

The Shakespeare Fellowship

News-Letter

SPRING 1958



CONTENTS

NOTICES	1
NEWS AND NOTES	1
REPORTS OF MEETINGS	2
ARTICLES :	
Elizabeth and the Catholics	R. Ridgill Trout 5
Shakespeare and the Trussells of Billesley	G. Bowen 6
BOOK REVIEWS :	
The Shakespearian Ciphers Examined	Dr. and Mrs. Wm. F. Friedman 7
Shakespeare. A Portrait Restored	Clara Longworth de Chambrun 9
IN MEMORIAM	4
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	11

PLEASE NOTE the Hon. Secretary's new address given in the panel on p. 12.

NEWS AND NOTES

On behalf of the Fellowship, we wish to offer our congratulations to our Vice-President and Committee Member, Sir John (formerly Mr. J. W.) Russell on his Knighthood, announced in the New Year's Honours List.

On 26th November, 1957, Mr. T. L. Adamson spoke on "Who Was Shakespeare?" at the Central Reference Library by the invitation of the Reading Branch of the English Association whose treasurer, Mrs. E. M. Waghorn, is a member of the Shakespeare Fellowship. There was a large audience, including students from Reading University, and the many keen questions that followed the reasoned statement that the Earl of Oxford was Shakespeare showed a lively interest in this "heresy" to which two of the audience announced conversion. There was a ready sale of The Fellowship pamphlet.

NOTICES

THE ANNUAL DINNER will be held at the Commonwealth Headquarters of the English-Speaking Union, 37 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1, on Wednesday, 23rd April, at 6.45 for 7.30, when the Chair will be taken by the President, who will also reply to the toast to the Fellowship.

The toast to the Ever-living Memory of Edward de Vere will be proposed by Sir John Russell.

The toast to the Guests will be proposed by Mr. Kenneth D. Browning.

The Guest Speakers will be the Earl of Lucan, Mr. Cyril Hare and Mr. H. L. Bryant Peers, F.R.G.S.

Applications for tickets (price £1) should be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. T. L. Adamson, 6 Upper Cavendish Avenue, Finchley, London, N.3.

COPIES OF *Who Was Shakespeare?* by H. Amphlett can now be obtained for 7/6d. (postage 1s.).

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED that free copies of the Leaflet are obtainable for distribution on application to the Assistant Hon. Secretary.

ORDERS FOR THE PAMPHLET ON EDWARD DE VERE by William Kent and others (second edition, 2/6d.) are coming in from book-sellers all over the world and members who have not yet secured their own copy are advised to do so without delay.

THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP TRUST

The members who were present at the Annual Meeting of 5th October last will remember that the meeting was informed of the bequest to the Fellowship by the late Lieut.-Col. Montagu W. Douglas, C.S.I., C.I.E., of the copyright, etc., of his book *Lord Oxford and the Shakespeare Group*, and a stock of copies of it: and that the Meeting decided to take the opportunity of establishing a Trust, to hold on behalf of the Fellowship not only the bequest referred to but the Fellowship Library and any other property from time to time belonging to the Fellowship, and appointed the President, Mr. Christmas Humphreys, and Sir John W. Russell, Mr. Kenneth D. Browning and Miss Ruth M. D. Wainwright to be the Trustees. The formal Deed constituting the Trust has been entered into and is dated 20th December last, and the matters included in the bequest, and the Library, are now duly vested in the Trustees.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5th October, 1957

The Annual General Meeting opened with a tribute from the President to his predecessor, the late Rear-Admiral H. H. Holland, C.B., and members stood in silence for a few moments in his memory.

The reading of the Minutes was followed by the reports of the Hon. Treasurer and the Hon. Secretary.

It was resolved that the admission charge of 2s. to non-members attending meetings of the Fellowship be discontinued and that there should be a bowl at the door for voluntary contributions from members and non-members alike.

The President reported to the Meeting the bequest to the Fellowship by the late Montagu William Douglas of the stock, copyrights and royalties of his book *Lord Oxford and the Shakespeare Group*, and it was decided that a Trust should be formed to deal with these and any other books and property from time to time belonging to the Fellowship.

The Report on the Study Circle was read by Miss Wainwright, who announced with regret her decision to retire from the post of Secretary of the Study Circle, and that since no successor had been found, the Study Circle had decided to dissolve itself. This news caused great concern to members, who also expressed their appreciation of the work Miss Wainwright had carried out so well and for so long. We are happy to be able to say that the Study Circle has not been dissolved after all as Miss Hilda Amphlett kindly volunteered after the meeting to take over the Secretaryship and—at the time of writing—has already organized three meetings. We wish her a happy and successful term of office.

The Officers of the Fellowship were duly elected and their names are given in the panel on p. 12. Before the election of the Hon. Treasurer, the President announced that, though Mr. Adamson was willing to stand for re-election, he had intimated his wish to retire from the post in August, 1958, and recommended Mr. R. P. Angwin as his successor.

Mr. Russell said he wished to repair an omission, pointing out that Mr. Adamson had for many years been the *acting* Chairman of the Fellowship as well as its Hon. Treasurer, but this side of his work had never received the recognition it deserved. He therefore proposed the creation of the new office of Chairman, and that Mr. Adamson be elected to it. The proposal was carried unanimously.

It was Resolved that the Annual Subscription for Town Members (within the London Postal Area) be raised to £1 from next September, and Life Membership to £10, and that there should be a Student Membership (under 21) with an Annual Subscription of 5/-.

WHAT WE LEARN OF DE VERE FROM SHAKESPEARE'S FOOLS AND CLOWNS

By KATHARINE EGGAR, A.R.A.M.

9th November, 1957

Quoting the opening lines of Sonnet 110—
Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there
And made myself a motley to the view—

Miss Eggar said that she regarded this as a personal confession on the part of the author, Edward de Vere 17th Earl of Oxford—"May we not then, with all diffidence and respect, seek to learn something of himself from the Motleys in his plays?" The Clowns were another matter: they were presented objectively, observed from the outside and revealed no more of their author than that he was not of their class of society. Among them is a small group of five minor characters "whose entertainment-value lies in their stupidity", who all have the same name, William, and three of whom come from the borders of Warwickshire—William the Cook, William Visor and William Silence in *2 Henry IV*, William Page in *Merry Wives* and, of course, Audrey's William in *As You Like it*. From these five Williams we could learn something—not about the author, but about the supposed author, William Shaksper, and the real author's opinion of him.

Having disposed of the Clowns, Miss Eggar proceeded to a fascinating study of Shakespeare's Fools, not only the professional jesters, but the amateurs, such as Biron in *Love's Labour's Lost* and the Melancholy Jaques. She also included the boy, Moth, in *L.L.L.* and, on account of certain characteristics shared with the fools—Puck and Ariel. She did not suggest Shakespeare's Fools were exactly self-portraits of Edward de Vere: "My point is—the author's attitude to the domestic fool . . . he appreciated his faithfulness as gratefully as his funniness, and makes us feel that these characters are drawn from servants of whom as a child he was *fond* and had a childish longing to imitate".

Among the Bodleian MSS. Miss Eggar had discovered some verses with the name "Edwarde" attached to them. She read the whole poem to the audience, but we have space here for no more than the final couplet:

"For all my service this grant me,
Madame your Chamber Fool to be."

It was Miss Eggar's belief that this poem was addressed to Queen Elizabeth by the boy, Edward de Vere, who was, of course, her hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain, and continued throughout his life to be her faithful Entertainer. Miss Eggar drew an interesting comparison between the treatment accorded to Feste in *Twelfth Night* and the Fool in *Lear* and that accorded to the Earl of Oxford by his Queen, who never fully appreciated his genius.

G.B.

THE CASE FOR FRANCIS BACON

BY COMMANDER MARTIN PARES, R.N.
7th December, 1957

This interesting lecture at the Poetry Society's Rooms given by the President of the Baconian Society, was listened to with every attention by an audience who filled the room. In particular, we enjoyed also a fine selection of slides—relevant and irrelevant.

Commander Pares did the best he could with Bacon as one of the greatest men of his time—a man who was an aristocrat, a traveller abroad, an immense reader, with a profound knowledge not only of British history but also of Greek and Roman plays as well as our own Mystery plays. He insisted that the plays ascribed to Shakespeare showed the writer to be a graduate of Cambridge University, to have a practical knowledge of horticulture and an immense legal knowledge, and also of Masonic signs. All these fitted Francis Bacon; and also to Bacon must be given the credit for the Acts of Union between England and Scotland. As far as the Plays themselves were concerned, Commander Pares appealed to the immense work by Bacon entitled *The Great Instoration*, the Fourth Part of which, dealing with the influence of plays and poetry, though given on the Contents page was never published. He contended that it must be the Plays of Shakespeare.

Dealing with the well-known objection to Bacon's authorship on the question of style, he quoted Shelley as well as the Plays to show that Bacon was, in Shelley's words, a poet; and that even the "poet" Shakespeare could write—more or less—a pedestrian prose. In other words, Shakespeare was the master of several styles.

Commander Pares did not stress the so-called cyphers which Baconians in the past have made so much of, though he thought they could not be all disproved.

In the subsequent discussion, he had to admit that he was unable to say why no contemporary reference was ever made to Bacon as a *playwright*—unlike the case of the Earl of Oxford; and he could give no explanation of the famous heading in the first quarto of *Troilus and Cressida*—"A never writer to an ever reader"; and it was a pity that he did not deal more specifically with the plays—for instance with *Hamlet*, which Oxfordians claim as almost autobiographical of the life of Edward de Vere. His date for the *Tempest*—1609—was challenged by Miss Bowen who, with most Oxfordians, put it at 1603.

Commander Pares was warmly thanked for his stimulating lecture on behalf of the audience by Mr. Russell, who was in the chair; and perhaps the Baconians might now invite an Oxfordian to give reasons why we credit the Master Mind behind the Plays of William Shakespeare to be the 17th Earl of Oxford.

H.C.

THE TROUBLESOME REIGN OF JOHN

BY GWYNNETH BOWEN. 16th January, 1958

This lecture dealt with two plays, *The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England*, first published anonymously in two parts in 1591, and *The Life and Death of King John*, which made its first appearance in the Shakespeare First Folio in 1623. These plays have much in common. Which was written first? Until recent years orthodox opinion, though with some hesitations, assumed that *King John* was based on *The Troublesome Raigne*, and was written some years later. Commentators were startled in 1936 by the definite statement by Professor Cairncross in *The Problem of Hamlet* that *King John* came first and so must have been written by 1591 at the latest. As it was generally accepted that *King John* was far from being the first play of the Shakespeare canon, this statement was an ominous threat to orthodox chronology which was supposed to start in 1592 at the earliest. So for some years, orthodoxy entirely ignores Professor Cairncross. With admirable clarity, Miss Bowen analysed later research which was accompanied by many an unconvincing argument and supposition in support of the old order, but which gradually if reluctantly turned to the new, the growing evidence for which was admittedly strong. Then Mr. Honigman in his introduction to the New Arden edition of Shakespeare of 1954 boldly dates *King John* 1590-91, and asserts that it precedes and is the source of *The Troublesome Raigne*. No one has rebutted this assertion.

Miss Bowen commented that we who believe that Edward de Vere Earl of Oxford was the real Shakespeare are of opinion that *King John* was written well before 1590-91.

It is interesting that Mr. Honigman sees in *King John* a mirror of Elizabethan times, chiefly of the period before the defeat of the Armada in 1588. He considers what historical works the dramatist consulted, among others Holinshed and Foxe's Book of Martyrs (new edition 1583) and discusses what he probably read "over and above source books". Miss Bowen pointed out that these books all belong to the period 1583-89. One was by John Leslie, published in English in 1584, arguing for the Scottish succession to the throne of England, and having much to say about King John and a will that bars Arthur from the throne—a theme much to the fore in Elizabeth's day. Miss Bowen examined in detail the external and internal evidence for the date of *King John* and finally suggested that the first version was written in 1585-6 and that it was revised after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots and possibly again after the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

A noteworthy and scholarly lecture pressing home yet another devastating case against Stratford authorship.

T.L.A.

ASTROLOGY IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

By DAVID FREEDMAN. 15th February, 1958

Mr. Freedman began his lecture with a short account of the background of Astrology, which would have been part of the mental furniture of learned and cultured Elizabethans.

From time immemorial some of the greatest names have been associated with this Art, which is based upon the knowledge and interpretation of the planets and the Signs of the Zodiac, and with which Astronomy was originally included, though Astrology was much wider in its range and bearings.

For the purposes of his lecture, Mr. Freedman assumed that Oxford was the author of the Shakespeare Plays, and he certainly showed that, if this was so, the numerous astrological allusions in them would have come naturally to him, and would explain the technical knowledge that went much further than poetical metaphors.

That Oxford was proficient in the art we know from Soothern's lines:

"For who marketh better than he
The seven turning flames of the sky?"

Furthermore, Oxford was interested in one of the greatest astrologers of Italy, Jerome Cardan, Mathematician, Philosopher and Physician. The latter's work, known as "Cardanus Comfort," was, of course, translated by Bedingfield, and dedicated to Oxford, who wrote his famous letter in reply.

Mr. Freedman showed, however, that Oxford's interest in the subject was based almost entirely upon its psychological influences, and he had no place for the degradation of "fortune telling," as can be seen by Sonnet 14.

It is impossible to notice more than a few of the astrological allusions in the Plays, given by Mr. Freedman. The first, striking, example was taken from *Henry IV* (part 2) Act II, Scene 4: "the fat knight having the appearance of . . . Neptune holding his trident, and is found embracing Doll Tearsheet, whereupon the Prince exclaims 'Saturn and Venus this year in conjunction. What says the almanac to that?' To which Poins adds, 'and look whether the Fiery Trigon, his man, be not lipping to his master's old tables, his notebook, his counsel keeper'."

The fiery Trigon refers to the Fiery Triplicity—Aries, Leo and Sagittarius. The tables etc., to the calculation of a horoscope. The Scene I, Act I, of *All's Well*, between *Helena* and *Parolles*, with its reference to Mars Retrograde, and Predominant "displays detailed knowledge, not only of the (apparent) planetary motions, but their effect upon character".

Mr. Freedman found detailed references to astrology in many other plays, and concluded with the beautiful lines from *The Merchant of Venice* Act 5. Scene I, L. 60.

R.M.D.W.

IN MEMORIAM

J. SHERA ATKINSON

We feel sure that many members will share our sense of personal loss at the news of the sudden death of Mr. J. Shera Atkinson on Saturday, 15th March. The last of Mr. Atkinson's many valuable services to the Fellowship was to draw up the Deed of the Shakespeare Fellowship Trust. An Obituary Notice will appear in our next issue.

THOMAS AITKEN

A MEMOIR

The death of Thomas Aitken has robbed the Shakespeare Fellowship of one of its most enthusiastic and valuable members.

Some six years ago whilst my husband and I were travelling in Wales we were fortunate enough to meet Mr. Aitken and his charming wife. As lovers of Shakespeare Mr. Aitken and I were bound to become firm friends.

I understand that as long ago as 1888, Tom Aitken was given "The Beauties of Shakespeare" as a prize at the Glasgow High School. He was then eleven years of age, and it may be said that his appreciation of the wonders and glories of the great plays increased from thence until the end of his long and varied life.

He had been sceptical about "The Man from Stratford" for many years, and talks with Percy Allen helped to convince him that the Earl of Oxford was the real Shakespeare.

Tom Aitken was a remarkable man. An engineer by profession, and a successful one, he was able to combine the sound judgment of the Scot with the vivid imagination of the artist. He loved everything which is good in this life. He read widely and well; he appreciated poetry and art; he believed in joy and laughter, in sentiment, in love, in Reverence. His conversation was superb, but he was always tolerant of the ideas and opinions of others. Forty-five years did not stand between us because Tom Aitken was young in heart and in spirit. We agreed that "Hamlet" is autobiographical and thus holds the "key" to the Authorship Problem, and it is a great sadness that our discussions are at an end.

As many members of the Fellowship know, Tom Aitken collaborated with Sir Henry Lawrence on his pamphlet, and Lt.-Col. Douglas was most grateful for the help given to him in the production of his book, *Lord Oxford and the Shakespeare Group*.

No words can do justice to this staunch believer in our cause, and to this rare personality.

I am grateful for the few years I knew Tom Aitken, and I know that "I shall not look upon his like again".

KATHLEEN MARTYN.

ELIZABETH AND THE CATHOLICS

BY R. RIDGILL TROUT

Queen Elizabeth, almost immediately after her accession, shewed her future attitude towards State religion. In a letter, dated St. Stephen's Night, 1558, from Sir William Fitzwilliam to Sir William More of Losely the following is extracted:

"Yesterdaye beyng Crystemas day the Quene's matie. repayred to hir great closet with hyr nobles . . . And she parseyving a bysshope preparing hymselfe to masse all in the olde ffourme, she taryyd there untill the gospelle was done, and when all the people lokyd for hyr to have offryde acordyng to the olde facyon, she wth hyr nobles returnyd agayn from the closet and the masse un to hyr pryve chamber, wch was strange. etc. . . ."

I am tempted to send the following notes, through reading the penetrating letter of Miss I. Gretton in the Spring number of the *News-Letter* 1957, in which she identifies Shakespeare's Holofernes as Cardinal Allen and with whose findings I agree.

Oxford never lost his respect for the Calvinistic teaching of his uncle Golding and, in my opinion, was never a Catholic. His love and respect for his Protestant Queen prevented him, although he may have agreed to certain views of his one-time friends Howard and Arundel. His views were much broadened by his classical study and his travels. His antipathy towards the warring factions of the church (including the Brownists) is evident throughout the plays. That he was fully conversant with views of Catholic and Protestant we know from many sources, including the references quoted by Miss Gretton.

I was particularly interested in William Allen when I stayed for a week or two as guest of the abbot at the new Douay Abbey, near Reading. Cardinal Allen was a Lancashire man, with all the verve of that county. On account of his beliefs he was compelled to travel from place to place. In 1567 he went to Rome. By 1568 he had established the missionary college for the *secular* clergy at Douai. As the reverend father informs me, "Douai in those days was a town that harboured several bodies of English refugees". The present Douai Abbey is and was, Benedictine.

Allen was then summoned by Pope Gregory XIII to open a college at Rome. He returned to Douai in 1576. Attempts were made by Elizabeth's agents to assassinate him, and the students were expelled and the college closed in March 1578. They moved to Rheims, where Allen, with help, translated the now famous English translation of the Bible, in five volumes.

On 7th August 1578, Allen was made cardinal by Sixtus V (see my article *N.-L.* Sept. 1950), and became the recognised head of the English Catholics abroad. It was arranged that he should take over the English College at Rome, and in 1580 commenced the Jesuit mission in England. This

entry into politics was disastrous for Allen, who was a great and good man.

Unfortunately for him he became closely acquainted with the infamous Robert Parsons or Persons, or Doleman and other aliases.

About 1587 he met Sir William Stanly (a relative of the Earl of Derby) who had proved to be a traitor in Spain, and Allen was misled into writing a book in his defence. Allen wrote several books including the *Apologie and true declaration of the two English Colleges at Rome and at Rheims*, 1587.

The story of how Anthony Munday ran away from his apprenticeship and entering Rome, inveigled himself into the English College: how later he bore witness against the men he had met, and watched their execution at Tyburn, may be known. Whether Walsingham or Burghley dispatched him on that mission we do not know.

But what of Robert Parsons? Parsons and Edmund Campion were companions at Balliol College. Parsons resigned and went to Louvain. In July 1575 he entered the Jesuit Society at Rome. In 1580 he and Campion were sent on a secret mission to England. In 1581 Campion was arrested but Parsons escaped to Rouen. From there he reached Rome. As organiser of the English mission, the year 1588 finds him in Spain spreading propaganda against the English. He sought to succeed Allen as cardinal, but failed. He was made rector of the English College in Rome and died there on 18th April, 1610.

How many books and pamphlets under various aliases he published is not known. One which caused great offence was "The Conference about the next succession to the Crown of England 1594". He took great exception to Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and, with Poley, was possibly the most bitter of the Catholic propagandists. He was instrumental in converting amongst others, Toby Matthews, the friend of Francis Bacon.

Edmund Campion appears also to have attended St. John's College. He was a scholar of repute, and when the Queen, with Lord Oxford in her train, visited Oxford in 1566, Campion made a telling speech of welcome. He afterwards went to Ireland where he published a history of Ireland, incorporated in *Hollinshed* 1577. Sought by the authorities on account of his Papist views, he escaped to Douai, where he joined William Allen. In 1580, along with Parsons, he came to England in disguise. Hunted from place to place, on 14th July he was arrested as a spy, and brought to London. The Queen herself attended the trial at the Tower. He was put to the rack and severely tortured on several occasions, but strongly denied any thought of sedition. On 20th November, he was judged guilty and was executed at Tyburn on 1st December, 1580/1. Amongst his various hiding places was Hackney.

Lord Thomas Vaux of Harrowden, the poet, had lived at Hackney as also did his son. Two of his

poems are in the "Booke of Songes and Sonnettes". (*M.W. of Windsor* I.I. 206; also the garbled version in *Hamlet*). It was his son who harboured Campion, which may have some connection with the priest's hole recently found when King's Hold (Brooke House) was demolished in 1955. This house, dating back several centuries, was the residence of Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon, during the middle years of Queen Elizabeth's reign. It was bought by Lord Oxford's second Countess in 1596, and after the death of the Earl in 1604 the widowed Lady Vaux went to live there with the widowed Countess of Oxford.

I cannot conclude without mention of Robert Southwell, 1561-1595. The Southwells of Norfolk, were connected with several noble houses. Whilst still a youth he was sent to Douai, thence to Paris. Although young, he was ordained in 1584. In the meantime, by the Queen's orders, no English-born subject of the Romish Church was allowed to remain in England over forty days. Yet he and Henry Garnett, both came over and stayed with various catholic families. He became chaplain to Anne (Dacre) Howard, wife of Philip, 1st Earl of Arundel (of the Howard family).

Southwell's poems are well-known, and his "Mary Magdalen's Tears", caused Thomas Nash, Oxford's doughty defender, to reply in "Christ's Tears over Jerusalem" with "Mary Magdalen's Tears".

With all these associations, which I do not remember having seen brought together, it is difficult to imagine that literary and general historians should have overlooked the fact that they are so closely related to the plays of Shakespeare and the Court, of which Lord Oxford was so prominent a member, and the only literary peer, living throughout the entire reign.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE TRUSSELLS OF BILLESLEY

BY GWYNNETH BOWEN

In *Shakespeare, A Portrait Restored* (reviewed on p. 9) the late Contesse de Chambrun stated it as a fact that William Shakespeare of Stratford was a first cousin of John Trussell of Billesley, author of *The First Rape of Fair Helen* and publisher of Robert Southwell's *Triumph Over Death*—"their mothers being sisters". If this were true it would raise a very interesting point, for then William Shakespeare (or Shaksper) of Stratford would be a kinsman of Edward de Vere the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, whose grandfather, the 15th Earl married Elizabeth Trussell and, through her, became the owner of Billesley Manor, as Mr. J. Shera Atkinson pointed out in his interesting article on the Manor of Billesley, published in the *News-Letter* of September, 1953.*

Fortunately, or unfortunately, the Contesse de

Chambrun's statement is open to several objections. In the first place, it is not known for certain that the John Trussell who wrote *The First Rape of Fair Helen* was the same person as the John Trussell who published Southwell's tract, or that either of them ever lived at Billesley. Secondly the connection between the Shaksper of Stratford and the Trussells of Billesley seems to have been a generation further back.

The First Rape of Fair Helen has recently been reprinted in *Shakespeare Quarterly* (Vol. VIII, No. 4, Autumn, 1957) with an introduction by M. A. Shaaber, according to whom the relationship depends upon whether or not William's maternal grandmother was a sister of a Thomas Trussell of Billesley who died in 1517, and the inference that John Trussell was a friend of William's "depends entirely on the presumption that he lived at Billesley near Stratford". But it seems that he could not have lived there after 1585, for in that year another Thomas Trussell made conveyances of the manor. In the same year "Thomas committed robbery and felony on the highway at Bromley, Kent, and was in 1588 attainted and sentenced to death. Billesley Manor passed to the Crown and was granted in 1590 to John Willes and others, being then held on lease by Richard Ognell. In 1600 Otho Nicholson of London and George Ognell of Billesley sold the manor to Robert Lee for £5,000". (Quoted by Shaaber from *Victoria County History of Warwick*, III (1945), 60).

It is difficult to see why these transactions alone should have prevented William and John from being neighbours and friends in their youth and William, himself, is supposed to have left Stratford in 1585, or soon afterwards, but from the commendatory verses prefixed to *The First Rape of Fair Helen*, it appears that John Trussell was still a very young man in 1595. Moreover, there is no evidence that he ever lived at Billesley. On the other hand, though Shaaber does not mention the fact, the Manor of Billesley with other estates in Warwickshire, was part of the inheritance of Edward de Vere the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, though it would seem to have passed from him back to the Trussells before 1585.

In his article, Mr. Atkinson described a visit to the house shortly before it was put up for sale in 1952, when he was shown the "Shakespeare Room" and the adjoining library, where according to a local tradition, Shakespeare wrote *As You Like it*. It is now the property of Mr. C. R. Hughes, who kindly showed the joint editors over it when they visited Stratford last summer, and entertained them at tea with his wife and daughter. Mr. Hughes has since become a member of the Fellowship.

*Obtainable from the Assistant Hon. Secretary (price 6d.)

BOOK REVIEWS

SHAKESPEAREAN CIPHERS

The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined

by DR. and MRS. WM. F. FRIEDMAN of Washington, D.C., U.S.A., published last Autumn by the Cambridge University Press, has rightly attracted considerable attention. Reviews which have appeared include those in *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Sunday Times*, *Punch*, and the *American Time*

The subject had been discussed at some length in *Secret and Urgent—The Story of Codes and Ciphers* by the late Fletcher Pratt, published in 1939—a book which gave a history of codes and ciphers in considerable detail; while Francis Bacon's Biliteral Cipher is briefly referred to in *Secret Diplomacy*, by J. W. Thompson and S. K. Padover (1936). Both books are well worth perusal by anyone wishing to get the matter of ciphers and codes in perspective.

The Friedmans, both highly trained and experienced cryptographers—experts in ciphers—examine in their book in detail and unreservedly reject every alleged cipher, anagram and acrostic system which has been published claiming to prove that Francis Bacon wrote the Shakespeare plays and poems.

Since they set out to examine alleged Shakespeare ciphers, it might have been helpful to the general reader if they had emphasised—they do mention it shortly in their introduction—that the period was one in which ciphers were much in use, not only by rulers and their servants but by others. In the Public Record Office there are three MS. volumes of the period in which some unknown person assembled 187 different ciphers. The Elizabethan background, unlike our own, was that of a "cipher-conscious" society; and it may well be that the writer Shakespeare *has* concealed his name in his works in a way, or ways, not yet detected.

There have in fact been no substantial attempts put before the public to prove the existence of cipher recording any other than Bacon to be the author, and so the Friedmans' investigation has been almost entirely confined to alleged Baconian ciphers. They deal, however, with the so-called acrostic or string cipher, on which B. M. Ward claimed to find the signature of Edward de Vere in the poem L'Escu d'amour, in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, and they demonstrate that this, and similar "string ciphers" claimed by certain Baconians, are not valid; showing by examples how almost any name can be found with equal facility by the method adopted.

It should, however, be remarked that the claim that the "posy" attached to that poem and to many others in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres—Meritum Petere Grave*—concealed the identity of de Vere does not rest on that alleged cipher. Incidentally, the Friedmans are incorrect in saying

"The theory is that this posy is de Vere's family motto": their motto was of course Vero Nihil Verius.

This reviewer has over several years closely examined the various alleged Baconian ciphers, particularly those of Mrs. Gallup, Orville Owen, the Woodwards, Bertram Theobald and E. D. Johnson, and the work of the Friedmans confirms his own very definite conclusions.

In outlining the "claims" put forward for Francis Bacon and others, they record the "spectacular rise to favour" of de Vere, and place him as now a "strong second" to Bacon. We should go farther: to mention one ground only out of many, on the modern dating of the Plays and the Sonnets (resulting from recent research by orthodox Stratfordians, confirming work done by Oxfordians years previously) which puts the Sonnets and many of the Plays back into the fifteen-eighties, only de Vere, born in 1550, was of an age to have written them—Bacon, Shakspeare, Derby and Marlowe were born in the early 'sixties and Rutland in 1576.

In their reference to Gilbert Slater's *Seven Shakespeares* the Friedmans say that his theory was that the Plays were the work of a syndicate consisting of Bacon (primus inter pares), the Countess of Pembroke, Raleigh, Shakespeare, Oxford, Derby and Marlowe. This mistake has frequently been made: Slater in fact examined the several claims made for these seven, and came to the conclusion that the case for Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, as Shakespeare was established, some of the others named possibly coming into the picture, but only to the extent of having collaborated with him.

The Friedmans examine in detail the work of the following, among others, showing in turn the futility of their efforts:

1. Ignatius Donnelly (1831-1901): *The Great Cryptogram*.

He began by setting out correctly the nature of Bacon's biliteral cipher (which depends on the use of two different classes of italic type) and then showed clearly that he completely failed to understand it, and proceeded, with elaborate countings of words, page and column numbers, additions and subtractions, to evolve a story full of puerilities and garrulity.

A series of articles in *Baconiana* as lately as 1944, "Donnelly's Amazing Cryptogram Re-examined", accepted Donnelly as valid without scrutiny, though long previously it had been proved that Donnelly's system could be used to produce any "message" at will.

2. Walter C. Arensberg (with whom the Friedmans were well acquainted), W. S. Booth, and Edward D. Johnson (a frequent contributor to *Baconiana*).

A common characteristic is that the methods used give so many chances of finding the signature—or whatever it is—which you set out to find

that the results are valueless: or to put it another way, that it is relatively easy, with them, to arrive at what you want to find in any book whatever.

3. Bertram Theobald, Frank Woodward and Parker Woodward, and J. Denham Parsons, all prominent Baconians, responsible for many books on Bacon's authorship. All employed numerical ciphers in various ways, in which $a=1$, etc.—the "simple cipher": the "reverse (or R) cipher", in which $z=1$ and $a=24$: and the K cipher (of doubtful validity) in which $k=10$, $z=24$, $a=27$, $b=28$, etc. Theobald made counts such as the number of words on a page, letters on a page, initial or last letters of lines, words in italics, words in roman letters, then did addition or subtraction sums with these figures and page numbers, to arrive at a number which on one of the ciphers mentioned gave one of the many ways in which "Francis Bacon" or one of his titles (e.g. Francis Bacon, Knight, or Viscount St. Alban) could be signed—at length or abbreviated—or gave the name of one of the many other writers who (according to Theobald) were only "covers" for concealing Bacon's authorship. The chances of getting one or more such "signatures" on any page so dealt with were abundant. The Woodwards also used those ciphers and specialised on finding the number 287 on, for example, the first or last page of a Shakespeare play, by counting words or letters and making certain additions or deductions, because, on that K cipher, 287 represents "Fra. Rosicrusse" and was said to be the secret sign of the Rosicrucian fraternity. When studying their books some time ago, this reviewer found that, using their methods, he could with equal facility get 244, which, on the "simple cipher", is the count of "Edward de Vere Earle of Oxford"! The explanation is, of course, that their method gives so many chances that you can find what you look for. Other tests of the ciphers mentioned, applied to Milton's lines "On Shakespear" in the 1632 Folio, readily gave "signatures" of George Bernard Shaw and Marie Corelli!

4. Dr. Orville Owen: whose "word cipher" is the basis of his five volumes, *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story*, published in 1893-5, claimed to tell the story of the life of Francis Bacon, a natural son of Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester, similar in the main to that told by Mrs. Gallup and referred to below. The story, it was claimed, was drawn from Bacon's own writings, Shakespeare, and many other writers—all "covers" for Bacon. The cipher process, however, was so flexible that it produced just what story Owen chose to tell. He refrained from giving more than vague hints as to his methods. The story as he "deciphered" it was in pseudo-Elizabethan and extremely diffuse, with many split infinitives, mis-spellings of Latin words and words of Latin origin, etc., all quite inconsistent with it having come from Bacon's pen.

5. Owen's one-time secretary largely "stole his

thunder" by the publication in 1899 of "The Bilateral Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon, Discovered in his Works and Deciphered by Mrs. Elizabeth Wells Gallup". She set out to establish that the works attributed to Shakespeare and many other Elizabethans, as well as those under his own name, were written by Francis Bacon, and concealed a secret story—that he and the Earl of Essex were sons of a secret marriage of Elizabeth and Leicester, and that he was heir to the English Crown, the story being told at great length, with numerous repetitions. She claimed that the story was hidden in those works in the bilateral cipher described in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*.

That is an excellent cipher in itself, constructed on a principle similar to the dots and dashes of the Morse code. Letters printed in italics were to be of two different groups, called for convenience the *a* group and the *b* group. If the printed message had its first five italic letters of group *a* type, they gave A in the hidden message: if the next five belonged to *a a a a b* groups, or to *a a a b a* groups, they gave B, or C, as the case may be; and so on through the 24 letter alphabet, Z being *b a b b b*. Mrs. Gallup claimed to be able to find and distinguish in the books examined the two groups. If one could do so it would be plain sailing: one group would be clearly (say) "fat" and the other "thin", or one "florid" and the other "plain", or there would be some other clear distinction. But in fact the italic type used were an extremely mixed lot, and while one might be clearly fat and another clearly thin—treating for the purpose of illustration those as the distinguishing characteristics—there would be a miscellaneous assortment in between, which would be doubtful. Sets of type, cut (by hand) by different makers got all mixed up: type got battered and worn: and on the rough paper used—it had to be used damp—the ink sometimes ran, so that (as can be seen by comparing two copies of, say, the First Folio of Shakespeare's Plays) on one sheet a letter may appear "thin" while, on other "pulls" off the same type, that letter has come out "fat". There are numerous other practical difficulties, and altogether it is certain that the alleged deciphered story is imagination.

The Friedmans refer to the fact that it contains many anachronisms: words not in use in Bacon's day are used: events after his death are mentioned. From notes made when this reviewer studied Mrs. Gallup it may be added that the invalidity of her claim should be obvious to anyone acquainted with Elizabethan literature. Her "story", purporting to be as deciphered letter by letter, is in "pseudo-Elizabethan" English, much of it diffuse, hysterical, washerwoman style, language, and spelling. It is "Gallup" certainly not Bacon's, English. Moreover, Bacon, a Latin scholar, would never write "president" or "presidence" when he meant "precedent" or "precedence": "dissproved", "attenntion", "propper": nor would he write

"The Odysseys", nor "costive" (for costly), "idole" for idle; nor of his "desire to sit in British throne". Very many examples besides could be given. She makes Bacon say that his name should be Tidder (or Tudor): but a legitimate son of Elizabeth and Leicester would be a Dudley. Like Owen, she showed ignorance of the law governing the succession to the Crown, and the laws of inheritance, making nonsense which Bacon could not have written.

The interest of the Friedmans' book is enhanced by the fact that they both knew Mrs. Gallup, and for some time worked with her at a research establishment set up by "Colonel" Fabyan for establishing the genuineness of her cipher. Neither they nor any of the other workers succeeded in reproducing, independently, any part of her "story"; and they found in some cases that she assigned a particular type specimen in one passage to the *a* group, and to the *b* group when meeting it elsewhere.

The few persons who claim to have verified passages in her decipherment by deciphering the original independently had in each case, it would appear, read her decipherment.

Although the Francis Bacon Society formally repudiated Mrs. Gallup in 1900, it has been apparent that many Baconians have accepted and still accept her work, and the Society's organ *Baconiana* appears to be fully open to the expression of their views. Sometimes a Baconian writer, without mentioning, say, Mrs. Gallup, will state as if they were historical facts, things for which her books are the only authority.

At Gorhambury, once the home of Francis Bacon and now that of the Earls of Verulam, there is a charming little bust of Francis Bacon at about the age of nine or ten, carved in wood and painted. When shown to this reviewer it was alongside a portrait of Lady Bacon, the wife of Sir Nicholas. The likeness between them is quite remarkable. The sculptor may have been told to portray Elizabeth's son with a resemblance which did not exist, but it would take more than Mrs. Gallup to satisfy this reviewer that he did so.

J.S.A.

SHAKESPEARE. A Portrait Restored. By CLARA LONGWORTH DE CHAMBRUN. Hollis and Carter 35/-.

This book, by the late Countess of Chambrun, who died in 1954, is her own translation of *Shakespeare Retrouvé*, published in France in 1947. It was the last of many books on Shakespeare, and in her opinion, it summed up her life's work.

She was considered in France to be one of the great authorities on Elizabethan times, and indeed the four hundred pages of this volume testify to a vast amount of research into the period, a good deal of which is interesting for its own sake, apart from the question of the Shakespeare authorship.

For those who believe that the player Shaksper was the author, this richly woven tapestry of his presumed life in Stratford and London may seem to add a profusion of scholarly detail to such works as Mrs. Stopes' *Shakespeare's Environment*. Yet, in view of the sober and candid biography by E. K. Chambers, many Stratfordians may themselves be surprised at Madame de Chambrun's confidence that "the life of Shakespeare is no longer a mystery".

And, although this author's skill in developing and amplifying her story has seemed to produce a consistent whole, many will be conscious of the essential weakness of the vital links in her chain of events. Those weaknesses were exposed once and for all by Sir George Greenwood.

To begin with, Madame de Chambrun is at great pains to show the "claims to distinction" of both John Shaksper and his wife, yet she ignores the established fact of their illiteracy. She paints a charming picture of Stratford-on-Avon, and, emphasises, quite unwarrantably, the fine education provided at its Grammar school. Yet she believes that William was taken away from it at the early age of fourteen (and therefore would not have benefited from classical authors such as Horace and Ovid, which were only taught in the higher classes).

On arrival in London, he naturally "directed his steps to his old school-fellows"—Richard Field, Thomas Vautrollier, and William Combes. "With Richard Field . . . he could not only have found employment as proof reader or typographer, but also material to supplement his education and enlarge his outlook".

In Appendix C of *Is there a Shakespeare Problem?* Greenwood answered Mrs. Stopes by showing that there is not the slightest evidence that Field was an old schoolfellow of Shaksper's, or that he ever resided with him, or read his books. He adds, "If Field and the author of *Venus and Adonis* had been close personal friends we should hardly have expected to find Field parting with his copyright in the poem; rather, we should have expected to find him in possession of the copyright of *Lucrece* also".

Passing over many pages, all of which call for comment, on Shaksper's early plays, we come to the next link, which is, of course, Southampton. It is not too much to say that the whole of Shaksper's subsequent career, according to Madame de Chambrun, depends upon this connection. Yet, Mrs. Stopes, in writing Southampton's biography, could find no scrap of evidence for his friendship or even acquaintanceship with Shakespeare. After eight years of research, this was a bitter disappointment to her.

Madame de Chambrun's description of *Venus and Adonis*, is worth quoting: "The hundred and twenty-eight verses . . . include narrative, dialogue, monologue, apostrophe, and elegy. Everything there is to say upon love, beauty, chastity, pity and death, seems here to have been said . . . It is

impossible to give an idea of the audacity and verve of this extraordinary poem, or say whether its qualities derived from classic times, the Middle Ages, or the Renaissance, whose efflorescence it so completely displays".

The "audacity" of the Dedication, however, does not strike the author, for she simply says: "The dedication . . . broke with the long tradition which demanded that a poet should approach the high and mighty personage whose patronage he seeks with a certain ceremony".

"The author knew that his inspiration came from Parnassus," which explains all.

In *Chapter VI*, Shakespeare's "Autobiography" is traced in the *Sonnets*. "The first twenty sonnets are an eloquent appeal to the young lord, bereft of his father, to marry and found a family". Again, "toujours de l'audace".

In spite of this great friend and patron, however, "The writer of the *Sonnets* knew the very depths of jealousy and wounded pride. He is angry when inferior writers are preferred to him; he suffers at finding that his profession puts him in an inferior class, where he is apt to be cold shouldered by persons of quality".

At the beginning of *Chapter VII*, entitled "Shakespeare's Stagecraft", we are told that, "at the beginning of his career in London, he felt more at home among theatrical folk than among the University intellectuals who claimed a monopoly of play-writing". Yet "Love's Labour's Lost" was one of his first plays, and surely shows that the author's learning, however lightly worn, in the form of pedantical witticisms, need not have produced any sense of inferiority.

The account of the various theatres and Companies in this Chapter is full of interest. In the 1590s, Shakespeare was, apparently, a successful actor, although, according to Madame de Chambrun he had been employed in several other trades, whilst learning his craft. And, although his "noble bearing marked him for kingly parts" (e.g. the Ghost in *Hamlet*) he left the leading parts in his own plays to Burbage.

In *Chapter VIII* "The Poet's World", we are introduced to the brilliant circle of men and women, which was now open to the Player through Southampton. "Lady Southampton", we are told, "could not fail to appreciate the fact that Shakespeare, in his *Sonnets* and the *Lover's Complaint* had pressed her son to marry the person she had elected. She received the Stratford poet and introduced him to the London élite".

We are given no evidence for this conjecture, which is simply asserted as a fact.

Unlike most modern orthodox Shakespeare critics, this biographer feels no need to explain Shakespeare's knowledge of Italy by any suggestion that he might have travelled there at some time during "the lost years".

In her opinion Southampton's friend Florio

gave him all he needed for the "rapid and convincing impressions of Italy to be found in the plays".

Madame de Chambrun should have read Dr. Ernesto Grillo, Karl Elze, and Professor Lambin.

It is very interesting that this author is convinced that Shakespeare knew French, and French writers well. She believes that *Hamlet* derived its inspiration directly from Belleforest, and that Shakespeare had read Rabelais, and, of course, Montaigne.

From his "Introduction to Southampton" in 1592, no difficulties impeded Shakespeare's career. In 1597, this biographer writes: "Shakespeare was not yet thirty-four, and he had already produced eight comedies, twelve tragedies, published two poems, and adapted a dozen old plays. . . . At Stratford he was considered a rich man, when on 4th May, 1597, he bought Clopton's old town house for one hundred and twenty pounds, and set about renovating it with a view to installing his family there". She does not think that he finally retired to Stratford until 1610, although there is no evidence, and she mentions several occasions when he must have been at home. Finally, she pictures him "entering into the full enjoyment of New Place, where many near or immediate neighbours eager to admire if not to understand the poet swelled the circle of friends". Many of these were Catholics, and it must be noted that Madame de Chambrun has strongly emphasised Shakespeare's religion in this book, which was published by a Catholic firm. Professor J. B. Harrison, a Catholic convert, has written of it: "The value is that it brings together a number of new and exciting ideas which are well worth examining". These, presumably, are mostly connected with religion. And Mr. Robert Speaight reviewed the book at some length in *The Tablet* for this reason.

The author certainly seems to have established that William Shaksper's father, John Shakspere, was a Catholic recusant, and, more particularly, that whoever wrote the plays was familiar with liturgical, technical terms which have misled Protestant editors. Although she does not insist that William Shaksper himself was particularly devout, she has shown that the strange facts, or absence of facts, concerning his marriage, can be explained for the reason that it was a secret Catholic one. Madame de Chambrun thinks that, before collaborating with Marlowe, Shakspere joined with others in writing the play of the great Catholic Sir Thomas More, and she takes it as proven that a hundred and twenty-seven lines of it were written by Shakespeare.

Actually, the question of Shakespeare's handwriting in this play has been the subject of much controversy, and Greenwood in his "Shakspere's Handwriting in Sir Thomas More", has demonstrated very clearly the complete unreliability of "expert paleographers."

To return to the general question of Shakespeare's religion, it may be remembered that his Catholic tendencies have often been remarked, notably by Macaulay. Yet, if these exist, they do not rule out other candidates for authorship, except, perhaps, Bacon. So far as Oxford is concerned, one of J. T. Looney's points of identification was that the author of the plays should have "Catholic leanings, though touched with scepticism", and he found that Oxford justified this point. For Green mentioned that "the list of nobles reconciled to the old faith" (at the time of the Jesuit Mission) "was headed by Lord Oxford, Cecil's own son-in-law".

There is also the evidence of the French Ambassador that, about 1576, Oxford had been reconciled, together with other noblemen and friends. Some years later, the "Howard-Arundel" affair, when he was driven to expose a (real or imaginary) plot against the State, would have given him an ambivalent attitude towards the Church, which is perhaps expressed in *Measure For Measure*. Such divided allegiances, and tragic conflicts would, at any rate, be psychologically what we should expect in the life of the author of the greatest tragedies in our language. Far more so than the triumphant career, untroubled except for petty jealousies, and the domestic peace and happiness which Madame de Chambrun conceives to have been the lot of Shakespeare.

RUTH M. W. WAINEWRIGHT.

been given notice of Oxford's departure from Venice. Had not his luggage already been sent off in advance? Fancy its owner being detected, arrested and searched by those foreigners under a beggar's rags! Oxford could run no such risks.

Still more, in March 1576 the plague—one of the most virulent in history—had been raging in Milan for several months. Would Oxford have exposed himself to this additional danger? A double one in fact, for all the very few strangers appearing under the walls of Milan at the time were thrown into the Xenodochion of San Gregorio, a stone's throw from the road, or rather track, from Venice. They were roughly pent up and quarantined there, a fate Oxford obviously did not undergo, considering his speedy journey—one month at the very most—from Venice to Lyons.

Last but not least, to go to Lyons through Milan was to have decided for a route through the Mont-Cenis Pass—mind: the "Summer Road", as it was called, between Italy and France. And Spring had not even yet begun. The pass is close upon seven thousand feet high. In March there are still very heavy falls of soft snow, immediately followed by avalanches and torrential floods at the least shining of the sun. To have attempted crossing this lofty alpine pass in the middle of March would have spelt instant disaster.

No, Oxford never went to Milan: the Roman Inquisition, the gaols of Spain, the raging plague and loathsome quarantine, the overwhelming snowdrifts and avalanches and floods, not counting the savage mountain bears and wolves, were more than a match for Edward de Vere in March 1576. He must needs have taken a more southern course, through Genoa, for instance, where he was sure of a more safe and friendly welcome.

G. LAMBIN

We leave it to our readers to judge for themselves whether, in saying that the Earl of Oxford was not visible to any *English* eye, Francis Peyto implied that he was visible to other eyes in Milan, but if he was not there how could Peyto be "refused to be spoken with"? As for the possibility of travelling from Milan to Lyons across the Alps in March, we invite comment from other readers with knowledge of local conditions, but would draw attention to the eleven days difference in the Calendar, which was not altered anywhere till 1582.

It seems that Oxford was still at Venice when Benedict Spinola's brother wrote from there on 26th February (Old Style), or 9th March by our Calendar, and intended to set out after the Carnival—that is to say, at the beginning of Lent. In 1576, Ash Wednesday fell on 7th March. Oxford was in Paris by 31st March. According to B. M. Ward (p. 112), he was already at Lyons at Carnival time, but this appears to be an error arising from a misunderstanding of Benedict Spinola's letter—Ward gives no reference. The relevant parts of Spinola's and Peyto's letters were quoted in our last issue, Autumn, 1957.

G.B.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Did Oxford go to Milan?

Sir,

B. M. Ward, who is still an authority on Oxford's biography, I believe, very prudently abstains from telling us how the great lord went from Venice to Lyons in March 1576. Francis Peyto's letter to lord Burghley, so easily accessible, was certainly well known to him, and he ignores it. In fact the document strongly confirms Oxford's avoidance of Milan: "If he had passed this way visible to any English eye, as he did not". And if invisible to anxious countrymen's eyes, quite as invisible did he remain to the Italian and Spanish eyes there, though on the sharp look-out for such an attractive prey. In the light of which total invisibility in Milan, "[I] made offer of myself in his fyrst comyng hither"—as Peyto further declares—cannot but mean: "I put myself at his disposal (by letter, most probably) as soon as he comes here (or should come here)", not: "... as he came here".

The rest of the text is too truncated for perfect appreciation, but seems to imply that Oxford having failed to appear in Milan or even grant Peyto an interview at unstated places and times, the latter was bitterly disappointed. For Peyto was apparently one of these catholic refugees who, getting homesick in the long run, were attempting to propitiate Burghley for their return passports, even at the cost of a bit of spying abroad.

But Oxford never came to Milan. It would have been pure folly on his part in March 1576 (a decisive date, as we shall see). He was not the man to have condescended to disguise as a rogue, palmer or pedlar; and both the rigorous catholic Archbishop, Charles Borromeus, and the watchful Spanish authorities were but too ready to pounce upon a heretic and enemy of note. They had certainly

Is Ignoto Oxford?

Sir,

Your readers will be familiar with the lines signed *Ignoto*, in praise of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, beginning:

To looke upon a worke of rare devise,

The which a workman setteth out to view. . . .

Probably this poem has already been attributed to "Shakespeare", but, to my mind, it strongly suggests the authentic lines of the Earl of Oxford to the Reader of Bedingfield's Cardanus' Comfort:

The labouring man that tills the fertile soil,

And reaps the harvest fruit, hath not indeed . . .

Furthermore, *Ignoto's* lines:

I here pronounce this workmanship is such,

As that no pen can set it out too much. . . .

appear to be echoed and improved in Jonson's eulogy in the Folio:

While I confesse thy writings to be such,
As neither *Man*, nor *Muse*, can praise too much.

Is it possible that Ben Jonson was consciously echoing the lines, with a hint that they were by the poet whom he called "Shakespeare", videlicet, the Earl of Oxford? Admittedly this does not *prove* that the poet was Oxford. But Spenser had made a dedication to Oxford, praising him as a poet. He had done the same to Raleigh and Raleigh had replied. It is not, therefore, beyond the bounds of possibility that Oxford also had replied, and had preferred to remain anonymous.

H. S. SHIELD

CROSSWORD COMPETITION. *Solution.*
CLUES ACROSS: 1. Comedy of Errors; 8. Agreement; 9. Bacon; 11. Best man; 12. Usurper; 13. Ruse; 15. Edward E.O.; 19. Reporter; 20. A fit; 23. So to say; 24. Marlowe; 26. Evoke; 27. True vowed; 28. Ideal Shakspeare.
DOWN: 1. Chambers; 2. Meres; 3. Dreams; 4. On eon; 5. Entourage; 6. Rebounds; 7. Rock proof; 10. Nero; 14. Stratford; 16. Derbyites; 17. Apes Vera; 18. Attend ye; 21. Esse; 22. Graves; 24. My Una; 25. On woe
The prize was won by Mrs. H. Hetherington, Springkell, Hindhead, Surrey, to whom we offer our congratulations.

THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

President:

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS, M.A., LL.B. (CANTAB.), J.P.

Vice-Presidents:

T. L. ADAMSON. MISS H. AMPHLETT
MISS K. EGGAR, A.R.A.M. WILLIAM KENT, F.S.A.
DR. JOHN MEZ. SIR JOHN RUSSELL.

Hon. Secretary: MISS G. M. BOWEN,
Flat 3, 65 South Audley Street,
London, W.1.

Assistant Hon. Secretary: MISS N. LOOSELY,
13 Pennard Mansions, London, W.12.

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

Hon. Librarian: MISS R. M. D. WAINWRIGHT,
4 Collingham Road, London, S.W.5.

Joint Hon. Editors of the News-Letter:

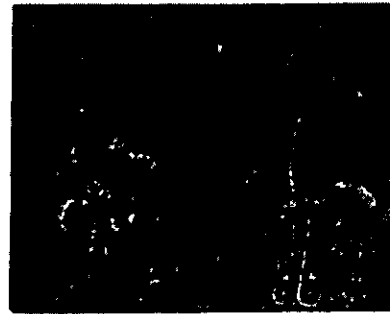
MISS G. M. BOWEN. MISS R. M. D. WAINWRIGHT

Annual Subscription 10/- Life Membership £5

The *News-Letter* appears each Spring and Autumn
Back-numbers (price 6d.) can be obtained from
the Assistant Hon. Secretary.

The Editors will be glad to receive articles not
exceeding 2,000 words, news items, letters, etc., all of
which will be carefully considered.

Contributions for the Autumn issue should be sent
to the Hon. Secretary not later than 1ST JUNE, 1958



Shakespeare's Plays

ON COLOUR FILMSTRIPS

Taken from modern productions including some of the Old Vic. Each strip shows the major scenes of a selected play; lecture notes contain extracts from the text relevant to the scenes illustrated.

RICHARD II
RICHARD III
JULIUS CAESAR

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
AS YOU LIKE IT
HENRY IV, parts I & II

Colour filmstrips, with full notes, price 27/6d. each
(extra copies of notes: 2/6d.). Write for details and
free preview copies to

EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTIONS

East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorkshire

Illustrations:

1. Julius Caesar
2. Midsummer Night's Dream

