1st September, was given to a discussion of *Othello*, treated in the same way.

RUTH M. D. WAINEWRIGHT, Hon. Secretary.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Free samples of the *News-Letter* have been recently sent to the University Libraries of Great Britain and Ireland, also to a number of literary societies and a few individuals in the literary or academic world. We cannot, unfortunately, afford to continue this practice indefinitely, and hope that those who have read the *News-Letter* with interest and would like to receive it regularly will become subscribers.

So far, the result of our publicity drive has been more gratifying than remunerative. We have received a request from the Copyright Agent for the Libraries of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the National Library of Scotland and Trinity College, Dublin, for one copy of all future issues of the *News-Letter* for each of these libraries, which are privileged to demand free copies of any publication. Free copies are also sent to the British Museum and the Shakespeare Memorial Library at Birmingham, London University, however, which possesses the famous Dunning-Lawrence Library, devoted to the problem of Shakespearean authorship, has been among our subscribers for some years.

We are grateful to those members who have so kindly supplied us with back numbers for Cambridge, but the British Museum also requires them and we are still short of all numbers prior to 1946.

Captain R. Ridgill Trout, whose wide antiquarian knowledge has so often been placed at the service of the Shakespeare Fellowship, has compiled an annotated list of rare books bearing directly or indirectly on the life of Edward de Vere which should be very valuable to any student anxious to know what to read and where to find information about our elusive subject.

Miss Amphlett has most kindly offered to make a typed copy of the list for any member who will apply for it enclosing 6d. in stamps to cover paper and postage. Address: Miss H. Amphlett, 5 Rusham Court, Egham, Surrey.

Miss Ruth Wainewright gave a lecture entitled *Who Wrote the Plays of Shakespeare?* to members of the Brighton and Hove Branch of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs at Hove on Wednesday, 20th July. This, according to the local press, was "a provocative address" and the "many questions which followed showed the interest of the audience."

We regret to record the death of Mrs. Agnes McKinnin Atkinson, wife of Mr. Shera Atkinson, on 26th March, 1955, in her 77th year. The final illness was short, though she had, since early in the last war, been subject to severe attacks of asthma which had greatly affected her health and for some years prevented her from attending meetings of the fellowship.

She became a convinced Oxfordian after reading J. T. Looney's *Shakespeare Identified* soon after its publication, and had been a member of the Fellowship for many years. She remembered the founder, Sir George Greenwood.

For a number of years she had given much study to the authorship question and had been engaged in the preparation of a book on the subject. It is hoped that some part of it at least may be published in due course.

REPORT ON SHAKESPEARE SCHOLARSHIP

The Advisory Committee of the Shakespeare Group of the Modern Languages Association of America are to be congratulated on the courage and frankness of their report on "the present and future state of Shakespeare Scholarship", which was signed by Professor Hardin Craig of the University of Missouri, Karl J. Holzknecht of N.Y.U., and Philip Williams of the University of Virginia, and read to over two hundred scholars by Professor Holzknecht last December. We understand that the Chairman of the Shakespeare Group, Professor Kenneth O. Myrick, wishes the report to be given as much publicity as possible. The introductory paragraph and the first two clauses are reprinted below from *The Shakespeare Newsletter* (U.S.A.).

"It is the duty of this group to encourage and maintain an effective level of scholarly excellence. We base this opinion on the history of Shakespeare scholarship, on the desirability of maintaining our standing among Shakespeare scholars of other countries, and on our faith that truth, rather than popular exploitation, is the mainstay for us and our successors. During the year 1952 and 1953 there were published in learned journals, *Festschriften*, and as parts of books about 300 articles on Shakespeare. Of these by the application of rather liberal standards about 180 may be said to be a greater or less degree of a

scholarly nature. There is thus in the current output of Shakespeare scholars a certain amount of writing even in publications of the highest standing that may fairly be described as unlearned and often anachronistic commentary or as actual waste. This condition, we recognize, has always existed and, except when it becomes dominant and drives out the quest for truth in favour of irrelevant and casual opinion, it cannot be said to do much harm.

There are at the present time certain conditions arising out of changes in the modern world and out of the career of Shakespeare scholarship itself that seem to be worth bringing to the attention of the Shakespeare Group:

1. **Our conception of Shakespeare's relation to his sources and backgrounds has undergone great change.**

The range and variety of books and documents available to Shakespeare was much greater than used to be thought. It is now perfectly clear that Shakespeare was widely read and that he habitually examined many documents in the composition of his plays. The ancient and long-lived theory of Shakespeare as an untutored genius is dead or nearly so. With it has vanished the idea that Shakespeare invented his plots outright instead of, like other dramatists of his age, making use of what he and his contemporaries believed to be fact, or at least event. Likewise, just as Shakespeare operated from actual event and not from abstract theory in his plot construction, so also he had no readily definable theory of character delineation, but seems to have proceeded on the naturalistic conception that a man of a certain kind would operate in a certain way and, conversely, that a man reported to have done certain things must have been a man of a certain kind. It will be seen how greatly these newer conclusions amplify and magnify the importance of Shakespeare's literary backgrounds and thus increase the range and the arduousness of Shakespeare scholarship.

2. **Textual criticism, thought to be in a happy condition, is in a state of uncertainty and change.**

Certain fundamentals of textual criticism as applied to Shakespeare have been clearly stated and explained, and in particular the principle of the reconstruction of a text in the light of its history. But it cannot be said that the textual criticism of Shakespeare and his contemporaries has advanced much farther than the original doctrine, and it must be said that the proper establishment of texts remains to be done. A further danger lies in regarding the speculative tenets of the new textual criticism as laws or creeds rather than as working hypotheses. This is all the more important because of the need for a new critical edition of Shakespeare based on careful study and, as far as possible, devoid of mere empiricism. In other words, unsound theory may result in the vitiation of the texts themselves."

CHRONOLOGY IN THE MELTING POT

The report of the Advisory Committee to the Shakespeare Group of the Modern Languages Association of America, reprinted above, is fraught with significance for Oxfordians. To begin with it admits that Shakespeare was widely read and even that he "examined many documents in the composition of his plays—

"The ancient and long-lived theory of Shakespeare as an untutored genius is dead or nearly so."

Let us beware, then, of flogging a dead horse and take due note of the altered position of Shakespearean scholarship—the term *Stratfordian* would be out of place here, for though the scholars concerned have by no means abandoned the Stratfordian faith, the new theories arise from the scientific textual examination of the "Shakespeare" plays in relation to Elizabethan drama, literature and bibliography in general. It follows that the evidence for Shakespeare's reading applies to the author as such, and only by inference to the player from Stratford.

One of the most revolutionary changes lies in the gradual elimination, or rather, metamorphosis of *source plays*. The theory that certain extant plays of an inferior order were used by Shakespeare as sources is so very nearly dead that Professor C. T. Prouty, among others, has recently been at some pains to revive it. In *The Contention and Shakespeare's Henry VI*, published last year by Yale University, he attacks the "new orthodoxy", as he calls it:

"first stated by Peter Alexander in 1924, confirmed, at least in part, by Madeleine Doran in 1928, and endorsed successively by Sir Edmund Chambers in 1930, Sir Walter Greg in 1939, Alfred Hart in 1942, F. P. Wilson in 1945, and Dover Wilson in 1952".

It is a formidable list.

This New Orthodoxy is the belief that *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* (1594) and the second part, or *True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (1595) are not, as had been held since the time of Malone, the sources of 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, but reconstructions of those plays, put together from memory by travelling actors.

It remains to be seen whether Professor Prouty will win many converts to his reactionary views, but the revolution started by Professor Alexander (to go no further back), is still in progress and has already had far-reaching effects upon the traditional notions of Shakespeare chronology.

The reversal of precedence with regard to the *Henry VI* and *Contention* plays made no difference in itself, since 3 *Henry VI* had already been assigned on external evidence to 1592 at the latest. Nor was it very disconcerting when Alexander

suggested that the anonymous *Taming of A Shrew*, also published in 1594, was later than Shakespeare's *Taming of The Shrew*, but the tangible evidence that Shakespeare began by revising other men's plays was fast disappearing and a general principle had been undermined.

The trouble began when in *Shakespeare's Life and Art* (1938), Alexander threw out a hint that the two-part play, *The Troublesome Reign of King John* might also be later than Shakespeare's version. In this he received less support for the simple reason that *Troublesome Reign* was printed in 1591, which was very troublesome indeed. Faith in the pre-Shakespearean "chronicle play" had, however, been badly shaken, and in *Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare* (1953), Professor F. P. Wilson asked:

"Was it Shakespeare and Marlowe who first gave dignity and coherence to the historical play and raised it above the level of a chronicle? So we have always been taught to believe; but when we look for these early chronicle plays written before the Armada, where are they? . . . Admittedly few of the plays acted in the fifteen-eighties have survived. So serious are the losses that the historian of the Elizabethan drama—especially of this period, before the practice of printing plays to be read became popular—often feels himself to be in the position of a man fitting together a jig-saw, most of the pieces of which are missing. Some sort of picture emerges, but is it the true picture? Nevertheless, many play-titles have survived, and a few plays, and if we go by these we are forced into this surprising conclusion: that there is no certain evidence that any popular dramatist before Shakespeare wrote a play based on English history. So far as I know, the only play of this kind for which there is some external evidence that it was written before 1588 is *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, a play of incredible meanness in the form in which it has come down to us."

On the relationship between *King John* and *Troublesome Reign* Wilson refused to commit himself, "but", he says:

"if we have to believe that our *King John* was written by 1590, then we shall have completely to revise our ideas about Shakespeare's relationship to Marlowe and to other contemporaries, and we shall have to reconcile, if we can, the maturity of so much in *King John* with the immaturity of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* of 1592-4.

And now comes the challenge. In the New Arden edition of *King John* (1954), the editor, E. A. J. Honigman, definitely adopts the view that Shakespeare's play preceded *The Troublesome Reign*. I cannot here enter into his arguments, but the book is quite accessible. It is, of course,

open to anyone to say that he is wrong, but if he is right, the consequences must be faced.

"If", says Mr. Honigman :

"the majority opinion which assigns *John* to the years 1595-6 be unassailable, little will be gained from a discussion that ignores chronology, since the *T.R.* was printed in 1591. But that part of Shakespeare chronology which supports this majority opinion has been under fire of late from a number of competent authorities. Newly discovered facts, moreover, suggest that, quite apart from the *T.R.*, *John* must probably be dated back to the winter of 1590/1. . . . *We ask for disregard of the traditional 'Shakespeare Chronology' since the relationship of the two John plays is part of the evidence.*" (Italics mine).

The case of *King John*, however, cannot be considered in isolation and, in an article entitled *Shakespeare's Lost Source Plays*, published in *Modern Languages Review*, Vol. XLIX, number 3 (July, 1954), Honigman raises wider issues :

"The growing reaction against the orthodox Shakespeare chronology calls for a re-dating of *Richard 3*, as well as other plays. Professor R. Taylor . . . first showed that *The Troublesome Raigne of John*, 1591, is [a network of stolen lines—Marlowe, Shakespeare and lesser dramatists were plundered to pad out verse. Malone had indicated that there was contact one way or the other between *Richard 3* and *Troublesome Raigne*, and Prof. Taylor's work makes it fairly certain that *Troublesome Raigne* was the debtor. *Richard 3* then would have to be dated 1591 or earlier."

There seems to be no end to the process : yet, as fast as the old extant "source-plays" are exposed as piracies or derivative versions, Professor Dover Wilson postulates more and more *lost* source-plays. Honigman comments :

"Although many pre-Shakespearean plays are undoubtedly lost, and although Shakespeare's use of extant source-plays cannot be denied, I feel that the wide-spread belief in his *lost* source-plays has little basis when studied in the light of the most important examples."

Honigman does not accept the once lost source-play for which there is, or one seemed to be, some evidence, the old *Hamlet* referred to by Nashe in 1589. This, he believes, in common with Alexander and others, may have been an early version by Shakespeare himself. Nor does he think it likely that Shakespeare made much use in *Merchant of Venice* of the old lost play called *The Jew*, described by Steven Gosson in 1579 as "representing the greediness of worldly chusers, and the bloody mundes of usurers", but he does concede to Dover Wilson the possibility of two lost plays 'compressed into one in the bad quarto known as *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, 1598", but :

"If he Shakespeare knew the lost *Henry V* at

all he will hardly have followed it more slavishly, than *King Leir* for *King Lear*. For, if *The Contention*, 1594, *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of York*, 1595, *Troublesome Raigne*, *A Shrew* and *The True Tragedie of Richard 3* are no longer held to be pre-Shakespearean, *King Leir* represents the typical source-play."

But what if *King Leir*, too, should turn out to be post-Shakespearean, as A. S. Cairncross suggested in *The Problem of Hamlet* as long ago as 1936, when he grouped it with *Troublesome Raigne* and *Famous Victories* as a "loose piracy"? Honigman does not envisage such a possibility for, although *Leir* was not published till 1605, about the time that Shakespeare's version is supposed to have been *written*, there *was* a play on the subject as early as 1594, and this would be very difficult to explain—unless we are to postulate yet another lost source-play. In making an exception of *Leir*, Honigman shows that he is not, himself, entirely free from certain chronological preconceptions arising from the belief that "Shakespeare" was born in 1564 and died in 1616. Oxfordians, however, are entitled to ask for disregard of the *traditional authorship* in assessing the dates of the plays, for, where the authorship is in question, chronology itself becomes part of the evidence. When J. T. Looney propounded the Oxfordian case in 1920, he did so in spite of the fact that Edward de Vere was born in 1550 and died in 1604, but it is beginning to look as though this apparent disqualification might become the deciding factor in his favour.

GWYNNETH BOWEN

ANTHONY MUNDAY'S "JOHN A KENT"

An article in this year's *Shakespeare Survey* (the eighth) called "The Significance of a Date", by Mr. Shapiro, [makes an interesting footnote to Miss Bowen's "Chronology in the Melting Pot".

The date referred to in Mr. Shapiro's paper is that of the MS. of Anthony Munday's play *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. Munday's handwriting is well known from many pages of *Sir Thomas More*, some pages of translation from the Italian and the signature to his will. John a Kent has Munday's signature, and, below that, in a different hand and ink, is the date ". . . Decembris 1596", a date never questioned until recently, when the queerness of the figure 6 induced microscopic inspection, and enlarged photography revealed that the old writing of 6 had first been taken (by moderns) for 5 and now is decided to be 0—thus proving that *J. a K.* may have been written earlier but cannot be later than 1590.

This puts the work into a different relationship to other significant writings of the period.

The last of the *Mar-Prelate* tracts, *The Protestation*, is assigned to mid-September 1589, and in it appears this passage : "Then amongst the rimers and stage plaiers which my lords of the Clergy had

suborned against me, I remember that Mar-Martin, John a Cant his hobbie-horse was to his reproache, newly put out of the morris, take it how he will . . ."

Munday was Abp. Whitgift's Pursuivant and a leading hunter of Martinists, and in *The Reproof of Martin Junior* (29 July 1589), there is a mock-oration of "John Canterburie" to the Pursuivants, the first to be harangued; being "Maister Munday."

Involved with this "earlier" date for *J. a Kent* is the dating of *Sir Thomas More* and Shakespeare's joining in the revision of that. 1589 is also the date for Green's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, a play obviously closely related to Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. Evidently about 1589 there was a demand for magicians and magic in plays, and it seems necessary in view of this to reconsider the occasion and date of Marlowe's *Faustus*, which is referred to in Green's preface to his *Perimedes* (entered S. R. 29 Mar. 1588).

Mr. Shapiro concludes by saying: "We only know five of Munday's plays, and most of our knowledge of this dramatist would have been lost if the MSS. of *John a Kent* and *More* had perished: nearly all the rest comes from Henslowe's diaries . . . Our assumptions about the development of Elizabethan drama in the eighties are so precarious that they can be seriously upset by the correction of the date of a single play. In the long run, our new estimate of the period of Munday's play-writing may seem more important than redating *Sir Thomas More*."

K. E. EGGAR

THE POET WITH A SPEARE

BY JOHN RICHARD MEZ

When the American scholar, William Kittle (1860-1942) published documentary evidence that Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford had, at the age of 23, published some poems and sonnets under the pen-name of "George Gascoigne," he referred to a most significant passage in the poet's *Tale of Hemetes*:

"Beholde, Good Queene: *A Poet with a Speare*

To serve you so as maye become me beste
In Fields, in Towne, in Courte, or anywhere.
Then peerless Prince, employ this willinge man
In your affaire as best he can.

Only employ me (Good Queene), and I trust to
be proved as diligent as Clearchus, as resolute
as Mutius, and as faithful as Curtius.

This is no evidence that Lord Oxford used the *nom de plume* of "Gascoigne", but if external evidence shows this to be true, then this passage seems to be of the utmost significance in our studies and our quest of the identity of William Shakespeare. It may be recalled that "George Gascoigne" used the Latin phrase "Tam Marti, quam Mercurio", and that Gabriel Harvey, in addressing

Oxford, publicly said: "Your countenance shakes a Spear".

In his *Posies* (1573), "George Gascoigne" published a poem: *An Absent Lover doth thus encourage his Lady to continue constant*. This poem begins with the words: "Content thyselfe with *patience perforce*. It continues, in line 21, with the words:

"Believe me now it is a *pinching payne*,
To think of lovers when lovers are away."

The Earl of Oxford wrote a poem, *The Revenge of Wrong*, reprinted in *The Poems of Edward de Vere*, collected by J. Thomas Looney, 1922. It contains these lines:

"*Patience perforce* is such a *pinching pain*,
As die I will, or suffer wrong again."

(Signed: Earle of Oxenforde)

In William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, we find the lines:

"*Patience* is *perforce* such a *pinching pain*"

Poem No. XII by Edward de Vere, in Looney's collection, contains a similar alliteration:

"The present pains *perforce* . . ."

(*Love and Antagonism*, Line 3).

While this is no proof of the identity of the three poets, it seems to be impressive corroboration of both Mr. Looney's and Mr. Kittle's contentions.

In Gascoigne's poems we find these lines, signed "Ever or Never":

"Remember therewithall, *my muse is tied in chains*,

The goonshot of calamite hath battered all my brains."

This outcry against oppression and lack of freedom is clearly reminiscent of Hamlet's "calamite". In Gascoigne's *Don Bartholmeu of Bathe* we find a similar line:

"My tongue is tied by one constraint".

How close is this wording to that in Sonnet 85 by William Shakespeare:

"my tongue-tied muse",

or in Sonnet 46:

"tongue-tied by authority".

Were these expressions invented by different authors? Or did one copy from the other? Or were they from one and the same pen?

References to the feud between the houses of the Montacutes and Capulets, as known from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, are found in a poem by George Gascoigne:

"This grave Venetian who heard the famous name

Of Montacutes rehearsed there which long had been of fame

In Italy

Confessing that he was himselfe a Montacut

. . . and showed in his hat,

This token whiche the Montacutes do bear
always, for that

They covet to be known from Capels (i.e. Capulets) where they pass.

For ancient grudge which long ago 'tween those two houses was."

George Gascoigne's *Posies* are full of references to names and events that have become familiar to us from the works of Shakespeare.

In George Gascoigne's *Dan Bartholmew his Triumphes* there is the following line:

"He bet about the bush, whiles other caught the birds",

and in the poem written by the Earl of Oxford as an introduction to Bedingfield's translation of *Cardanus Comfort*:

"For he that beats the bush, the bird not gets,
But who sits still and holdeth fast the nets."

Both were published in 1573.

Thus, in all these passages, "George Gascoigne" and Lord Oxford have struck upon the same thoughts. Could they have been written by one and the same author?

BROOKE HOUSE, HACKNEY

BY KATHARINE E. EGGAR.

Some of our readers may have seen references in the newspapers to the discovery in May last of an early wall-painting during the last stages of the demolition of this residence of Edward de Vere for the last ten years of his life.

We are indebted to the L.C.C.'s Superintending Architect of Metropolitan Buildings for the following particulars.

The wall on which the paintings were discovered under whitewash was the North wall of what since the 18th century has been the first floor room in the original S.E. corner of the Tudor House. Structural evidence suggests however, that the room and the one immediately below it were originally one, the present first floor being an 18th century insertion: but the timbers of the ceiling date back at least to the early 16th century, and carried a floor above. As the present East wall, on the other hand, dates from the 18th century, it would seem as if in the time of de Vere's occupation, the paintings were a part of the mural decoration of a very large hall on the ground floor (this last inference is mine.)

The greater part of the house as it existed before the 1939-45-war, dated from Elizabethan times, (when it was known as *King's Place*), though there were traces of earlier buildings.

From 1811 up to the War, the building was used as a Mental Hospital. It suffered extensive damage from enemy action, the northern part being almost completely destroyed; and as it was unoccupied during the War, it suffered further deterioration by rain penetration and dry rot.

In 1944 the L.C.C. acquired Brooke House as part of a 5½ acre site required primarily for housing, but it was later decided that three acres, including

the part on which the house stood, should be used for a County College. One hundred and twenty three flats were erected on the housing portion in 1950. It was not found possible to preserve what (then) remained of Brooke House, and the ruins (apart from the small portion on which the wall painting appears) have now been demolished, preparatory to the early development of the site for education purposes.

Special arrangements have been made to ensure the careful recording of the building as demolition has proceeded, and to gather material to provide the basis for a series of authoritative plans, sections and elevations, showing the elevation of the house from its foundation.

In addition to the wall painting, certain valuable features including part of the original pannelled plaster ceiling of the Tudor Long Gallery, ornamented with coats of arms and crests of the Hunsdon family, have been preserved.

The wall paintings are pronounced to be late 15th or early 16th century work, and their interest for us is that Vere's eyes probably rested on these decorations at times during meals! To the antiquarian discoverers, the main interest attaches to the two figures at the Eastern end of the North wall which are shown facing East against a background of Tudor roses in a diaper setting. The larger, standing figure, carries the double Patriarchal Cross and crossed keys associated with the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Patron of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The smaller, kneeling figure wears a monkish habit.

It is known that a Patriarch consecrated the Church of Clerkenwell Priory in about 1184, but although *King's Place* stood on land which passed to the Order after the dissolution of the Order of the Templars in 1324, nothing is yet known of any house that may have stood on the site before the late 15th century.

Apart from the two figures, there were only faint traces on the Tudor arched niches of paintings of falcons, sunbursts and daisies, with a leaf pattern in grey and red, and a frieze of unidentified heraldic shields ran along the top of the wall.

Perhaps when the L.C.C.'s promised monograph is ready, we shall be able better to reconstruct in imagination the home of our Poet; and we must be thankful for the "careful recording" and for the preservation of the mangled fragments of past glory. But how sad it is to think that in order to erect a County College for the education of the present generation, the house in which Shakespeare lived and wrote and died should have been demolished.

Strangely enough, immediately after the demolition of Brooke House the 18th century Church of St. John at Hackney—the Parish Church which succeeded the old St. Augustine's of de Vere's time—was extremely badly damaged by fire, only the massive walls and belfry tower having been left standing.

THE SPANISH ROMANCES AND "THE TEMPEST"

BY RUTH M. D. WAINWRIGHT

One of the probable sources of "The Tempest", that has been noted by several critics, is a series of 16th century Spanish Romances, translated by various people, entitled *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood*. There is a reference to this book by Falstaff in Henry IV, which proves that Shakespeare knew it.

In 1588, Anthony Munday brought out a new series of the "Mirror of Nobilitie", the story of Palmerin D'Oliva. "Mappe of honor, Anatomy of rare fortunes, Heroycall president of love; wonder of Chivalrie, and most accomplished knight of all perfections . . . Written in Spanish, Italian and French, and from them turned into English by A.M. one of the messengers of Her Majesty's chamber." On the next page to this frontispiece is an engraving of Lord Oxford's crest, covering the whole page.

The Dedication runs, "To the right noble, learned, and worthy Lord, Edward de Vere, Earle of Oxenford," etc. etc.

Later on Munday adds: "If Palmerin hath sustained any wrong by my bad translation, being so worthily set down in other languages, *Your Honour having such special knowledge in them* I hope will let slip any fault escaped . . ."

Towards the end of the story of Palmerin there is an account of the island of Malfada, called after the witch who lived there, and who was "the most subtle magician of her time, so may we say of her as the poets feigned of the ancient Circe . . . She had of long time enchanted this island with such charms that what ships arrived there, could never depart thence again, much less such as entered within the isle."

In the earlier translation, there is an account of a Prince called *Polisteo* who studied the arts magic, "whereby his pains at length came to the most absolute perfection of all in Asia." He lost his wife in childbirth, and his son recalls how "loving to be solitary, he came and dwelt in the island, bringing with him my sister and those *waiting women* whom you have seen. (A touch of Miranda's earliest recollections).

Again, another story in the series—that of the Emperor *Trebatio*, son of Constantine, recalls *Prospero*—the exiled Duke and ideal ruler, and also Sycorax,—for the Emperor falls in love with a beautiful enchantress *Lyndaraza*. "With her, twenty years were but a summer's day, and the *whole of life but as a dream*."

In one of the tales of the Knight of the Sunne, there is another allusion to a wicked sorceress, whose son was fathered by the devil,—*Artimaga* and her son *Fauno*. Obscene and ludicrous as *Fauno* is, there seems little doubt that he must have suggested the idea of *Caliban*. After Tre-

batio's rescue from enchantment, the chronicler has this significant passage. "That when we are at our way's end we seem but as it were to begin afresh: it is like a sweet sleep, but let us shake of this drowsy humour, and let us open our sleepy eyes . . . little shall remain thereof after scores of years . . ." And after the death of Lyndaraza he says, "For whether we be free or bond, on foot or horseback, sleeping or waking, whole or sick, we daily draw near unto our ending, if you will speak more truly to our perfection, for *then man beginneth to live indeed* when he goeth out of this miserable world."

No pessimism here. "*Be cheerful sir, our revels now are ended.*"

SHAKESPEARE AND THE GENERAL

BY I. GRETTON

When Shakespeare wrote, "The play . . . pleased not the million; 'twas caviar to the general," he coined a phrase which has come to have the meaning of "pearls before swine." I believe this is far from his understanding of the words. Failure to discover the *general* has led to the assumption that Hamlet was referring to the general public, i.e. the million, and was merely repeating his statement that the play had not pleased them. However, by studying the clues in "Hamlet" and in "Holinshed's Chronicles" it would be possible to identify the general and thereby restore the phrase to its true meaning.

In 1583 the Polish Palatine Albert Laski or Alasco, a general who had fought in upwards of forty battles, visited England on a diplomatic mission. He was entertained at Oxford University, where, to quote Holinshed, he witnessed:

"the setting out of a very stately tragedy named *Dido*, wherein the Queen's banquet (with Aeneas's narration of the destruction of Troy) was lively described in a marchpane pattern. There was also a goodly sight of hunters with full cry of a kennel of hounds, Mercury and Iris descending and ascending from and to a high place, the tempest wherein it hailed small comfects, rained rose-water and snow an artificial kind of snow, all strange, marvellous and abundant."

The speech quoted in "Hamlet" deals with the fall of Troy and evidently forms part of a play of *Dido* and Aeneas, for Hamlet says:

"One speech in it I chiefly loved; 'twas Aeneas' tale to *Dido*; and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter . . ."

The general is apparently commemorated in "Hamlet," because one of the characters who receives the players is Polonius, whose name is simply "The Pole" translated into Latin.

Albert Laski had, in Holinshed's words:

"A white beard of such length and breadth as that lying in his bed and parted with his

hands the same overspread all his breast and shoulders, himself greatly delighting therein and reputed it an ornament."

Polonius is similarly adorned, for when he complains that a speech is too long Hamlet retorts, "It shall to the barber's with your beard."

Shakespeare's use of the word "caviar" is revealing, as this delicacy was very rare in England at that period. Laski, however, came from a country where it was known, and he may have complimented the author by likening his play to caviar.

Now why should Shakespeare have thought of Albert Laski when he was writing "Hamlet"? Well, I can put forward this suggestion. In the year 1553 John Laski, the Church Reformer, left England with his followers to return to Poland; their ship was blown off its course and was driven ashore at Elsinore. If Shakespeare was a student of Church history Elsinore would have reminded him of John Laski and John Laski would have brought to mind Albert Laski. As to his sources of information about the Oxford celebrations, he was not restricted to Holinshed, for the performance had been given before a large and distinguished audience, and the dramatist George Peele had been present as the producer.

The play remains unidentified, as the corresponding passage in "Dido Queen of Carthage" by Marlowe and Nash, the only English play on the theme which has survived from that period, bears no resemblance to the speeches quoted in "Hamlet." The tragedy of "Dido" which was performed at Oxford University was a Latin play by William Gager. Perhaps an English play of the same name was written about that time, and the much-enduring general, before he finally left England in September, 1583, saw a performance of that as well. If not, Shakespeare must be combining references to two plays—Gager's Latin play, which was caviar to the general, and an English play (author unknown) which pleased not the million.

NEW BOOKS

BEN JONSON OF WESTMINSTER

By MARCHETTE CHUTE.

Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1954.

Rare Ben Jonson

With prodigious industry Miss Chute has followed her book on Shakespeare with this one on Jonson culling from over 180 standard works on the great playwright and his times, all the facts of his career and his work she could, to make it, so to speak, an epitome for all interested in our second greatest dramatist.

Miss Chute has followed her authorities with care and she has presented us with a vivid picture not

only of Ben himself, but also one of Elizabethan times and stage. His contemporaries—Greene and Chapman and Beaumont and Fletcher and Nashe, and of course, William Shakespeare of Stratford—all come into the picture, excellently portrayed for us, as well as the various theatrical companies and managers like the Chamberlain's company and the Globe company and Philip Henslowe. And, in addition, we get a great deal of information as to the plays and how they were written and with what success. There can be no doubt whatever—if our authorities can be relied upon—that Ben Jonson cut as considerable a figure in his day as his namesake Samuel did over a century later.

For us Oxfordians, however, her book proves again how ready she is to follow the orthodox path. Not a shred of heresy must taint it. She mentions the Earl of Oxford just once, naming him as one of the Court poets—and that is all.

If Oxford and Jonson ever met, there is no record of it in this book.

In her book on Shakespeare, Miss Chute dismissed with contempt any idea that Shakespeare of Stratford did not write the plays. She refused to discuss it at all. Her authorities said that the plays were his, and what was good enough for them was good enough for her.

Miss Chute has no heresy either about the First Folio. It was all planned entirely by Hemminges and Condell. They produced it entirely to honour "so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare." But to give the work an aristocratic tone, "with great wisdom" they dedicated it to Pembroke and Montgomery; and they got Ben Jonson to do the honours with a sumptuous Dedication and other verses. Miss Chute does not trouble us with her "authorities," though no doubt she could give plenty who make such statements without bothering with contemporary evidence.

The present writer, however, must agree with Miss Chute that all the plays of Jonson are his own. They are as characteristically his as are the Shakespeare plays characteristic of their author, whoever he was. If the style is the man—then there is no mistaking the style of "rare" Ben Jonson. H. CUTNER

SHAKESPEARE UNMASKED

By PIERRE S. POROHOVSHIKOV

This book, by the Professor of History at Oglethorpe University, B.C., appeared first in 1940, and has recently been reprinted by Arco Publishers Ltd., Price 25/-. The work—with which I have been familiar since soon after its first publication—is a scholarly one, which merits the attention of all students of Shakespeare, though few will accept the Professor's theory that the Plays and Sonnets were the work of Roger Manners, 5th Earl of Rutland, born in October, 1576, and who died in 1612 at the age of 36.

The theory was put forward, with less wealth of information, by the late M. Demblon, of the New University, Brussels, in two books published in 1913 and 1914, and was dismissed very briefly by Gilbert Slater in "Seven Shakespeares", 1931, as untenable.

Porohovshikov bases his theory largely on (1) the detailed topographical and other knowledge of Italy shown in several of the plays—which Rutland could have gained during his visit of nearly two years to Italy (1595-97): and on (2) the intimate acquaintance with the Danish Court shown in the "good" quarto of *Hamlet* (1604), but not on the "bad" quarto of 1603—which Rutland might have gained when sent on an embassy to that Court (June-August, 1603). These parts of the Professor's book are of quite exceptional interest and value, but there is not space here to say more than that (1) points with equal or greater force to Oxford, who in 1575-6 toured Italy, apparently more extensively than did Rutland: while as regards (2), Oxford could well have acquired the knowledge—even, possibly, from Rutland, a close connection by marriage—though more probably at a much earlier date.

Porohovshikov is in even greater difficulty than the Stratfordians in regard to chronology. He is forced to assign *Loves Labours Lost*, *Venus*, *Lucrece*, to Bacon, and to attribute to a youth who was 14 in 1590, the fourteen or so other plays which appeared in quartos in the fifteen nineties, during much of which he was travelling and engaged in three military campaigns in Ireland and elsewhere. He practically ignores the Sonnets, written in—or if Leslie Hotson is right, before, that same period. He cannot name any contemporary reference to Rutland as a dramatist or poet, nor to any literary work under his name or reputed to be his. I have not space to allude to the other difficulties in the way of his claim which he leaves unresolved.

He pays tribute to the "very remarkable" work done by Oxfordian scholars, "who have done in twenty years more for the truth than our orthodox friends in three centuries", and admits that, apart from his claim for Rutland, Edward de Vere is of all possible authors by far the most probable.

J. SHEERA ATKINSON

A lengthy review of Prof. Porovshikov's book, *Shakespeare Unmasked*, by Mr. J. L. Adamson appeared in the September number of *The Literary Guide* (price 1/-), from which we quote the following paragraph.

"Rutland could at the most have been twenty-six years of age when the First Quarto of *Hamlet* 'as it hath been divers times acted . . . ' was published in 1603 . . . (but) if Dr. Cairncross is right, then Rutland was twelve or thirteen years old when *Hamlet* was written, and when Nashe wrote in his epistle of 1589 'He will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls, of tragical speeches.'"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

s'Gravenhage.

Dear Sir,

In the Spring number of the *Newsletter* I published a notice about Edward de Vere as translator of some of Horace's odes.

In the meantime I received information showing that I was mistaken and that the translator of about half of Horace's *Odes* was Sir Stephen de Vere (1812-1904), presumably a member of the same family as the Earls of Oxford.

By publishing this rectification in the *Newsletter's* next issue I would feel much indebted to you.

S. A. VAN LUNTEREN

Eds.—*We have received similar corrections from Mrs. Elizabeth Dooley of New York.*

Dear Sir,

In *The Listener* of 24th March, 1955, was a review of *Studies in Elizabethan Drama*, by Percy Simpson. The reviewer, John Crow, says:

"Most exciting to most of us will be the first essay, 'Shakespeare's Use of Latin authors.' We have run away from the old view that Shakespeare was an unlettered boor. Dr. Simpson, going carefully into those parts of Latin literature that were available to a late sixteenth century reader, makes an extremely strong case for Shakespeare's having had a good knowledge, in the original of Plautus, Ovid, Horace, Virgil, Catullus, Terence, Seneca, Juvenal and Erasmus. Not all Dr. Simpson's examples are, naturally, equally persuasive but his case seems to be made beyond ordinary cavil. We are left with the picture of a Shakespeare who, when he left school, did not drop his Latin."

The italics are those of Mr. Crow. W. KENT

Dear Sir

I have read Miss Amphlett's book with much pleasure and profit, and welcome it with enthusiasm. I venture to congratulate her on a fine piece of work which skilfully re-states the evidence that William Shakespeare was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Much additional evidence has come to light since J. Thomas Looney published his *Shakespeare Identified*, in 1920, and a great part of this has been incorporated.

On pp. 103-4 Miss Amphlett refers to Latin verses addressed to Elizabeth, and various courtiers who accompanied her on her progress, presented to them at Audley End in July, 1578, by Gabriel Harvey, Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. She quotes a translation of part of the one addressed to Lord Oxford containing the significant phrase "thy countenance *shakes a spear*". It may be remarked incidentally that the Latin passage runs "vultus tela vibrat"—so that a more accurate translation is "thy countenance *shakes spears*".

She suggests that the words possibly originated

the pseudonym "Shakespeare", but does not mention the more likely alternative, that they were a pun on a pen name *already privately in use* by Oxford. Nor does she mention that the addresses, known as the Gratulationes Valdinenses, were delivered by Gabriel Harvey as the official welcome to the Queen and her Court, in his capacity of Public Orator of Cambridge University. In addresses of the kind it then was, and still is, the custom to insert Latin puns on the name, of the person honoured in the address, or even on some nickname or the like by which he was known. Thus, as I first pointed out in an article in the Shakespeare Fellowship *News Letter* of April, 1950, the address to Lord Burleigh, which immediately preceded the one to Oxford, punned repeatedly on his surname Cecil, and then, no less than three times, and rather clumsily, calls him "Polus". It appears probable that that, or something very like it, was a nickname of Burleigh, and that it was the origin of the name Polonius in "Hamlet". It is generally recognised that it was Burleigh who was dtamatised in that character.

The existence of those two addresses, side by side, calling Burleigh "Polus" and Oxford "Shakespeare", is obviously of outstanding importance in examining the evidence that Oxford was the author of the Plays which later came from the pen of "Shakespeare".

On p. 189-190 Miss Amphlett has, strangely, "telescoped" what has been pointed out in reference to two different Manor houses which belonged to Lord Oxford. Mr. Percy Allen, and following him Mr. C. W. Barrell, some time since called attention to the fact that Bilton Manor, near Rugby, and about 23 miles from Stratford-upon-Avon, belonged to him, and suggested that he may have retired there for a time in the early fifteen eighties. There is no tradition connecting the house with "Shakespeare". In the Shakespeare Fellowship *News-Letter*, Sept., 1953, I pointed out that, as appears in Dugdale's *History of Warwick*, the Manor of Billesley, only 4 miles from Stratford, was among the properties the Earl inherited from his grandmother, Elizabeth Trussell. I had learned from the Auction Particulars—the house was for sale in 1953—that the principal bedroom, in the old (Tudor) part of the house, was known traditionally as "The Shakespeare Room", and the butler who showed me the house stated that it was further a tradition that in the first floor library, adjoining that room, Shakespeare wrote *As You Like It*.

Miss Amphlett has written as if these traditions related to Bilton. The improbability of them, if they referred to the man of Stratford, is considerably greater when they are (correctly) attached to Billesley. Moreover, Billesley is very close to the Arden country, while Bilton would at the time in question have been a day's journey on horseback away from it. As my article pointed out, Billesley was at the time occupied by a near relative of

Lord Oxford, Thomas Trussell, and if the former desired to pay a prolonged visit he would no doubt have been a welcome and most honoured guest.

Dear Sir,

It is not without a certain sense of amusement that I read in the *New York Times Book Review* of June 12th, 1755:

"No one, . . . will stem the Oxfordian groundswell: Societies are organizing, periodicals being launched, and an amazing number of people sagely remarking that there must be something in it."

This sentence is contained in a review of the book *The Murder of the Man who was Shakespeare*, by Calvin Hoffman, contributed by Prof. A. Harbage of Harvard University. The learned professor justly disposes of these new "Tales of Hoffman" as being nothing but a bright idea, "Unencumbered by anything resembling factual evidence or critical perception", but while he is supposed to refute Mr. Hoffman's Marlowe thesis, he seems much more concerned with the Oxford thesis and from the first column to the last sentence he inveighs against it in his endeavour to defend the orthodox case.

When Mr. Harbage finds it appropriate to exclaim that "Shakespeare's plays are not *learned*" in order to show that neither Bacon nor Lord Oxford could have written them, I protest. The man who has enriched the English vocabulary by thousands of words, who has known Latin, French and Italian, Ovid, Virgil, Dante, Plutach, Petrarch, Montaigne, all arts of dramatization, of verse-making and alliteration, of sonneting, history and the Fine-Arts of Italy cannot be said to have "wanted art" even if Johnson chose to say so.

J. R. MEZ.

THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

Past Presidents:

LT.-COL. M. W. DOUGLAS, C.S.I., C.I.E.
PERCY ALLEN.

President:

REAR-ADMIRAL H. H. HOLLAND, C.B.

Vice-Presidents:

T. L. ADAMSON. J. W. RUSSELL. WILLIAM KENT,
J. SHEERA ATKINSON, LL.B. (LOND.) [F.S.A.
MISS K. EGGAR, A.R.A.M. MRS. M. H. ROBINS.
CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS, M.A., LL.B. (CANTAB.), J.P.

Hon. Secretary: MISS G. M. BOWEN,
6 Grosvenor Mansions, Hartington Road,
Buxton, Derbyshire

Hon. Treasurer: T. L. ADAMSON,
6 Upper Cavendish Avenue, Finchley, London, N.3.

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 FEBRUARY 1st., 1956.