

The Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter

AUTUMN 1956



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NOTICES

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the rooms of the Newman Association, 31 Portman Square, at 3 p.m. on Saturday, 13th October. Tea will be obtainable afterwards.

THE NEXT MEETING will be at the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, 14th November, when Mr. T. L. Adamson will give a lecture on *The Plays of Christopher Marlowe*.

THE LIBRARY CATALOGUE has been brought up to date and it is hoped that copies will be available before we go to press. Price 1s.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE NEWS-LETTER except for some of the early issues can be obtained for 6d. a copy.

THE ANNUAL DINNER

Fifty-one members and guests were present at the sixth Annual Dinner to commemorate the 406th anniversary of the birth of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Regrettably two of the chief guests, Major-General Sir H. Guy Riley, K.B.E., C.B., and Mr. Bryant Peers, were unavoidably prevented from attending.

Mr. Christmas Humphreys, President, was in the chair. He spoke of the complete absence of any reliable evidence that William Shakspeare of Stratford wrote the plays and poems. The object of the Fellowship is the investigation of the

problem of authorship. He emphasised the essential need of reliable evidence. The Fellowship put their money on the Earl of Oxford, though a few of us may be Derbyites and others favour group authorship with one dominant personality. He read an interesting letter from Mrs. Ogburn, part author of *This Star of England*, enclosing a strong protest published in the *New York Herald Tribune* by prominent Americans, including her husband, against the hush-hush policy of the press on the claims for Oxford authorship. Mr. Humphreys referred sympathetically to the continued ill-health of Mr. W. Kent, F.S.A., one of the great pioneers of our cause, and to the illness of Mrs. John Mez which prevented her and her husband from being present at the dinner.

The toast of 'The Ever Living Memory of Edward de Vere' was proposed by Capt. Evelyn Broadwood, M.C., F.I.M.I.T. He said that the greatest problem of Elizabethan England was the personality of Shakespeare. Where we expect evidence for the Stratford man there is no evidence. In 1902 Mr. Joseph Skipsey, who had for some time been the custodian of the Shakespearean Library there and the exhibitor of the relics, resigned because he had gradually lost all faith in Stratford authorship. There was no real evidence to support it. Capt. Broadwood then briefly summarised the results of years of patient investigation that had led to the acceptance by many men and women all over the world of Oxford as Shakespeare.

Mr. M. D. Hallows, Headmaster of Guildford Royal Grammar School, who spoke at the shortest notice, proposed the toast of the Fellowship in an inspiring speech. History, he said, showed that the greatest reforms in the world had been achieved by the tireless energy and enthusiasm of small minorities fighting against entrenched interests. He recognised and appreciated the fight the Fellowship were making to establish the true authorship, and bade us carry on with all our strength because if we were right we should at long last prevail.

In her reply to the toast, Miss Ruth M. D. Wainwright dwelt on the growing interest in our cause. The Fellowship was now on the telephone and she, as Librarian, had received many enquiries about our activities resulting in the sale of many of our books and pamphlets. Another encouraging feature was the demand for the Fellowship "News

Letter" from the Universities and other public bodies.

Lt.-Col. J. W. Russell, in an amusing speech, took nature as his theme in toasting the guests. Public speakers should remember, he warned, that the whale was in danger from the harpoon only when it spouted. Converts to our cause, increasing daily, are ready to fall like Comice pears, but orthodox diehards have minds like oysters—so difficult to prise open.

Sir Stephen Tallents, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., President of the Institute of Public Relations, in a gracious reply, concurred in Mr. Hallowes's comments on the power of an ardent minority, and said he had been impressed by Mr. Humphreys's emphasis on the imperative need for trustworthy evidence in the fascinating problem of the authorship of Shakespeare.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

George Gascoigne, Pioneer of Elizabethan Literature
BY RUTH M. D. WAINEWRIGHT—10th March, 1956.

Miss Wainewright began by stressing Gascoigne's pre-eminence in the field of English letters between the publication of the Book of Songs and Sonnets in 1557 and *Euphues* and *The Shepherd's Calendar* in 1578 and 1579. 'Wyatt and Surrey were dead, Spenser yet to come, and the only name of any importance during that time was that of George Gascoigne.' From the point of view of posterity, however, the excellence of the later Elizabethan writers tended to put him in the shade.

In Miss Wainewright's opinion, Professor Charles T. Prouty was right in identifying the poet as the son of Sir John Gascoigne of Cardington, Bedfordshire, and estimating the date of his birth as probably 1539. Professor Prouty had examined William Kittle's theory that none of the five Gascoignes living at the time was the poet, the name being a pseudonym of Edward de Vere, as well as B. M. Ward's theory that *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*—later re-published with considerable alteration and some additions as *Gascoigne's Posies*—was really an *anthology*, some of the poems being by de Vere. She felt that Prouty had completely demolished Ward's argument that the poem entitled *L'Escu d'amour* in which, we are told, the absent lover *deciphers* his name, was an acrostic on the name *Edward de Vere*. To decipher was to *explain*, not to conceal, and the name so deciphered, though not necessarily the author, was *Scudamore*, which derived from the French, *L'Escu d'amour*. The motto of the Scudamore family was *Scute amoris divin*.

The second half of the lecture was devoted to a survey of the works themselves in chronological order, considered both as literature and autobiography, including prose tracts and translations as well as poems and plays. Miss Wainewright paid high tribute to Gascoigne's originality and versatility, but thought that, as a poet, he had a

'limited imagination . . . His real importance lay in his individual approach, for he can tell us of his own experiences with considerable artistry and realism and he was a master of the long narrative poem.' On the other hand, 'his concepts tend to be artificial, his metres pedestrian, his ideas sententious, his emotions rather obvious. None of his lyrics have the romanticism, lightness and charm of de Vere's *Desire* poems for instance . . . He is always at his best in the "true historie" but could not fuse and transform his experiences by imagination in the way that Shakespeare does even in his early plays'.

Lord Oxford and the Players' Company

BY KATHARINE E. EGGAR—14th April, 1956.

In this lecture, Miss Eggar traced the growth of the various Companies of Actors, from the early days of Elizabeth's reign to the final erection of the Globe Theatre.

She showed how, in the '60s, there were no professional actors, and Players were of three kinds. 1. The craftsmen of the Guilds, genuine working men, who acted occasionally at Seasonal Festivals and Holidays. 2. Men of no settled occupation or residence, strolling players, who, because they were 'Master-less' men, were classed as rogues and vagabonds. 3. The domestic servants of the nobility, who performed at the Great Houses, and who formed themselves into Companies under their noble masters' direction.

James Burbage, Lord Leicester's head man, was the leading spirit of this movement towards 'professionalism', and, obtaining the Queen's own warrant, he built the first *theatre* in England, which was soon followed by a second one—The *Curtain*, not far from the original *Theater*.

During twenty years of development *all* companies except Burbage's (Leicester's) remained legally 'rogues and vagabonds'.

During these twenty years Lord Oxford was in a different position from other nobles of his rank, for between 1571-1591 he was a permanent resident Courtier, bound by continual attendance at Court. He had no great establishment of his own, like Derby, Leicester, Pembroke and Sussex, for and by which he could keep a Company under control.

The Court Revels would, however, be of immediate interest to him, and also the children of the Chapel Royal. Miss Eggar brought all her specialised knowledge and research to bear in her description of de Vere's probable work behind the scenes in both these fields of action. In 1572, the Queen appointed a new Lord Chamberlain—that remarkable organiser and leader of men Lord Sussex—under whom de Vere had seen active military service two years previously. At this time Oxford was in high favour at Court, and it is indeed probable that he had some share in the above appointment, and also, in bringing about

the establishment at Court of Sussex's Company of Actors as 'The Lord Chamberlain's Men.'

On Oxford's return from the continent in 1576, he found that another great friend had been allowed to form a second Court Company—his cousin, Lord Howard of Effingham, whose Company was known as 'the Lord Admiral's.'

Miss Eggar then described the establishment of the Blackfriars School for Drama and Music, giving cogent reasons why it is probable that de Vere maintained these 'little eyases', as Hamlet calls them, and probably financed the performances there. In the '80s there was intense activity at this little private playhouse, and in 1583 came the creation of the Queen's Company with Royal livery, wages and classification as 'Grooms of the Chamber'. This carefully-chosen but artificial association of talented individuals had self-destructive elements; and in spite of its brilliant auspices it fell into discredit during the Mar-Prelate scandals. After Oxford's second marriage and retirement from Court in 1591, the Queen's Company faded out in the provinces.

The years 1592/3 were terribly stricken with plague, and the decimation caused by this in all the Players' Companies led the Royal Authority to call a conference with the City Council to deal with the public situation. As the result, two Companies and two only, were established with license to play in public—The Lord Chamberlain's and The Lord Admiral's—the latter under Edward Alleyn at Henslowe's *Rose* on the South Bank, and the former, under James Burbage, at his original *Theater* (which afterwards became the *Globe*). The whole story of the development of the Players' Companies, combined with the events of Oxford's life, as related by Miss Eggar, showed, by reasonable deduction, how natural it was for the Lord Chamberlain's Company, with its leader's old Court connection with the Lord *Great* Chamberlain, and its playhouse on the Hackney side of the City, to become 'Shakespeare's Company' and the one thenceforward perpetually associated with the production of 'Shakespeare's' plays.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Opening of the Tomb

The opening of the tomb of Sir Thomas Walsingham at Chiselhurst, Kent, in the attempt to prove that Marlowe was the author of the Shakespeare plays, while giving rise to considerable hilarity at the expense of Anti-Stratfordians in general, has at least called the attention of the public to the existence of a Shakespeare problem. The tomb was opened on 1st May, and the failure to find anything in it but sand was announced that evening by the B.B.C. Next morning it was front-page news, supported by photographs. The *Daily Telegraph* even had a leading article on the subject, dragging in the quotation: 'Come unto these yellow sands, and there take hands'. After

that, by a subtle metamorphosis, the sand turned to dust, which was obviously more appropriate to the occasion. Perhaps the writer had at the back of his mind another Shakespearean quotation:

'Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers come to dust.'

Punch noted the odd coincidence that, on the very same day, another tomb was opened in Egypt, which was found to contain nothing but *water*—a strange reversal of the dispensations of Nature.

It was probably as a result of the projected opening of the tomb that a Debate was held on 13th April at the Middle Temple Common Room, under the auspices of the Hardwick Society, on the motion: 'That this House doesn't care who wrote Shakespeare'. We have pleasure in recording that the motion was lost though, in general, both sides agreed that the plays were, in fact, written by the gentleman-player from Stratford.

On 4th May, the question: 'Who Wrote Shakespeare?' was raised in the 'Any Questions' programme of the B.B.C. Freddie Grisewood was in the chair, and was unable to resist the somewhat musty joke on the name of Thomas Looney. The panel, which consisted of Lady Bonham Carter, Sir Gurney Braithwaite, Alfred Robens and J. F. Wofenden, all took the line that they 'couldn't care less'. One of our members, Mr. G. W. Rudyerd of Buxton, Derbyshire, submitted the following letter to 'Any Answers', but only a short extract was read:

'Dear Sir,—Perhaps it is a sad sign of the times that a panel of intelligent people should express their opinion that the authorship of 'Shakespeare',—the greatest literature in the English language—is a matter of no importance.

It is surely obvious that the more closely we are able to study the personality and history of the author the greater will be the enjoyment and true value which we are able to glean from his works.

To know, as we now do, that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford was the author of the 'Shakespeare' plays and poems, is to shed a very great deal of light and value on the works and it has given meaning to many passages which otherwise would have none. Edward de Vere was indeed a man of many parts at the Court of Queen Elizabeth.

Your Chairman even expressed the view that it was a pity these masterpieces had ever been written!

Yours faithfully,

G. W. RUDYERD.'

Freud and Shakespeare

Among the numerous articles called forth by the centenary of Sigmund Freud, was a series in the *Observer*, to which Mr. Philip Toynbee contributed one on *Freud and Literature*. The Hon. Secretary of the Shakespeare Fellowship submitted the following Letter to the Editor, which was rejected

for lack of space. It may, however, be of interest to readers of the *News-Letter* :

"Sir,—In his article entitled *Freud and Literature*, published in your issue of 3rd June, Mr. Philip Toynbee refers to Dr. Ernest Jones' psycho-analytical study of *Hamlet*, but it is probably not generally known that the fundamental ideas for this book emanated from Freud himself, who says in *An Autobiographical Study* :

'Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* very soon after his father's death. The suggestions made by me for the analysis of this tragedy were fully worked out later by Ernest Jones.'

Neither is it generally known that Freud was almost convinced, on psychological grounds, that Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was the real author of the Shakespeare plays. I have not been able to procure a copy of the first edition in English of the *Autobiographical Study* (New York, 1927), but am informed that it contained the following footnote to the above passage :

'I no longer believe that William Shakespeare the actor from Stratford was the author of the works that have been ascribed to him. Since reading *Shakespeare Identified*, by J. T. Looney, I am almost convinced that the assumed name conceals the personality of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.'

In the edition of 1928 (bound up with *The Problem of Lay Analysis*), the footnote is omitted, and in Dr. Ernest Jones' edition (London, 1935), it is replaced by the evasive words : 'I have particular reasons for no longer wishing to lay any emphasis upon this point.' (p. 117).

What, one may well ask, was the reason for this withdrawal ?

In *The Outline of Psychoanalysis*, posthumously published, in German in 1940 and in English in 1949, there is another and more detailed footnote :

'The name "William Shakespeare" is most probably a pseudonym behind which there lies concealed a great unknown. Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, a man who has been regarded as the author of Shakespeare's works, lost a beloved and admired father while he was still a boy, and completely repudiated his mother, who contracted a new marriage soon after her husband's death.' (p. 61 in the London edition).

It seems that Freud had not changed his mind.

Yours etc.,

GWYNNETH BOWEN."

Note.—Members of the Fellowship have long known of Freud's Oxfordian tendencies, but for some of the details given above I am indebted to an article entitled *The Confessions of William Shakespeare*, by A. Bronson Feldman, Ph.D., published in *The American Imago*, Vol. 10, Summer, No. 2, 1953, and later reprinted as a pamphlet.

G.B.

SHAKESPEARE AS MARINER

BY REX CLEMENTS

Author of : *A Gipsy of the Horn*,
A Stately Southerner, etc.

There are those who doubt whether Shakespeare had sea-experience. The nautical allusions scattered so plentifully throughout the plays are ignored or dismissed with the remark that the poet might have picked them up in conversation with seafaring men. I doubt it: let a landsman attempt to use the technical jargon of seamen and he will soon find himself in difficulties; never will he deceive the professional sailor. Shakespeare uses such technical sea-terms lavishly, with ease and mastery. He does so spontaneously, almost casually, in the rush of composition; never to affect a display of knowledge. The amount of sea-lore in his plays is enormous. A considerable volume would be required to explain and comment upon all such references. To quote only one instance—and one, by the way, almost always passed over in silence by editors, as though it required no elucidation for the uninitiated reader:—*In Cymbeline* Belarius says :

O melancholy !

Who ever yet could sound thy bottom ? find
The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crare
Might easiliest harbour in ? (IV, 2).

Those few lines almost compel one to say that the man who wrote them knew the method and purpose of 'arming the lead'—a sea-practice by no means familiar to the stay-at-home landsman. 'Sound thy bottom'—yes. Let us take it that the use of the deep-sea lead was sufficiently well-known as to be within the cognizance of every Elizabethan playgoer. But Shakespeare goes on to add : 'find the ooze.' How does one 'find the ooze' when sounding ? The sea-bed might be sand, or rock, or shingle. It is done—as the poet obviously well knew—by 'arming' the lead. In the bottom of the sinker is a cavity which, before a cast is taken, is filled with tallow and smoothed off level with the surface of the lead with the blade of a knife. When the man taking the cast is aware, by the 'feel' of the line, that the sinker has touched bottom, he smartly raises and lowers the line to allow the long sinker to strike the sea-bed vertically two or three times, with certainty and precision. When the line is hauled in, the sinker is seized, up-ended, and with a knife the surface of the tallow is neatly sliced off, care being taken not to crumple it. Cupped in the hollow of one's hand, the tallow is well scrutinized, and, by what is adhering to it, the nature of the sea-bottom is ascertained,—sand or mud, as the case may be; nothing if it is sheer rock. Later, the tell-tale tallow is compared with the markings on the chart (which, besides the depth, records the nature of the sea-bottom). Shakespeare must have been fully aware of all this to add, almost parenthetically, to a

metaphor of taking a cast with the lead, a reference to the secondary purpose of sounding—that of ascertaining the nature of the sea-floor.

In the light of such familiarity with the details of the seaman's craft, not to mention his acquaintance with such things as bowlines, yawing, luffing, and the peculiar way in which a sailor breaks a sea-biscuit, let us glance at one of Shakespeare's sea-pictures—the opening scene of *The Tempest*.

At the opening of the play what are we confronted with? A ship at sea, in heavy weather. The master of the ship is on the quarterdeck or poop, shouting for the boatswain, or bosun ('Boteswaine' or 'Boson', Shakespeare spells it either way), who comes running along from forward. Some order has evidently just been given, for the master says: 'Fall to it yarely!'; in other words, 'Look lively now!' He adds—and it furnishes us with the reason for the peremptory order—'or we run ourselves aground!' We instantly perceive the ship is perilously near to some unknown coast.

Immediately things begin to happen swiftly. To the bosun's bull-mouthed roar the hands come tumbling along from forward; 'Cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! Yare, yare!'—'Look lively now, my bully boys, put your backs into it!'—and, as the bosun throws the topsail halyards off the pin, there comes the first order:

'Take in the topsail!' (The main topsail this; the fore is evidently fast. We have been told, by implication, that the weather looks threatening and is growing worse. They have already shortened sail).

The order to take in the topsail tells us much. Land has not only just been sighted ahead or on the lee bow, but it is now blowing hard—indeed, there is a rising gale, as we shall soon see. A rising gale and a lee shore—the moment calls for swift action! The ship has evidently been running free, and the weight of the rising blast is too heavy for her to haul on the wind with the deep topsail set, so it has to come in. As the yard comes down with a run and the bellowing canvas thunders in the wind, there is the monitory shout: 'Keep an ear open for the master's whistle!' while the men snug the canvas up to the yard and some lay aloft to furl it.

The topsail fast, the pressure aloft is relieved and the ship rides more easily. The bosun has time to draw breath, look round, and hurl an oburgation at the face of sea and sky:

'Blow, till thou burst thy wind, if room enough!'

Editors have been learnedly expansive over this phrase.

It is, of course, real sailor-language as natural and quick-to-the-lips (except in the use of the second person singular) of the clipper-seaman of yesterday as to his Elizabethan forbear. It is a defiance thrown to the wind to blow its hardest and do its worst, provided the ship has enough 'sea-room',—sufficient open water, that is, to be handled as the occasion demands, without the

added danger of proximity to land and the risk of being embayed. So in *Pericles* we read:

First Sailor: 'Blow, and split thyself!'

Second sailor: 'But sea-room,—an the brine and cloudy billow kiss the moon,—I care not' (III, 1).

It is an authentic touch, that outburst of the bosun's and the two sailors, a defiance uttered by unnumbered sailor-lips in like predicament.

The ship's position is now plain to all on board. There lies the land to leeward, reaching forward of the beam. The wind is blowing dead on shore and rising rapidly. The next few minutes are going to be critical. Of all the perils of the sea, to a vessel dependent upon the winds alone, that of a lee shore in a gale is among the worst.

As the ship comes up to her new course and the hands coil up the ropes, an interruption occurs. Some of the passengers struggle up on deck. They address the bosun, but that functionary, blowing the water out of his moustaches, answers them shortly. (It was injudicious on the part of one of them to say the least, at such a moment to offer the bosun the Elizabethan equivalent of the exhortation: 'Don't be downhearted!' An explosive retort of white-squall vehemence was only, we may conjecture, repressed with difficulty). One of the passengers, more good-natured than the others, hastens to interpose a word in season. But the bosun is in no mood for mere pleasantries, and his rejoinder lacks cordiality.

The *Tempest's* bosun, it may be remarked, was obviously drawn from the life. He is a truculent, loud-voiced, highly-efficient officer of the old school.

'We'll rant and we'll roar like true British sailors', says the old sea-song, and just such a hearty, fearless, ranting, roaring old sea-dog is Shakespeare's bosun.

Meanwhile, what is happening to the ship? The bosun's reference to having 'sea-room' enough—besides being in keeping with the professional desire of all bosuns, everywhere, gives us the key to the whole situation. Have they sufficient sea-room to manoeuvre the ship and to weather the land? All depends on that. With the topsail fast, the ship can be brought to the wind, her tacks aboard, ready to beat to windward. The pressure of the wind and the consequent strain upon the ship will be more powerfully felt now she is no longer running free. Will she be able to weather the land? The answer is not long in doubt, as the bosun's next repetition of an order from the master makes us realise:

'Down with the topmast!'

Now what is the meaning of that order? And here we must pause for a moment to take a brief glance at the rigging and sail-plan of an Elizabethan ship, in order to grasp the position clearly, for it is imperative to an understanding of what is happening.

First, it is 'the' topmast, it will be observed. Elizabethan ships were usually 3-masted, square

rigged on fore and main masts, with courses, topsails and sometimes, in the newer ships, topgallantsails (one remembers Romeo's 'high top-gallant of my joy'). The mizen mast was fore-and-aft rigged, carrying a lateen mizen, with, possibly, a square topsail. Thus a typical Elizabethan ship had two topsails (three with the mizen), and therefore two topmasts. Why does not Shakespeare tell us which topmast he means—the fore or the main? Does he not know?

Now in Tudor and early Jacobean ships the main mast was the 'main' mast. It was both stronger and more lofty than the foremast—in this unlike the iron and steel clippers of the last days of the sailing-ship, in which there was little difference between the two. And, in consequence, Tudor ships often carried a 'fitted' topmast (that is, a moveable spar) on the mainmast, in distinction to the fore and mizen masts, which were often pole-masts (that is, all in one piece).

So *'the'* topmast was the main topmast—it was the only one which *could* be struck. Shakespeare, of course, was aware of all this; it was everyday fact to a man with sea-experience, though this particular piece of nautical fitting-out was observable any day in the Thames. So the order is to 'Strike *the* topmast.'

Why should they do that? it may be asked. The reason for the operation was that a useless spar might not offer resistance to the wind and increase the leeway of the ship. Heavy top-hamper, too, was best out of the way.

But there is more in it than that. At the time *The Tempest* was written, the striking of topmasts was a new point of seamanship. Top-hamper was best out of the way—admittedly. But supposing you needed to make sail soon afterwards in a hurry? Then you had to hoist and fid your topmast again before you could set the sail—and that took time. So it cut both ways. Sir Henry Manwaring, the great Elizabethan nautical authority, expresses the best opinion on the point in his *Seaman's Dictionary*, published in 1640. He writes: 'If you have sea-room, it is never good to strike the topmast.' If you have sea-room—there's the point; and we have just learnt from the bosun's words—and it is unmistakably confirmed by events which follow hard upon their heels—that they have *not* enough sea-room. Devil take what may come afterwards, they cannot afford to lose an inch of weatherboard *now*! So the order is: 'Down with the topmast! yare!'—or 'Strike the topmast! smartly now!'—and first the yard, then the mast, are sent down.

The next order is liable to misunderstanding—by any but a seaman. Commentators and editors—those who refer to it—seem to think that the command: 'Lower, lower!' is an appeal to the men to get the mast still lower than they have done, lower than it is. This is not nearly accurate enough. 'Lower' here is a verb. The order is not addressed to the men generally, but to the single

seaman standing by the gantline. The order is to him, to 'lower away' by letting the mast-rope run round the pin. It is a technical sea-term, then as now. 'Lower away' is the complete term, and would be the initial order given by the watchful bosun, when he felt the ship steady herself and saw a suitable opportunity. Then, when the moment was well-chosen and he saw that the heel of the mast was coming down clear of the gear and with a straight run before it, there would follow the sharp, peremptory 'Lower, lower!' to the man at the mast-rope, that is, 'Lower away smartly! ease her down handsomely!' before the ship rolls and the topmast fouls anything.

So the topmast is snugly housed. What next? The next order follows instantly:

'Bring her to try with main course!'

What the skipper is trying to do is obvious—indeed he has not much alternative if he is to save his ship. By hook or by crook he has got to claw off the land. Iron-bound, with fringing reefs, it lies to leeward, stretching well forward on the lee bow. That distant point, dimly seen in the spume and driving spray, must be weathered, or it is all up with her. The foresail has been taken in; valuable as the lifting-power of that great head-sail is, it is too much for her in the ever-rising weight of the wind, and it has been made fast. Now, under storm canvas—the iron-hard, belying mainsail only—he is going to bring her 'to try,' that is, bring her to the wind, kept clean full, so as not to make leeway, with the tack aboard, the bowline set up, and the sheet well aft.

One may picture the heeling vessel, creaking and labouring, buffeted by the great shoreward-rushing rollers, the taut cordage, the straining mainsail with its mighty driving-force, and the little knot of men tensely watching sail and spar, with anxious glances to leeward, to see if they are losing or gaining in their grim battle with that iron-bound headland on the lee bow.

Again there is another brief interruption by their courtly freight. They are a difficult lot, these passengers, and their language outflares that of the bosun himself. Besides, they are damnably in the way. The bosun calls on them to bear a hand. The manner of his appeal is lacking in suavity, but the blunt words at that moment of crisis—'Work you, then!'—are in character, and recall the words of a greater than he—Francis Drake—fixing an affronted group of swaggering gentlemen-adventurers with a steely eye and the stern demand: 'I must have the gentlemen to hale and draw with the mariners.'

The altercation between the seaman and the courtiers is cut short by an order from the master, vociferously repeated by the bosun, glad to have work to do and no more arguing with the gentry:

'Lay her a-hold, a-hold!'

The master has seen what the noisily-bawling party on the maindeck have failed to notice—the ship in her stark contest with wind and sea and

stubborn land is being steadily overpowered. She cannot weather the land on that tack. Her gallant fight is in vain; the shore is close under the lee, the headland is changing its bearing forward, not aft. There is no room to wear ship; no time to get the lee anchor over in readiness to club-haul her,—the danger is too imminent. So they 'lay her a-hold'; the helm is put down—perhaps 'the hellock of a sayle,' as Captain John Smith calls it, spread in the mizen rigging, helps her—and the ship is brought to, head-reaching to the wind. She is easier so, but going to leeward like a lobster-pot. This cannot last. What will they do now?

Here there is scope for difference of opinion. Several interpretations are possible. The succeeding orders are not sufficiently detailed to enable us to be sure. A shift of wind is possible, but unlikely. The most likely assumption is that the ship was put about on the other tack. It is that which fits in best with the subsequent course of events.

Desperate diseases demand desperate remedies. The risk of missing stays must be taken, even the risk of bringing the sticks out of her. The sail is kept clean full. The master signs to the helmsman, the whipstaff is forced over and the helm put hard down. 'Hard-a-lee!' With swift surges and shuddering halts the ship's head swings up into the wind. The men are gathered in the waist, standing by tack and sheet. With cracks like cannon shots, the great sail above their heads lifts, half fills, lifts again, and is taken flat aback. Swiftly tack and sheet are raised. 'Mainsail haul!' The yard swings, the lee brace flies through the sheave like a cable through the hawsepipe and, helped by a rag of sail forward, almost before they have time to wonder if mast and gear will stand the strain, the sail fills on the other tack.

What are the chances now? They have gone about and are heading off the land, but the manoeuvre, rapidly as it has been performed, has cost them vital ground and they are almost in the backwash of the breakers. There is but one thing to do: stand it or not, they must pile the canvas on her and beat out to sea. The masts may go; it cannot be helped, the risk must be taken—sea-room they must have, or she will be ashore.

'Set her two courses!'—(A considerable interval must be assumed to have elapsed between this order and the previous one). As if the mainsail were not almost more than the hardly-pressed ship could stand up under, the foresail is to be set as well. Some of the hands lay aloft (the yard is a-portlast; lowered down, that is, almost on to the rails), and, working doggedly, the hands spread the banging canvas to the wind.

Under the weight of these two great sails the ship lays over, down to her ways in foam. But the gear holds—she is a royal ship, well found and cared for. Driven to the utmost of her capacity, under the watchful eye of the master, alert to see that the sails are kept clean full and that there is no danger of griping, and with the bosun scanning

the gear aloft and alow, they go all out to get clear of the land.

'Off to sea again! lay her off!'—the words are as much an exultant shout as an order. The imminence of the danger is growing less. The master turns for a monitory word to the helmsman, the men have a breathing space to look about them, the tension relaxes.

It has been a seamanlike manoeuvre, well-timed and executed, and should have been successful. They are making headway, the gear is standing up to the strain, and the two courses are holding her on her boiling path in the teeth of the risen gale—out to open sea!

And then—suddenly and without warning—comes a cry of panic from the men on deck:

'All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!'

What has happened? What unforeseen disaster has followed so closely on the heels of this piece of triumphant seamanship? . . .

And here we launch out from the realms of seamanship to take flight into those of the supernatural. This storm is not as other storms at sea, as Shakespeare and many of his audience in the pit of the Globe Theatre knew them. There is magic abroad. Prospero and his 'tricksy spirit' Ariel have taken a hand in affairs. Like a tropical thunderstorm Ariel swoops down on the ship.

Lightning strikes through and through her. 'Now on the beak, now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,' it 'flamed amazement.' On board confusion reigns. Prayers, cries and curses resound. 'Mercy on us!'—'We split, we split!'—'Farewell . . . farewell!'— . . . Death appears imminent. 'Not a soul but felt a fever of the mad, and played some tricks of desperation. All but mariners plunged in the foaming brine, and quit the vessel.' As they jumped, 'Hell is empty,' was the cry, 'and all the devils are here!'

(Even in the vortex of such a cataclysm, one cannot help noticing that liminary phrase 'All but mariners', almost parenthetical though it is. When others deserted her, her company stuck to the ship. Poet and dramatist apart, in those words speaks a man who takes a sailorly pride in the honour and traditions of the sea-service).

And swiftly, in the pandemonium and hurly-burly of it all, the ship is piloted by Ariel into a deep, landlocked bay of the island. There she is left safe in harbour, the weary crew all asleep under hatches.

Apart from its supernatural ending, the storm is a very convincing piece of work. And the seamanship is on a par with it. Those few orders shouted on the bare boards of a Southwark stage gave, and give, a graphic and faithful picture of the occurrence. In outline only, of course; but in those orders there is nothing redundant, nothing out of place.

It almost looks as if the author could not help dealing faithfully with his subject, nursing the ship through the storm, and then, after writing the triumphant 'off to sea again! lay her off!' coming to himself with a start, realising he had saved the

ship, muttering 'This will never do,' and straightway, without hint to his auditors or preamble of any sort, writing the astonishing outburst: 'All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!' If he wished to give the nautical experts among his audience the sense of a miraculous intervention in an all-too-common seafaring experience he certainly achieved it. The ship was not lost; she was saved; she had just with good seamanship clawed off a perilous lee-shore; and at this point, like a bolt from the blue, the crew must needs burst in with their cry of 'All lost!' at the apparition of Ariel.

A 'sea-change' indeed! One is almost compelled to think that Shakespeare, with his seamanly instinct and in spite of his dramatic necessities, had been constrained, willy-nilly, to bring the ship safely through her ordeal. Deliberately to wreck her by clumsy handling—magic was another matter!—that was something that the sea-sense of William Shakespeare, mariner, would not permit him to do.

EDWARD II AT STRATFORD-BY-BOW

Whilst the claims of Marlowe to Shakespearian authorship are being discussed, nebulous though they be, the timely production of *Edward II* at the Theatre Royal, Stratford-by-Bow, has allowed us to make a closer check of both writers' styles, and in particular, to compare this play by Marlowe with Shakespeare's *Richard II*, which it resembles in many ways.

Performed by the local Repertory Company, with no scenery and quite ridiculous costumes (the men, for the most part, wearing tunics of an indefinite shape over their modern trousers) all credit must go to the fine acting of the cast which held their audience entranced. Mr. Peter Smallwood, who played the King, as well as looking extremely like the effigy of Edward in the cathedral at Gloucester, never once lost his regal dignity, nor, despite the weakness of the character he portrayed, lost our sympathy.

In this quality of rousing tears in the beholder, Edward parallels Richard, for however blame-worthy he may have been, he remained 'God's elected' and 'not all the water in the rough, rude sea' could wash away his balm. There are times, too, as when he touched the earth of England and apostrophized it to spurn his enemies, wherein we are almost shocked by the similarity of thought in the two plays—shocked, indeed, into wondering who copied who.

If we follow Admiral Holland's dating for the play of *Richard II*, 1582—there can be but one answer—Marlowe filched what he needed from Richard to adorn his Edward.

The machinations of the 'wolfish earls' are even more virulent than Shakespeare's; and the play lacks the lighter touches of grace and humour, such as the talk between the gardeners in the Duke of York's garden, or of the queen with her ladies;

these we miss, and we miss the poetry of Richard's renunciation—candidly, we even miss Marlowe's *mighty line*!

Edward II is one of the long list of 'blood tragedies' which culminated in Webster's *White Devil*—such tragedies as Shakespeare could take and soften with his fine poetry and humanistic thought into something more than blood and thunder. I have not forgotten *Titus Andronicus*, but it is because this play lacks these very qualities of poetry and philosophy that many critics deem it doubtful Shakespeare.

Edward II acts well from the force of its drama; Shakespeare relied more on the force of words—poetry and ideals, and it is because Marlowe gives us not one noble thought, or one admirable character that we may safely say this did not come from the pen of Shakespeare.

Thanks are due to the management for giving us this chance to see the play so well acted. The weak but gentle King, the romantic singing of Gaveston to beguile his royal master, and the restrained, sinister cruelty of the murderer will remain long in the memory.

Mr. Clifford Russell, Asst. Hon. Secretary of the Marlowe Society, is to be thanked also for bringing this production to the notice of Shakespeare Fellowship members and arranging parties to attend the performances. H. AMPHLETT

BOOK REVIEWS SHAKESPEARE'S MAGIC CIRCLE

By A. J. EVANS, M.C., M.A.

160 pages. Price 15/- net. Arthur Barker Ltd.

One hundred years ago an American woman teacher, Delia Bacon, was the first (or at least one of the first) to propound what Mr. A. J. Evans calls a 'Magic Circle.' Her idea was that the plays of Shakespeare were the production of a number of playwrights and poets, the chief of whom was Francis Bacon; and though her theory was favourably considered by such an eminent writer as Nathaniel Hawthorne (among others), poor Miss Bacon was hounded into lunacy by the outcry it received from the orthodox. The past hundred years have seen other theories broached without such unfortunate results, and the orthodox have had to face up to far more serious assaults on their position than Miss Bacon's.

Mr. Evans has cast in his lot with the followers of the sixth Earl of Derby as the Master Mind behind the plays, and he cannot, in his book, write with patience about the claims of either Bacon or the Earl of Oxford. In the few books he mentions in his 'Bibliography' regarding Bacon, he gives us only Eagle's *New Views for Old*, and Durning-Lawrence's *Bacon is Shakespeare*—dismissing in his Introduction, Donnelly's *Great Cryptogram* as 'a highly unconvincing book in favour of candidature of Francis Bacon, though the first hundred pages contain a mass of evidence against the Stratford actor which in general has never been refuted.'

This sounds very much like a paraphrase of Looney in *Shakespeare Identified*—'the full force of the first hundred pages has not yet been fully appreciated.' Had Mr. Evans himself read Donnelly, he might have found much more than one hundred pages very difficult to refute.

In any case, he will not have Bacon as the Master Mind any more than Oxford though he admits that 'those of Oxford's lyrics which have survived' are 'very good'; but 'not only not good enough but lack Shakespeare's majestic and flowing rhythm.' And he adds, 'there is in them not one spark of real humour or *joie de vivre*. They were written by an unhappy, frustrated man totally unlike the Shakespeare of the plays and long poems.'

Now it just happens that Mr. Evans is full of Derby as being also a great poet, and he insists that *The Phoenix and the Turtle* was not only written by Derby, but 'must have been unintelligible except to members of the House of Derby.' Does Mr. Evans then contend that it presents unequivocal testimony to 'Shakespeare's majestic and flowing rhythm'—that it is packed with 'real humour or *joie de vivre*'? Would anyone, except Mr. Evans, reading this strange poem for the first time, be quite certain that its author could have easily written as well, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It*? I can fancy nothing more dangerous than to say what a man can later write judging only from youthful productions.

We are given, of course, the famous report by 'Fenner, a Jesuit agent' that Derby withdrew to a cottage 'interested only in penning comedies for the common players.' But before this, Mr. Evans had already discovered—or at least conjectured—that Derby had been writing lots and lots of plays. He says, 'William Stanley returned to England not later than the middle of 1587' after a tour on the Continent, during which he had visited the Court of Navarre thus proving, of course, that he *must* have written *Love's Labour's Lost*. Not only that, but 'we will imagine,' he says, 'that he brought with him the drafts of a number of plays in various stages towards completion,' and therefore, 'it would not be surprising if Stanley submitted his plays to Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, who was recognised in his own generation as a poet and dramatist of great merit.' Now there is no evidence whatever that Stanley brought back any plays from the Continent; nor is there any evidence that he showed any of them in rough drafts (or otherwise) to Oxford; but after all, by prefacing some conjecture by 'we will imagine,' we can prove anything, and especially that Stanley wrote the Shakespeare plays. All we have to do is to 'imagine' it.

The only *real* reference to Stanley as a playwright is the note by Fenner; and all that it says is that he was 'penning comedies for the common players'. I cannot recall that this has ever been analysed; but it may be as well to point out that we Oxfordians do not agree that the Shakespeare Plays were written in the first place for the 'common players.' The Plays are highly aristocratic, and most of

them (if not all) were written for the Court of Queen Elizabeth and her nobles, 'surreptitious copies' being made of them later, and then no doubt performed by the 'common players.' The idea that *Hamlet* or *Lear* was just 'penned' for the 'common players' seems to me utterly fantastic. No doubt that Derby did try his hand at writing plays, but if they are those the author of which gave his initials as 'W.S.' like *The Widow of Watling Street* or *A Yorkshire Tragedy*—then practically every authority who has examined them is certain that they were *not* written by 'William Shakespeare.'

And of course this brings Mr. Evans up against the problem of *Hamlet*—the most autobiographical play of them all. Not even he can say that it does not refer to the private life of Edward de Vere. But does this prove that de Vere wrote it? Oh dear no. 'It does not follow,' says Mr. Evans, 'that because many of the incidents in *Hamlet* reflect Oxford's life, that Oxford, even if he had been the original writer of the *Ur-Hamlet*, was the real author of the final version.' As Derby was Oxford's son-in-law, he might have known a great deal about Oxford; but, though no doubt the play of *Hamlet* was revised and re-edited, the fact remains that it was *originally* written before 1588 substantially as we have it now and Derby was not then Oxford's son-in-law.

It would require a book to deal with the many points Mr. Evans raises in favour of Derby for he summarises them in 39 paragraphs; but nowhere does he produce proof that the Plays actually came from the hand of William Stanley. That Derby had a fine education can be admitted, but then so had Rutland, and many of the nobles at court. Most of them also travelled—including the Earl of Oxford and, if travelling on the Continent proves who was the veritable author of the Plays, then Oxford could easily head the 'Magic Circle'.

But there are one or two points which must be raised. Mr. Evans has no difficulty in showing that the 'our pleasant Willy' of Spenser's *Tears of the Muses* refers to Will Stanley. Mr. Looney equally has no difficulty in identifying 'Willy' as Oxford. The reader must make his own choice. Then Mr. Evans quotes the famous Preface to *Troilus and Cressida* with its heading—'A never writer to an ever reader' without in the least seeing in it the inevitable 'e ver' reference to Oxford. How could Derby write that? And in *The Tempest* can be found many Baconian 'pointers', to say nothing of those in *Measure for Measure*, the play which Mr. Evans (following Prof. Lambin) attributes to Derby because of topographical and other clues. Even the 'B.I.' lines in the First Folio referring to the Droeshout portrait are thoroughly 'Baconian.' Did Derby tell Jonson to make them so, or what? Oxford was dead and had no hand in the First Folio, but Derby was alive and I refuse to believe that he knew nothing about it if he were the veritable author of the Plays.

H. CUTNER.

SHAKESPEARE SURVEY (9)

Cambridge University Press. Price 21/-.

A few quotations from this storehouse of industry and learning will show how inconclusive and how abstract all study of Shakespeare must be when the real author is unknown.

In reviewing the year's contributions to study of Shakespeare's Life, Times and Stage, R. A. Foakes writes: 'The mystery of Shakespeare's life seems to provoke a monstrous deal of speculation for each poor pennyworth of fact. . . . *Shakespeare par lui meme* . . . gives the essential facts, but also airs again the Baconian and other heresies; Abel Lefranc and Percy Allen are named in the bibliography, but not E. K. Chambers.' Thus skilfully J. T. Looney is not named, but the Baconian heresy is mentioned as musty, and no other 'heresy' is allowed to be specified. The Vere poundsworth of truth must not be put into currency, yet not even a half-penny worth of new 'fact' is instanced.

The biographical soil having 'again' proved so barren, another field must be tried. 'The most fruitful lines of investigation seem to lie at the moment in the study of the background of Shakespeare's art' (N.B. not of Shakespeare) 'and the interpretation of clues in his work. It is coming to be realized more and more clearly just how inaccurate was the 18th century notion of an untutored Shakespeare'; and more than twenty articles are referred to as showing the 'recognition that Shakespeare may have been able to read in several foreign languages, and . . . that he read very widely in his own.'

At the same time, 19th and even 20th century notions of play-dating have come under suspicion.

J. G. McManaway, reviewing *Textual Studies* requiring 'new and even more rigorous bibliographical techniques and an appalling amount of sheer drudgery,' says of E. A. J. Honigmann's argument for dating *King John* 1590/91 and making it the source, instead of the follower, of *The Troublesome Raigne*: 'It (the argument) might carry conviction were it not for the evident maturity of much of the verse in "John", and . . . the effect on the accepted chronology of the plays up to Henry IV. If it could be granted that by the Spring of 1591 Shakespeare had already produced at least one version not only of *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, the *Ur-Hamlet* and the plays about *Henry VI* and would in the next year or two add *Richard II*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, what would be the effect on our ideas of Shakespeare's development as a poet and playwright? Shakespeare's middle years, as we have understood the term, when he should have been actively creative, are made to seem to have been devoted largely to the re-writing of youthful exercises. Honigmann is a redoubtable champion . . . the odds will remain against him, however, until each play in question can be assigned its chronological place in the canon.'

(Need for hard thinking here by orthodox and heretics alike).

Of C. T. Prouty's study of *The Contention* and *2nd Henry VI*, McManaway, while admitting the shrewdness of the questions asked therein, thinks that vital evidence has been ignored in the comparison of the texts, and that therefore the writer 'unwittingly forces himself into the position of arguing that by 1599 (by which date Prouty says "we can be reasonably sure that Shakespeare had revised the old plays"), Shakespeare in the revision of a play that would never attract attention on its own merits, could do no better than falsify the facts of history, foul the action, weaken the structure, and confuse the characterization. This of the playwright who had fashioned the plot of *Romeo*, manipulated the historical events in the reign of Henry IV, and created Falstaff!

'The point at issue,' protests the reviewer, 'is not Shakespeare idolatry—Prouty's error is that he did not ask more questions (my italics) such as . . . ' and here follows a long list of suggestions concerned with the kind of manuscript used, for what purpose prepared, publishers, prompt-books, book-keepers, and so on; but never a hint that the fundamental error of the birth-date of the extraordinary writer needs scrutiny.

KATHARINE E. EGGAR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Coronation Sonnet

Sir,

In her interesting article, headed 'Coronation Sonnet,' in the last issue of the *News-Letter*, Miss Bowen claims that the first line of Sonnet 125—'Were't aught to me I bore the canopy'—does not refer to an occasion when the writer of the Sonnet 'bore the canopy', but that it amounted to a refusal to bear it on a future occasion: that the line means 'Would it be aught to me if I bore the canopy? . . . ' In other words, as the orthodox Stratfordians claim, it is merely a hypothetical question.

The only word which can legitimately be inserted, however, is not 'if', but 'that'—'Were it aught to me that I bore the canopy', meaning 'Is it anything, now, to me that (on an occasion not specified) I bore the canopy . . . ?' If the first four lines, forming a single sentence in question form, are considered, it becomes obvious that the passage cannot be hypothetical: the sense is: 'Is it anything, now, to me that I bore the canopy, with my person honouring thine, or that I laid great bases for eternity, which (eternity) proves more short than waste or ruining?' It is clear that if the first part—the bearing of the canopy—was hypothetical, the second part—the laying great bases—would be so too, and that the next few words—a positive statement about the result of laying those bases as it then appeared to the writer—become nonsense if the laying of them was hypothetical. The 'great bases', generally regarded as meaning the enduring monument to the person addressed constituted by the Sonnets—see for example Sonnet 55—were written in assurance of their 'eternity', which seemed to have proved a brief period only.

It is quite clear that the only person to whom the Sonnet can have been addressed is the occupant of the throne.

Miss Bowen seeks to associate the Sonnet with the ceremonial at a Coronation. This cannot have been the Coronation of Elizabeth I in 1558, when Edward de Vere was only 3, and Miss Bowen suggests that of James.

At that Coronation there could not have been any question of de Vere refusing to bear a canopy: he had his own individual place of honour as Lord Great Chamberlain in the processions, ahead of the Sovereign.

The probable occasion referred to is that of the procession in St. Pauls in 1588, when the Queen returned thanks for the victory over the Armada. There was not then the need to follow rigid precedent—as there was at a Coronation—and from contemporary evidence it appears at least probable that de Vere and the Earl Marshal bore the two front staves of the canopy.

At a Coronation, principal parts in the arrangements fell upon the Lord Great Chamberlain and the Earl Marshal, and there can be no doubt that Edward de Vere was familiar with the 'Little Device for the Coronation of Henry VII,' the official record of the order of the proceedings, on which those at subsequent coronations have been based. Miss Bowen mentions the canopy borne by barons (i.e. men) of the Cinque Ports in the procession from Westminster Hall to the Abbey on the day of the Coronation, but not the one borne on the previous day, from the Tower to Westminster, by 'four noble knights, they to be changed at many places, as well for that the king may be served of many noble persons to their great honour, as for their ease that bear it, considering the long distance.' It has not been, I think, previously pointed out that the Sonnet is echoing the words of this record—is emphasising that de Vere, in taking part in bearing the canopy on a great occasion in place of occupying his special position of dignity before the Queen, was himself doing special honour to her.

Miss Bowen's suggestion that the phrase 'dwellers on form and favour' describes the position of, or the services due at a Coronation by, the Lord of a Manor held by grand serjeanty, is not a possible one. Their tenure was one of secure ownership, in no sense at the pleasure of the Crown: what were, in form, services or duties, have always been highly prized and unique honours, and it would have been nonsense, and insulting, for the writer of the Sonnet to use the language of these lines—'lose all, 'pitiful thrivers', etc.—of Dymoke, the King's Champion, or any of the few others. The lines obviously refer to disappointed hangers-on of the Court (Rendall, Shakespeare's Sonnets and de Vere, p. 278).

I agree that familiarity with the Coronation ceremonial may have suggested the word 'oblation', but not that 'my oblation, poor but free, which is not mixed with seconds' is a reference to the duties of the Lord Great Chamberlain during the service in regard to the Sovereign's oblations. The bread and wine presented by the Sovereign were not, as Miss Bowen suggests, 'royal oblations': of the latter there were two, each of gold. The Lord Great Chamberlain's concern was with these.

J. SHERA ATKINSON.

Shakespeare and the Palazzo del Té

Sir,

Having visited Mantua last year for the purpose of investigating the relationship between Giulio Romano, the Gonzaga, Shakespeare and Edward de Vere, I was very interested in Miss Amphlett's article in the Spring, 1956, *News-Letter*.

What is not made clear is the distinction between the Palazzo del Té and the Ducal Palace. The cluster of buildings in the north of Mantua is known as the Palazzo Ducale, the Reggia where the ruling family, the Gonzaga lived. The Palazzo del Té, a mile to the south, was the palace to which the family retired occasionally for pleasure, and where the famous stud horses were kept. It was this palace of the Té which Giulio Romano rebuilt and decorated beginning in 1524, for Federigo, the son of Isabella d'Este, who was the first Duke of Mantua. It was indeed for him a palace of pleasure where he lived with his mistress, Isabella Boschetti, for whom Romano painted the Sala di Psyche. It was there, and not at the Ducal Palace that

Romano and his pupils painted the Sala dei Cavalli and the Hall of the Giants. These Giants do not in any way resemble statues. They are more like the grotesques of a Disney cartoon, and differ dramatically from the heavenly cupola painted above in amazing perspective. One has to see the versatility of Romano's paintings at the Té, at the Ducal Palace and at Rome to realise his genius.

Mantegna painted horses, with the Gonzaga family groups, most magnificently at the Ducal Palace, but he had been dead eighteen years when the Té was being rebuilt and decorated. His house nearby, still in good condition, is also near that of Giulio Romano.

Romano painted the myths of classical legend, Ovid's version of which so inspired Edward de Vere. The reason why these brightly coloured paintings so impressed him (if he visited Mantua) would have been because they are so different from the abundance of other paintings in Italy which portray religious subjects. He may have seen the Roman sarcophagus in the court-yard of the Té, but the story depicted on it, as elsewhere in pictures and legend, differs radically from that of Shakespeare. In 'Venus and Adonis' the 'lustful queen' never succeeds in seducing Adonis, whereas in legend he is her lover and constant companion. In legend and in Shakespeare's poem, Adonis is killed by the boar.

The picture reproduced on the front of the *News-Letter* is 'Venus and Adonis Surprised by Mars'. Mars is not referred to anywhere in Shakespeare's poem.

The host of Edward de Vere, in 1575-6 at Mantua would not have been Federigo, who had died in 1540, nor his son, Francesco, the 2nd Duke, who died at the age of 27 in 1550, but Federigo's second son, Guglielmo, the 3rd Duke, who ruled Mantua until 1587.

As Henry VIII received horses from the Marquis (not Duke) of Mantua, the Barbary strain would have been known to all the English court, especially those who, like the 16th Earl of Oxford and his son, Edward de Vere, had a great love for horses.

NOTE: References: Books under various titles on Mantua by Selwyn Brinton; Edward Hutton, Frederick Hartt, as well as contemporary documents from which they quote, and others at the state archives at Mantua, also Vasari.

KATHLEEN LE RICHE.

KINGDOM AND GRAVE

Dr. John Mez writes, from Switzerland

'It is always interesting to observe how closely related have been the inventions and ideas of William Shakespeare to those of Edward de Vere.

There exists a poem:

Were I a King

Were I a king, I might command content;

Were I obscure, unknown would be my cares.

And were I dead, no thoughts should me torment.

Nor words, nor wrongs, nor love, nor hate, nor fears;

A doubtful choice of three things one to crave,

A kingdom or a cottage or a grave.

(Signed): VERE.

In Shakespeare's *King Richard II*, Act III, Scene 3, we find:

'What must the king do now? . . .

. . . must he be deposed?

The king shall be contented . . .

(I'll give) . . . my large kingdom for a little grave

A little, little grave, an obscure grave.'

To which one may add two significant lines from 2 *Henry VI*, Act IV, Scene 9:

Was ever king that joyed an earthly throne

And could command no more content than I.

OBITUARY

Mr. Francis L. Nichols

By the death of Mr. Francis L. Nichols, which occurred on 4th May, the Fellowship has lost one of its most enthusiastic members and an indefatigable research worker. His friendly personality will be greatly missed by all who knew him, and the loss to the Fellowship of his unfinished work is incalculable.

Mr. Nichols joined the Fellowship in 1952, but he had been an Oxfordian long before that. On 18th September of that year, he wrote one of those letters out of the blue, which occasionally relieve the routine work of an honorary secretary. 'I am', he said, 'an enthusiastic Oxfordian and have been privately carrying out a great deal of lone-wolf research on this fascinating subject, and I therefore feel that if I can link up with people of a similar mind, it may be useful for all concerned. I expect you will agree that verification of facts at the Bodleian Library by a reader on the spot would prove very useful from your Society's point of view.'

Mr. Nichols was, by profession, the Art Editor of *Motoring*, the journal of the Nuffield Organization and, before that, had had considerable experience as a journalist in Fleet Street. His researches into the authorship of the Shakespeare plays were a spare-time occupation, as all such work must be till the public, or an important section of it, are prepared to listen to the results. His artistic propensities led him to investigate the alleged portraits of Shakespeare and he gave a lecture to the Fellowship on this subject in November, 1953. We are indebted to him for making the block of the Welbeck Portrait of Oxford for the leaflet issued in 1953 and those of the other portraits shown on the cover of the *News-Letter* for April, 1953. He was elected to the Committee in October, 1954, and was recently appointed to a sub-committee for the revision of the Shakespeare Fellowship pamphlet, *Edward de Vere—The Real Shakespeare*, by William Kent and Another, for which he kindly offered as illustrations some of his own excellent photographs. It will be remembered that he was to have taken part in a Debate last April, against the motion proposed by Dr. Mez: That *George Gascoigne* was a pen-name of Edward de Vere, but the Debate was cancelled owing to the illness of Mrs. Mez. Mr. Nichols had himself been taken ill the previous autumn, but had made a temporary recovery.

For many years, Mr. Nichols had been collecting material for a book on the Oxfordian case. Let us hope that the fruits of his labour will not be lost though they must be gathered by others.

G. BOWEN

Mr. Gerald William Phillips, M.A.

Gerald William Phillips, M.A., scholar of Westminster and of Christ Church, Oxford, passed away on the 19th of June, 1956, in his seventy-second year. He firmly believed that Lord Oxford was the true 'Shakespeare'. For some thirty years, with intervals, he had been a member and supporter of the Fellowship, devoting his leisure to the elucidation of the problem of authorship, and his death is a great loss to the cause.

His interest in the subject was first aroused by the perusal of Looney's *Shakespeare Identified*, where he found the deductive method convincing. Ward's *Life*, and the works of Greenwood and other members of the Fellowship were also consulted, and he was then able to formulate his own reconstruction, rather different from those previously made. He concentrated mainly on the *Sonnets*, and by a detailed and meticulous examination of these, and comparison with the Plays and Poems, arrived at two discoveries:

1. The *Venus and Adonis* is later, not earlier than the *Sonnets*, and is not by the same author.
2. One hundred and thirty of the principal *Sonnets* can be arranged, by rhyme-link, personal pronouns and other objective data, in a series which forms a narrative

poem. This was done quite independently of the arrangement by Sir Denys Bray, which he had not then seen. Furthermore, to account for the subject of the *Sonnets*, and for many allusions in the Plays, he found he had to postulate a 'pre-contract' marriage by the Poet, and the birth of a legitimate son, about whom the *Sonnets* were written.

These results were published without delay in *The Tragic Story of 'Shakespeare'* (1932), followed in 1934 by a pocket edition of the text of the *Sonnets*, arranged in his new order, leaving the order to speak for itself. As it failed to do so, the theory was fully expounded in *Sunlight on Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1935), shortly followed by a more popular work, *Lord Burghley in Shakespeare* (1936), the concluding chapters of which deal further with the *Venus*, the *Lucrece*, and the distinction between *Shakspero* and *Shakespeare*. He never ceased to examine his theories, and to collect further evidence, but the War, and also failing health precluded further publication. The net result was summarised in a pamphlet, *Shake Spears Sonnets* (1954) addressed to all members of the Fellowship.

This is not the place to discuss the validity of his findings. It was a great disappointment to him, that they met with little support, and he felt that, perhaps, they were not clearly understood. Some words from the First Folio may form a fitting conclusion: 'Read him therefore: and again and again; and if then you do not like him surely you are in some manifest danger not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his friends, whom, if you need, may be your guides. If you need them not, you can lead yourselves and others; and such readers we wish him.'

H. S. SHIELD

Miss E. R. Monteath

We record with regret the death on 27th June, of Miss E. R. Monteath of Bradford-on-Avon, an enthusiastic and generous member who unfortunately was never able to come to London to attend any of the meetings. She had for many years been a convinced Oxfordian, and her lively letters showed a keen interest in all the activities of the Fellowship.

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