

News-Letter

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JUN 6 1945

The SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

— AMERICAN BRANCH —

VOL. I

APRIL-MAY, 1940

NO. 3

Shakespeare's Birthday: The Calendar Argues for Lord Oxford

The birthdays of such men as Shakespeare ought to be kept, in common gratitude and affection, like those of relations whom we love. LEIGH HUNT

Edward de Vere, only son of the 16th Earl of Oxford, was born on April 12th, 1550, at Castle Hedingham in Essex. Through his childhood he was called Lord Bulbeck, the crest of which title displays a lion holding a "shaken" or broken spear. At his father's death in 1562, the twelve year old boy succeeded to the title of 17th Earl of Oxford.

The youthful peer was a brilliant student and, as he grew to manhood, became a patron of the arts, especially of poets, dramatists, actors and musicians. He himself wrote lyric verse, a few examples of which have survived, but he was better known through his middle years as the best writer of comedy and the outstanding practitioner of "the rare devices of poetry." Not one of these dramatic "devices" has survived under his own name, but the belief is growing that many of his "devices" did survive under the pen-name of "William Shakespeare."

As there was a man some fourteen years younger than Edward de Vere living at Stratford-on-Avon — and occasionally in London — bearing a name somewhat similar to the one associated with the dramas, it was long thought, and many still think, that this Stratford native was the author of the greatest of all Elizabethan plays, though there is nothing in his life-record to account for the wide knowledge displayed in those works.

To honor the dramatist, it has been the custom for many years to celebrate the anniversary of the Stratford man's birth, supposed to be April 23rd, though only the christening date of April 26th, 1564, is given for "Gulielmus, sonne to

John Shaksper" in the Stratford church register. As it was then the custom to christen a child when it was about three days old, April 23rd has been arbitrarily fixed as the day to celebrate.

Among those who believe that Edward de Vere was the real author of the plays, there is a desire that his birthday should also be celebrated. When should this be, on the 12th or the 23rd of April?

This question arises because of changes in the old Julian calendar, which was followed in Britain up to 1751, when an act was passed by Parliament equalizing the style with that of the Gregorian calendar used by Continental Europe, for the difference in time reckoning had long been a great inconvenience. It was then enacted that eleven days should be omitted after September 2nd, 1752, so that the ensuing day should be the 14th.

A familiar example to Americans of a change in birthdays necessitated by this correction of the calendar is that of George Washington, who was really born on February 11th, 1732 (old style), but whose anniversary, from the foundation of the Republic, has been celebrated on February 22nd.

In order, then, to conform to the changes in the calendar, the anniversary of the birthday of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, should be celebrated, not on April 12th, but on April 23rd.

It is a curious coincidence that this should be the same date, so long commemorated in honor of William of Stratford; or is it just a "coincidence?" Is there not something more interesting behind it yet to be examined? Was the Stratford man really born on April 23rd, or were the church records tampered with in the same manner that

Shakspeare's will is interlined to make him appear the bosom friend of actors? Was the April 23rd date assigned by those concerned in keeping up the mask of anonymity for the Lord Chamberlain of England, after his death, and yet, paradoxically, wishing the poet-peer to be honored in fact if not in name?

Some of Lord Oxford's surviving relatives were Roman Catholics who are known to have used the reformed or Gregorian calendar followed on the Continent.

Eva Turner Clark

An Unanswered Query and Its Implications

In the English publication, *Notes & Queries*, November 18, 1939, appeared the following:

DE VERE, EARL OF OXFORD, AUTHOR OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

I have recently been reading a book in which the claim is made, and strongly urged, that De Vere was the real author of Shakespeare's plays. The claim seems more plausible, and interesting, than that put forward by the Baconians, and I should be glad to know of any book in which De Vere's claim, and the arguments for it, are subjected to critical analysis.

S.

The weekly periodical, above quoted, has issued twelve numbers which have arrived in New York since the request for information was made, with no sign of a reply, although a succession of replies usually follows insertion of such a query.

The answer is that no such book has been written by a supporter of the Stratford theory. A few, like Professor E. E. Stoll, have written occasional articles filled with nothing but ridicule and diatribe and with every indication that they did not know their subject. That is not "critical analysis"! It is a safe prediction that, when some Stratfordian theorist decides the time has come to make a close study of the De Vere theory for the purpose of writing a "critical analysis," he will find himself succumbing to the evidence that piles higher each day and will end by becoming one of its most ardent supporters!

De Vere's Life In Uncut Hamlet

Maurice Evans' full-length *Hamlet*, which played a six-week's return engagement on Broadway during the early winter is the best embodiment of Oxford-Shakespeare propaganda that any student of the subject could desire.

Evans and his director, the talented Margaret Webster, make plain the autobiographical nature of *Hamlet*, through their retention of the full text. It is really more of a visualized novel than a play, the theme being *frustration*. We feel the impact of personality here so strongly that it becomes plain as daylight that *frustration*, a fated psychological repression, must have been an obsession with the author.

But no such psychological impediment can be shown to have circumscribed the Stratford native's career. "He ran from his master to London," leaving his wife and three small children to shift for themselves, and all of his orthodox biographers claim that from holding horses for theatre patrons he rose like a comet to be the foremost dramatist in history. Not the slightest hint of a frustrating element appears in these doings—real or alleged, as they may be.

But when we turn to the life story of Edward de Vere we find the pale specter of frustration coming between the poet-peer and his announced objectives from earliest youth to "last scenes of all." Not only that, but in his personal letters, protesting against the fate that has prevented him from pursuing a life of honorable action, the Earl time and again uses the exact expressions that ring from the lips of Hamlet when the melancholy aristocrat inveighs against thwarting circumstance.

J. Thomas Looney's chapter on *Hamlet* in "*Shakespeare Identified*" is a brilliant presentation of these parallels, in brief. But the Oxford-Hamlet evidence is so overwhelming and so much additional contemporary testimony has come to light since Mr. Looney first wrote, that an entire book could be devoted to tracing Edward de Vere's reflected image in the play. It is quite as clear as Dickens' personality in *David Copperfield*.

And still pictures from Maurice Evans' full length version of the tragedy could be used to illustrate this autobiographical treatment of the masterpiece.

Only a Smock: But It Covers a Famous Rivalry

There is a curious allusion in *Love's Labour's Lost* which so far as I know has escaped the notice of commentators. It occurs in the fifth act, when Biron and Boyet are brought into sharp opposition and for a few moments hold the center of the stage. One easily reads into these two characters suggestions of Edward Earl of Oxford and Philip Sidney, the two brightest wits of the Court, both sonnet-makers, both ambitious, proud and extravagant (Sidney, killed in the Lowlands in the autumn of 1586, left a burden of debt to his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, and Oxford's father-in-law, the Great Lord Burghley, complained that Oxford had impoverished his children). For years Oxford and Sidney had been pitted against each other in a never quite good-natured rivalry since the time Sidney had been proposed as a husband for Anne Cecil, who had afterward married Oxford. That Sidney was touchy about his inferior rank and his dignity we know, and that the arrogant Oxford had a cutting tongue. The passage in *Love's Labour's Lost* is this, but the whole scene should be read:

Some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany,
Some mumble-news, some trencher-knight,
some Dick

That smiles his cheek in years, and knows the trick

To make my lady laugh when she's disposed,
Told our intents before . . . and might not you

Foretell our sport, to make us thus untrue? . . .

You put our page out: go, you are allowed;
Die when you will, a smock shall be your shroud.

The point is that Sidney had given the Queen as a New Year present a white linen smock worked in black silk as the fashion then was. Oxford had given her jewels. When the play was first performed in the late 1570's or early 1580's, the allusion would have been understood perfectly and it would have drawn smiles from a merry Court audience.

If this is so taken, it throws light upon the date of the early version of the play, for after Sidney's death and solemn funeral in London, February 16, 1587, such a hit would have been in the worst possible taste and would not have been well received. There is a psychological moment even for a bitter jest. As Boyet (Sidney) says of Biron (Oxford): 'Every jest but a word.' The word was 'smock.' *Margaret L. Knapp*

Lecture on Pictorial Evidence at Club Founded by H. H. Furness

I spent a delightful afternoon with Horace Furness yesterday, and we personally agreed that we did not want to know any more about Shakespeare than we did at present, that on the whole it would be more agreeable to know nothing about him except his books.

S. Weir Mitchell: *Life and Letters.*

On February 2nd, Charles Wisner Barrell delivered an illustrated talk on his scientific dissection of the Ashbourne portrait of "Shakespeare" before the Hathaway Shakespeare Club at the Hotel Bellevue-Stratford in Philadelphia.

Despite one of the worst storms of the winter, a good-sized audience was on hand. Mr. Barrell used twenty-six stereopticon slides, made from his original X-ray and infra-red plates.

Although the Hathaway Shakespeare Club was organized under the auspices of that unquestioning

Stratfordian authority, Dr. H. H. Furness, editor of the great Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, the present-day members view with equanimity the possibility that Lord Oxford may be the real author of the plays.

Many interesting questions were asked at the conclusion of Mr. Barrell's talk. The pictures were pronounced of unique and thrilling quality. A half-column interview with Mr. Barrell appeared in *The Philadelphia Bulletin* for February 3rd and other papers gave space to the facts brought out in the lecture.

Who Was Shakespeare?

The Editors of the NEWS-LETTER take pleasure in reprinting the following editorial from the January 26, 1940 issue of *The Argonaut of San Francisco, California*. This sixty-four-year-old weekly has been staunchly Stratfordian in its editorial point of view up to recent years. But as the Oxfordian evidence of the authorship of the plays has increased in weight and graphic clarity, the foremost weekly journal of the Pacific Coast has become frankly hospitable to the new order of Shakespearean research.

It will hardly be denied by any competent person today that there is a Shakespeare problem. For years there has been a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with the orthodox solution, which is, of course, that the plays and poems that are attributed to William Shakespeare were written by a man born in Stratford-on-Avon who left home at an early age to go to London, where he was supposed to have become a prominent man in theatrical circles. This man's name appears to have been spelt by himself "Shakspere," though the name attached to the works is spelt "Shakespeare." This discrepancy in spelling does not mean much in itself, for surnames in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth were spelt variously, even by those who bore them. For instance, there were forty or more different ways of spelling the name of Sir Walter Raleigh, and he himself employed not less than half a dozen of them. It used to be contended that Lord Bacon must have been the author of the Shakespearean works on the ground that the Stratford man was so illiterate that he did not know how to spell his own name, but this argument fell flat when it was found that Bacon himself once spelt his name Bakon. Of course this was only one of the Baconian arguments, but none of these have stood up very well under scrutiny. Lord Bacon wrote verse, but it is verse as poor as Shakespeare's is fine; the prose style of Bacon is very different from the prose style of Shakespeare; the plays must have been written by a man thoroughly conversant with the usages of the theatre, and there is no reason for supposing that Bacon was conversant with them. Besides Bacon was too active in other fields, and even in the field of literature, to have found time to write the great body of the Shakespearean work. More and more the Baconians have based their credence on alleged ciphers, but these too have come to wear a shabbier and shabbier look the more they have been investigated.

A new light on the Shakespearean problems was thrown, however, by a book written about twenty years ago by an Englishman named J. Thomas Looney, entitled *Shakespeare Identified*, who maintained that the real author was Edward De Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, a book buttressed by much learning. Lord Oxford, it became quite evident from reading this book (we must admit that we read it only recently), was a man who has been spitefully used by history. He was a man of distinction in his day, but his name was scarcely mentioned in our time before the appearance of Mr. Looney's book. Oddly enough, though none of his plays are commonly supposed to have come down to us, Francis Meres, one of his contemporaries, places him, in his *Palladis Tamia*, at the head of the list of English writers of comedy in his day. Mr. Looney maintains that both the Shakespearean comedies and tragedies are Lord Oxford's, and he shows that the greater part of the evidence that we possess bears every indication of supporting his contention. Lord Oxford was a true poet, as such specimens of his poetry as have come down to us reveal; he employed in his verse a Shakespearean measure; he was a patron of the theatre, having a company of his own, known as "the Oxford Boys," on the road; he even went on the stage himself; he was a friend and patron of the English writers of his time. Furthermore, all that we read in the Shakespearean Sonnets fits the man, and apparently it fits nobody else. Certainly it is almost, if not quite, impossible to marry any of the circumstances of the Stratford man's life to the exigencies of this verse. Mr. Looney has not completely dissipated the great Shakespearean mystery, and perhaps it is not destined to be completely dissipated; but he has done more than any other towards this end; and we frankly admit that he has convinced us that Lord Oxford was the real Shakespeare.

Mr. Charles Wisner Barrell has come to the support of Mr. Looney, in a remarkable article that appears in the January issue of the *Scientific American*. In this article the author attempts to show that science, in the shape of infra-red photography and the X-ray, has brought to the light the real man in a series of paintings that are said to be of Shakespeare. Into this article we do not

propose to enter for the purpose of discussion. But it is an article that is certain to be widely read, and it may bring conviction to many who have not read Looney's book. It will most assuredly go far to confirm the impression that that book has made.

We often hear it said: What does it matter who wrote Shakespeare's works, as long as we have the works themselves? Well, it matters very

much to a sensitive person, for a sensitive person desires to give credit where credit is due. Ever since the individual *qua* individual was born back in Ancient Greece, men have desired to know the names of all authors of great works of literature and art. It is a healthy instinct. Communists may profess to deride it, but no person who believes in the worth of the individual will be found amongst their number.

Edward de Vere: Accepting Him as Author of Shakespeare

By ALFRED A. FURMAN

AUTHOR'S NOTE:—The poem entitled "Edward de Vere" was written to celebrate the discovery of the actual authorship of the Shakespeare plays. The first book that challenged popular opinion on that subject was written by Herbert Lawrence and appeared in London in 1769 under the title of "Common Sense". My brother, Philip Howard Furman, possessed a copy of that volume, and, startled by its revolutionary contents, he sent it to a New York auction house in March, 1916, inserting in the catalogue of the sale a descriptive note of the matter. The item was purchased by a Shakespearean collector of Chicago who paid for it the sum of \$1,825. In the 170 years that have elapsed since this "Common Sense" was published a host of authors has appeared, deriding the popular opinion in regard to the authorship. The last and most convincing work was "Shakespeare Identified" from the pen of J. Thomas Looney, London, 1920. Its conclusions have been rigidly investigated by Charles Wisner Barrell who subjected three ancient traditional life paintings of "William Shakespeare" to analysis with X-rays and infra-red photography. Beneath the portrait of the Stratford claimant, he found the portrait of Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford. The long trail was ended.

For years we read his plays, in comedies
Delightful and in tragedy supreme,
But never was the poet truly known.
We saw in all his lines a master mind,
One who had read the secrets of the heart
Versed in the schools of old philosophy
Who from the wells of history drank deep.
A man he was who mingled with the great,
Led ladies proud and fair to whirl in dance
Upon the waxen floor. In many a tongue
Present and past, he read and spoke at will
Giving unto the world in measure full
The riches of his mind. Disdaining fame
He dwelt apart, in secret wooed the Muse.
Guarding his name behind a *nom-de-plume*.
He had resolved to go into the grave
Unknown for his great work, and let the crown
Rest on another's brow. For decades long
Men were content with his decision strange,

But ever and anon a voice would rise
To question such a sacrifice. Was it right
So great a monument of genius be inscribed
With a false name, bewildering the age
And leave in blank despair its worshippers?
One who had occupied a teacher's chair
Said "I will seek and tear the mask away
To show the world that lord of poetry."
He studied with a zeal that brooked no power
To break or bend his will. And now the waif
Laid on the doorstep of posterity
To live unknown or be by fairies saved,
Has come at last to his inheritance.
In proud humility he cast away
The finest treasures now brought home to stay.
Give me your hand, Edward,
Give me your hand;
Long were we groping in the dark, Edward,
But now we understand.

NEWS-LETTER
THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP
AMERICAN BRANCH

VOLUME I APRIL - MAY, 1940 NUMBER 3

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Occasional meetings of the American Branch will be held, for which special notices will be sent to members. Dues for membership in the American Branch are \$2.50 a year, which sum includes one year's subscription to the NEWS-LETTER.

The officers of the American Branch will act as an editorial board for the publication of the NEWS-LETTER, which will appear every other month, or six times a year.

News items, comments by readers and articles of interest to all students of Shakespeare and of the acknowledged mystery that surrounds the authorship of the plays and poems, are desired. Such material must be of reasonable brevity. No compensation can be made to writers beyond the sincere thanks of the Editorial Board. Articles and letters will express the opinions of their authors, not necessarily of the editors. They may be sent to Charles Wisner Barrell, 17 East 48th Street, New York, N. Y.

VETERAN BACONIAN
JOINS FELLOWSHIP

Mr. Philip Van Valkenburg of Baldwin, Long Island, for many years one of the most active American proponents of the Baconian theory, has joined The Shakespeare Fellowship and has become an enthusiastic student of the Oxford case.

Mr. Van Valkenburg is of direct Knickerbocker Dutch ancestry. Well-informed and widely-traveled, some of his most interesting anecdotes concern his adventures while participating in the exploration of an ancient underground stone chamber on the former country estate of Sir Francis Bacon. The search was being made for the presumed "lost manuscript" of a play on Henry VII which Baconians then believed Sir Francis to have written.

CRIME IMITATES FICTION

*Mysterious Theft of Shakespeare's First Folio
from Williams College Library*

Notice is being served on librarians, book-sellers and all others concerned with rare books to be on their guard for the appearance of a First Folio Shakespeare stolen from the Chapin Library at Williams College, Williamstown, Mass. Early last month a visitor secured permission to examine some of the library's choicest books by using a forged letter of introduction from the president of another New England college. The stranger went under the interesting name of Sinclair Gillingham and pretended that he was engaged in Shakespeare research. After the Chapin's Four Folios were shown him he produced a list of other titles that he wanted to see. While the custodian's back was turned he placed the First Folio in a briefcase he was carrying and inserted in its place in the slipcase a volume of Goethe.

Public institutions which do not employ guards to protect their treasures should be warned against the technique used by the intruder at the Chapin Library. The probability of its recurrence, however, is pretty slim. Of the two hundred odd known Shakespeare First Folios this seems to be the first instance of one having been stolen. To be sure, a Third Folio was lost during the last war, on its way from England to America. The victim, Gabriel Wells, has never been sure whether it was thrown overboard and drowned or taken ashore by a ship's porter. At any rate, it was never recovered.

But if the theft of the Chapin Folio is unique, the planning of it was not original. It is altogether conceivable that the crime was suggested by a romantic mystery story by Joseph C. Lincoln and his son, Freeman Lincoln, "The Ownley Inn," published last Summer. It concerns the theft of a New England Primer from a rare book room in a public institution. Here, too, the thief adopted the ruse of a false letter of introduction and substituted another book before making his escape. In the Lincoln yarn the impostor planned to sell the tiny volume to a none too scrupulous connoisseur. He never succeeded, and after a series of violent encounters and hairbreadth escapes the Primer was ultimately recovered.

Philip Brooks

Mountainous Error

*What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heapt
For truth's o'er-peer.*

Coriolanus, II, 3, 111.

In a peevish mood, Henry Ford once declared: "History is bunk!"

We do not have to agree whole-heartedly with this conclusion to point out that many important events and personalities of the past have been smothered in errors. Prejudice, faulty information, the misreading of scantily compiled documentation, snap judgment and the suppression of opponents' evidence by interested scribes and political partisans, have certainly resulted in the compilation of many false and distorted historical panoramas and individual portraits from the past. For example:

Uncounted millions hold the firm belief, based upon Shakespeare's characterization of Richard III, that the last of the Plantagenet kings was a hell-hound of fiendish mind and grotesquely deformed body who deliberately murdered everybody who stood in his way, and after trampling on human rights and sacred decencies, met the well-deserved fate of a proven criminal at Bosworth Field.

Carried away by the emotional impact of a melodrama written to justify the political objectives of the House of Tudor—Richard's immediate successors—Shakespeare's readers have mistaken lurid political propaganda for attested fact.

Sir George Buc, who wrote a comprehensive biography of Richard III in the early years of the 17th century, gives him a far different and thoroughly human character. It appears that "crook-back'd Dick" was not a hunch-back at all. He was small of stature and slim of waist and his determination to wield as heavy a battle-axe as his giant brother, Edward IV, resulted in one of his shoulders developing a bit higher than the other. Instead of being a venomous and saturnine mask, his face displayed both intellectuality and approachability. Even his bitterest contemporary opponents freely admit that Richard had the best brains and the broadest outlook of any of his Plantagenet brothers. During the brief years of his reign, he directed the enactment of more laws for the protection of the rights of the common

citizen and the dispensing of impartial justice than any English monarch before him in a like period. As Sir Francis Bacon expresses it: "He was jealous of the honor of the English nation, and likewise a good law-maker for the ease and solace of the common people."

(Note here the difference between Bacon's estimate and Shakespeare's.)

Lord Campbell in his *Lives of the Chancellors*, after reviewing the acts of the one parliament of Richard III, declares:

"We have no difficulty in pronouncing it the most meritorious national council for protecting the liberty of the subject, and putting down abuses in the administration of justice, which had sat since the time of Edward I." (Nearly two centuries earlier.)

One of the most thrilling and best documented historical novels of our times is Patrick Carleton's study of Richard III, *Under the Hog*. The title refers to Richard's cognizance, the silver boar. Based upon Sir George Buc's biography and a thorough study of contemporary affairs, Carleton's work is an excellent example of dramatized history as opposed to Shakespeare's partisan exaggeration. Read in conjunction with the play, conviction grows that the latter was political propaganda, designed to discredit any lingering sentiments for the House of York.

E. M. Tenison, editor of the great folio series, *Elizabethan England*, has uncovered a number of outstanding historical misconceptions in the course of her monumental task. One of these concerns so fundamental an issue as the composition of the military branch of Elizabeth's service.

"Posterity," writes Miss Tenison, "has often mistaken 'vain rumours' for reliable evidence, and has placed overmuch reliance upon retrospective writers who have judged the Elizabethan Army without ascertaining its Laws and Ordinances, or of exactly what and whom it was composed.

"We have all been educated to think that though Queen Elizabeth had a Navy she had no Army worthy of our serious consideration. When we study the secret reports of King Philip's spies

we shall be better able to do justice to our own countrymen. But even Sir John Fortescue, in his great *History of the British Army*, never dreamt of questioning the accepted pronouncement that the Elizabethan land forces were so lacking in dignity and discipline that (with a few exceptions such as the Veres) 'gentlemen' held aloof. The present writer tardily convinced him of the contrary, by showing him the name of Francis Fortescue, his direct ancestor, in an unpublished list of some seven hundred 'Voluntary Gentlemen of the Horse' mustered at the Hague under the Earl of Essex in 1585-6. Also by introducing him to the Earl of Leicester's *Laws and Ordinances of War*, the existence of which had remained unknown to our historians.

"Sir John's death, prior to the publication of *Elizabethan England*, prevented his repairing the unintended but deplorable injustices to the Elizabethans, perpetrated both in his *History* and in the chapter he contributed on 'The Army' in *Shakespeare's England*. He was, however, converted to the need for such atonement."

Some years ago the *Connoisseur Magazine*, which specializes in material relating to antique art, published the rather amazing information that the best known "portrait" of Elizabeth of York, Henry VII's Queen, is really a painting of Barbara Yelverton, a Court lady in waiting. This same mis-identified likeness has been utilized for generations to illustrate biographies, histories and officially-approved school books. It has even served as copy for an expensive stained glass memorial window to the first Tudor Queen!

Moreover, for at least a hundred years, a life study of the unfortunate Arabella Stewart, cousin of James I, was catalogued in the collection of portraits at Hampton Court Palace as "Queen Elizabeth." It has been reproduced under the same wrong conception in various works, including Frederick Chamberlin's *Private Character of Queen Elizabeth*.

Officials of the National Portrait Gallery in London inform me that for a long time a portrait of Henry de Vere 18th Earl of Oxford was publicly displayed there, designated as "Frederick, King of Bohemia." It was not until Sir Lionel Cust or some other equally thorough investigator took the pains to compare the picture with other inscribed portraits of De Vere at Welbeck Abbey and elsewhere that the error was discovered and rectified.

This painting of the 18th Earl of Oxford is also of interest in being a fine example of the work of Cornelius Johnson — mis-called "Janssen" — to whom one of the oldest and most interesting portraits of "Mr. William Shakespeare" is attributed, (though, as a matter of fact, this attribution is entirely erroneous). My infra-red dissections of the "Janssen" "Shakespeare" have disclosed the monogram of another and earlier artist beneath the present surface of the picture.

So errors in the identification, characterization and judgment of men, women and events of the past have flourished.

Is it not possible that mountainous error also obscures the true personality of the Bard of Avon, despite the asseverations of his "official" biographers and the commercially-minded clique that rallies about the dubious "birthplace" and other catch-penny exhibits in Warwickshire?

Charles Wisner Barrell

BURT OF BOSTON AND THE GLOBE

Prof. F. Allen Burt of Boston University, who published an interesting feature article on Edward de Vere in the *Boston Herald* during 1938, has joined THE FELLOWSHIP. Prof. Burt lectures on advertising and publicity at Boston. We consider him a valuable acquisition.

It is an interesting coincidence that part of the land upon which the Globe Theatre was built in 1599 in Southwark was purchased from one Thomas Burt, a dyer. We should like to think that Prof. Burt is a descendant of this Elizabethan who had dealings with the principals behind the Globe land transfer and also undoubtedly "saw Shakespeare plain."

COMMENDATION FROM LORD TWEEDSMUIR

One of the last letters written and signed by the late and sincerely lamented Governor-General of Canada was in acknowledgment of a friend's copy of the *January Scientific American*. John Buchan Lord Tweedsmuir stated in this note that he had read the article on the pictorial evidence that Oxford was the original of the "Shakespeare portrait with very great interest," and asked that his personal thanks for the pleasure he had taken in the matter be conveyed to Mr. Barrell, the author.

The Date of Hamlet's Composition

The commonly accepted Shakespeare chronology places in 1600 or 1601 the writing of *Hamlet*, which was entered on the Stationers' Register July 26, 1602. In 1603 a pirated version known as the First Quarto was printed and in 1604 appeared a version known as the Second Quarto, much longer than Q1. In 1623 the play was printed in the First Folio.

In *The Problem of Hamlet* (London, 1936), Professor A. S. Cairncross, M. A., D. Litt., has established the fact of a much earlier writing of the Shakespeare *Hamlet* than is accepted by other Stratfordians, that it is in fact the early "lost *Hamlet*" sometimes called the *Ur-Hamlet* attributed to Kyd, but we shall show that this play must be placed still earlier than Dr. Cairncross' suggested dates of 1588-9. It appears from allusions in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* and *Bartholomew Fair* that this play (the old *Hamlet*) must have been written about 1584. It was one of the most popular plays of its day with the theatre-going public.

A threatened invasion of England by King Philip of Spain had kept the English population in a stir of anxiety for several years before the appearance of the "Invincible Armada," so the apparent allusions to preparations for the expected attack of 1588 are equally applicable to an earlier year.

The lines of Polonius (*Hamlet*, II. 2. 417):

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited; Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light,

are a clear burlesque of certain passages in Philip Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetrie*.

Although the *Apologie* was not printed until 1595, nearly ten years after Sidney's death, it is believed to have been written not later than 1581, as it was intended as a reply to Stephen Gosson's *The Schoole of Abuse* and *An Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse* (dedicated to Sidney, though he was not pleased by that fact), both printed in 1579. The custom of passing manuscripts about among friends and writers, common in England at the time, especially with courtiers who thus observed the convention that their writings were

not intended for publication, made it possible for Sidney's work to be known long before it was published.

The following excerpts from Sidney's book indicate the passages parodied by the *Hamlet* lines quoted above:

The most notable [poets] bee the *Heroick*, *Lirick*, *Tragick*, *Comick*, *Satirick*, *Iambick*, *Elegiack*, *Pastorall*, and certaine others. . . . Now in his parts, kindes, or *Species*, (as you list to terme them) it is to be noted, that some Poesies haue coupled together two or three kindes, as Tragickall and Comickall, wherevpon is risen, the Tragi-comickall. Some in like manner haue mingled Prose and Verse, as *Sanazzar* and *Boetius*. Some haue mingled matters Heroickall and Pastorall. But that commeth all to one in this question, for if seuered they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtfull. Therefore perchance forgetting some, and leauing some as needlesse to be remembered, it shall not be amisse in a worde to cite the speciall kindes, to see what faults may be found in the right vse of them.

While Sidney is writing about poets and poetry, the dramatist applies his analysis to actors and their way of declaiming poetry on the stage. Sidney's approval of Comedy and Tragedy is summed up in the following lines:

So that the right vse of Comedy will (I thinke) by no body be blamed, and much lesse of the high and excellent Tragedy, that openeth the greatest wounds, and sheweth forth the Vicers, that are couered with Tissue: that maketh Kinges feare to be Tyrants, and Tyrants manifest their tyrannical humors: that without sturring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the vncertainty of this world, and vpon how weak foundations guidlen roofes are builded.

In preceding pages, Sidney goes deeply into the subjects of Tragedy and Comedy and comments on the works of Seneca and Plautus, but space forbids us to give more than his conclusion. His approval of these forms of drama is echoed in the *Hamlet* line, "Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light." Seneca's blood-curdling

tragedies had a revival in Italy in the early part of the sixteenth century and Elizabethan dramatists followed them as models in writing tragedies, just as many of them followed Plautus in their comedies.

Sidney's tragic death in Flushing in 1586 made him a national hero and no one after that year would have dreamed of caricaturing him or his writings, yet the lines of Polonius are clearly a take-off of the quoted part of Sidney's *Apologie*. Only one conclusion can be drawn from this evidence and that is that *Hamlet* was written while Sidney was living, even before he went to the Low Countries, probably about 1583 or 1584, a time confirmed by other allusions.

Translation of Portrait Article to be Published in the Lowlands

Permission has been given Charles Boissevain, international journalist residing in Geneva, Switzerland, to translate "Identifying 'Shakespeare' With X-Rays and Infra-Red Photography" into the Dutch language for publication in one of the leading reviews of Holland.

Monsieur Boissevain has been a member of THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP of London for some years and was the first resident of Continental Europe to join our American Branch. He reports a small but actively interested group of Oxfordians in the Netherlands.

The fact that Mr. Barrell's investigation has shown the original painter of the Ashbourne Oxford-"Shakespeare" portrait to be the great 16th century Dutch master, Cornelius Ketel, will arouse particular interest in Holland, despite wars and rumors of wars, in Monsieur Boissevain's opinion.

There is a particularly strong historical link between the Shakespearean Age of England and the rise of the Lowlands as an independent nation. Both George Chapman and Ben Jonson, the dramatists, fought with the English allies of the Dutch against Spanish tyranny. Several Dutch and Flemish painters took refuge in England when their homelands were laid waste. Ketel was one of the most famous of these. There is a contemporary record of his having painted Lord Oxford's portrait.

The Earl of Oxford himself visited the Lowlands on at least two known occasions — in 1574

In 1584, Shakspeare of Stratford was a youth of twenty and it would be rather absurd to suppose that he could have written the wonderful play of *Hamlet* at that early age. Besides, many of the Shakespeare plays can be shown to have preceded it, when Will the butcher's apprentice was younger still.

Edward de Vere Earl of Oxford, was recognized by literary critics of the 1580's as the best dramatist of his period and to him must be assigned the authorship. Furthermore, such burlesques of Sidney's writing (and there are others in other Shakespearean plays) serve to explain the literary rivalry said to have existed between the two young courtiers during their early thirties.

Eva Turner Clark

and 1585 — and as his favorite cousins, Sir Francis and Sir Horatio Vere were both commanding generals of the English expeditionary forces in Holland and Flanders during long periods, while Oxford was in receipt of a pension from the English Crown which is docketed under secret service terms in the Exchequer accounts, it can be taken for granted that the Earl knew the Lowlands through other and unreported visits. During the 1590's more than one of his personal letters to his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Cecil, refer to his "fortune" having led him "far away" from the environs of the English Court. Finally, his son and heir, Henry de Vere, 18th Earl of Oxford, died while on military duty with the Dutch in 1625.

It is also a notable "coincidence" in this connection that an undocumented tradition has long persisted to the effect that "William Shakespeare" himself had visited the Lowlands.

In any event, the Dutch people regard the Bard with the same familiar affection accorded to their own native geniuses.

The only contemporary drawing of the interior of a Shakespearean theatre that is known to exist is the sketch of the Swan Theatre in Southwark, as it appeared to the Dutch traveler, Johannes De Witt, in the autumn of 1596. This is reproduced in Mrs. Eva Turner Clark's book, *The Man Who Was Shakespeare*. Mrs. Clark makes clear the fact that the stage scene depicted in Canon De Witt's drawing is the one between Malvolio, Maria and Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Act III.

Authorship Mystery Classic Available

A shipment of J. Thomas Looney's masterpiece, "*Shakespeare Identified In Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*" has arrived in this country. Copies may be had by members of The Fellowship at the special price of \$4.10, postpaid. To non-members the price is \$5.10, postpaid.

This is the book that has revolutionized thought regarding the much-debated question of the real creative personality behind the works of "Mr. William Shakespeare."

John Galsworthy, the novelist, helped distribute it. Dr. Sigmund Freud was convinced by its arguments. Sir Geoffrey Callender, historian of the Elizabethan Navy, was enthralled by its revelations. Dr. Frederic Taber Cooper, Carolyn Wells, the late Oliver Herford, and many other distinguished American writers and scholars have found this untenable.

The New York Times, The New York Sun, The Cleveland Plain Dealer and The San Francisco Argonaut are four of many independent journals that admit its importance.

Only the self-satisfied "orthodox" brethren of the Stratfordian persuasion — fearful that harm may result to their recognized commercial interest in the myths that center in Stratford-on-Avon — have refused to have anything to do with the Looney classic. Literary detection of this realistic type is taboo in "authoritative" Shakespearean circles.

Copies of "*Shakespeare Identified*" are now difficult to secure in this country, the American edition of 1920 being entirely out of print and the plates destroyed.

Our present shipment comprises about fifty copies of the original English edition. The volume will be quoted by rare book dealers at a substantial increase within the near future. Do not delay, but get your order in while the book is still available at the \$4.10 price.

Send checks or postal money orders to C. W. Barrell, Secretary of THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP, 17 East 48th Street, New York City.

OTHER OXFORDIAN ITEMS

Students of the authorship problem may still obtain copies of Percy Allen's *Life Story of Edward de Vere as "William Shakespeare"* at \$2.10 postpaid in the U. S. and Canada.

Mrs. Eva Turner Clark's comprehensive narrative, *The Man Who Was Shakespeare*, may be ordered through The Fellowship or direct from the publisher, Richard R. Smith, 120 East 39th Street, New York City, at \$3.50, postpaid.

Elizabethan Mystery Man: A Digest of Evidence Connecting Edward de Vere 17th Earl of Oxford With the Literary Activities of "Mr. William Shakespeare," the pamphlet written by Charles Wisner Barrell as a general introduction to the new authorship theory, can also be ordered through The Fellowship. Price 25 cents a copy or \$1.00 for five copies, postpaid.

The January number of Scientific American, containing Mr. Barrell's important contribution to the solution of the Oxford-Shakespeare case, "Identifying 'Shakespeare' With X-Rays and Infra-Red Photography," is available through The Circulation Manager, Scientific American, 24 West 40th Street, New York City. Copies of the magazine featuring in graphic detail the fascinating story of the discovery of Lord Oxford's disguised personality behind the camouflage of the Ashbourne painting may be had for 35 cents each, postpaid. Special rates for bulk orders.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN FOLLOW-UP

The May issue of Scientific American will contain a thorough editorial summary of the general reactions of readers and public commentators to Mr. Barrell's X-ray and infra-red revelations. The inability or disinclination of Stratfordian "authorities" to offer specific rebuttal to the arguments so vividly presented by Mr. Barrell and his technical associates has been one of the significant circumstances noted by the Scientific American editors, as well as the editors of the Associated Press, who handled the news feature release of the discoveries.

An X-ray photograph of the Ashbourne "Shakespeare" head which was crowded out of the January issue of the magazine will be used to illustrate the editorial comments in the May number. This dissection plate provides striking additional evidence of the fact that "Shakespeare's" features are merely over-painted variations of physical characteristics borne by Lord Oxford in his inscribed portraits.

Oxford's Wide Knowledge of Music Reflected in "Shakespeare's" Plays

Mention was made in our February number of the fact that the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York had recently performed three pieces by the Elizabethan composer, William Byrd, among them being "The Earle of Oxford's March."

Byrd's pieces were taken from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book by Gordon Jacob, professor of composition, conducting, and orchestration at the Royal College of Music in London, who arranged them for the orchestra.

A manuscript collection, known as "My Ladye Nevells Booke," which is said to have preserved "The Earle of Oxford's March," was printed for the first time in 1926 (Curwen, London), under the editorship of Miss Hilda Andrews.

Miss Katharine Eggar published an interesting article on this composition of William Byrd in *The Musical Times* (London, Jan. 1, 1929), in which she gives it a longer title, "The Earle of Oxfordes Marche before the Battell."

GOOD AND WELFARE

Membership in The Fellowship is rapidly approaching the century mark.

Our roster now includes the libraries of Harvard, Rollins College, the University of Pennsylvania, Yale and Holyoke, Mass., as well as the names of many distinguished scholars, writers, attorneys, editors and Shakespearean students.

William Kent, author of *London Worthies*, a who's who of the English metropolis from ancient times to the present, and editor of *An Encyclopaedia of London*, has joined the American Branch. Mr. Kent is a keen and fearless exponent of the Oxford theory. Under the section entitled Shakespeare in his *London Worthies*, he devotes two full columns to the career of Edward de Vere, who is described as "plausibly regarded by an increasing number as sharing with Bacon the credit for the Shakespeare plays." But, incidentally, Mr. Kent neglects to include Bacon's own biography under the Shakespeare heading.

MISS BOOK OF INDIANA

While the American Branch of The Fellowship numbers among its members residents of four different countries and twenty states of the Union,

What seems to be an allusion to this very composition is found in Henry V (I. 1. 44):

List his discourse of war, and you shall hear
A fearful battle render'd you in music.

Or did these lines in the patriotic play of *Henry V* give to William Byrd the inspiration to compose the "Marche before the Battell"?

In dedicating *The First Set of English Madrigals* (1599) to Lord Oxford, the famous Irish composer, John Farmer, said:

"For without flattery be it spoke, those that know your Lordship know this, that using this science as a recreation, your Lordship have overcome most of them that make it a profession."

Such technical knowledge was in the mind of the author of the Shakespeare plays, for only a well-trained musician could have introduced into them the many references to music in all its forms, and especially where they are technically designed to heighten stage effects.

Indiana leads all other sections in proportion to population on our current roster. This is very largely due to the efforts of Miss Lois Adelaide Book of Columbus in that state, an Oxfordian who knows the art of translating conviction into action. Many individuals admit the great interest and revolutionary import of the evidence that shows Oxford as the long-sought answer to the "Shakespeare mystery." Miss Book is one who takes active part in building the only kind of dues-paying membership for The Fellowship that will guarantee our ability to "do something about it."

FIRST FOLIO HUNT TURNS TO ENGLAND

Springfield, Mass., March 12 (A. P.).—Investigation of the theft last month of a \$30,000 first folio of Shakespeare belonging to the Williams College Library turned today to England, and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were called into the case. John F. Horgan, a State detective, said that he had proof that three men were involved in the theft, but gave no indication as to why search for the valuable volume had turned to Britain.