

# News-Letter

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## Is Not Oxford Here Another Anchor?

*Who smirched thus and mired with infamy,  
I might have said, No part of it is mine;  
This shame derives itself from unknown loins.*  
Much Ado About Nothing, IV. 1. 132

Interesting indeed is that detail in the Nazi plan for the conquest of Britain which envisions the taking over and "rehabilitation" of Shakespeare as a true German poet who had the misfortune to be born outside the Third Reich.

The apostles of destruction have generously agreed to spare the Bard. Whether this means that Stratford-on-Avon is not to be bombed is not clear at this writing.

An April 24th wireless dispatch from Berlin to The New York Times reads as follows:

The works of William Shakespeare will survive the present war without having to undergo the disgrace of being identified by the Germans with present-day England. The German Shakespeare Association has decided that "Shakespeare was no spiritual companion of present-day British plutocracy," so his works can continue to be identified with the German spirit.

Professor Wolfgang Keller also proved to the satisfaction of a meeting of the association here that Shakespeare was no friend of the French. Several of his plays, Professor Keller declared, show that Shakespeare regarded the French as "false, big-mouthed, frivolous and tricky—in short, he did not like them."

Keller appears to have combed *King John* and the *Henry Sixth* plays for anti-French sentiments.

It is notable, on the other hand, that he ignores the final scene in *The Life of Henry Fifth* wherein we find expressed the fervent hope—now fulfilled—that the contending kingdoms

Of France and England, whose very shores  
look pale

With envy of each other's happiness,  
May cease their hatred, and this dear conjunc-  
tion

Plant neighborhood and Christian-like accord  
In their sweet bosoms, that never war advance  
His bleeding sword 'twixt England and fair  
France.

So be there 'twixt your kingdoms such a  
spousal,

That never may ill office or fell jealousy,  
Which troubles oft the bed of blessed mar-  
riage

Thrust in between the paction of these king-  
doms,

To make divorce of their incorporate league;  
That English may as French, French English-  
men,

Receive each other. God speak this Amen!

We search the plays in vain for any speech by a Shakespearean character expressing similar hopes for a permanent alliance between England and Germany. Only one of the plays—the sombre *Measure for Measure*—is given a Germanic setting, the stage locale being labelled "Vienna," though the coloring and characterization throughout is that of Elizabethan England.

Mr. George Frisbee of San Francisco has pointed out that the author of *Hamlet* had some colloquial knowledge of the German language, as hinted in the early dialogue between King Claudius and the melancholy Prince. With oily heartiness the usurper says:

"But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son"  
and Hamlet mutters in an aside:

"A little more than kin, and less than kind."

The word *kind* here certainly expresses the purely Teutonic meaning of *child* as well as the English meaning of *natural* and *humane*. Shakespeare would never miss an opportunity to put over a pun as obvious as this one.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* mention is made of a German "Duke" who has entered England secretly and, with his rascally suite, is swindling the tavern-keepers of Reading, of Maidenhead and of Colebrook out of post-horses and other accommodations.

Doctor Caius, the excitable Gallic physician in the comedy, refuses to accept this Elizabethan forerunner of the Nazi "Fifth Column" at face value:

"I cannot tell vat is dat; but it is tell-a-me, dat you make grand preparation for a Duke de Jamanie; by my trot, der is no Duke that the Court is know, to come; I tell you for good will: adieu."

Whereupon, mine host of the Garter, realizing that he has been victimized by his easy acceptance of the slogan, "*Germans are honest men*," runs forth into the night shouting:

"Hue and cry, villain, go! Assist me, Knight, I am undone; fly, run! Hue and cry, villain, I am undone!"

This "Duke de Jamanie" has been identified by Sir E. K. Chambers and others as the Duke of Württemberg, formerly Count of Mömpelgart, who visited England from August 9 to September 5, 1592. Mömpelgart was received at Windsor by Queen Elizabeth and, on his own initiative, pressed for the privilege of investment with the Order of the Garter.

During his tour of England, the German and his suite were delayed at Oxford, says Chambers, "because his post-horses were worn out, and could not be replaced, even at double the normal cost." It is also stated that he misused a warrant for securing post-horses to the chagrin of certain innkeepers, such as mine host in *The Merry Wives*.

The Teutonic "nobleman" did not, however, achieve his wistful desire to be a Knight of the Order of the Garter until April 23, 1597, when he was installed by proxy *in absentia*.

Dr. A. S. Cairncross in *The Problem of Hamlet* very logically concludes that both Chambers and

Prof. Leslie Hotson are wrong in assuming that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written after the German Duke became a Knight of the Garter. The proper time to have rapped this pushful boor would have been immediately following his invasion of England in 1592, when his exploits were being currently discussed — rather than five years later when the Queen had finally honored the Teuton with England's most coveted decoration.

The author of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* possessed an intimate knowledge of the village of Windsor with its castle, its Chapel of St. George, royal preserves, Garter Inn and general topographical features, as Maynard Dixon, historian of the famous borough, has shown in convincing detail.

It is impossible to place the shadowy William of Stratford in Windsor through any known documentation.

But one of the most interesting papers written by Mr. J. Thomas Looney in support of his main arguments to prove that Edward de Vere Earl of Oxford was the real creator of the comedy brings out the fact that Oxford was familiar with the environs of Windsor from early youth. We even have a contemporary sketch of him at the age of twenty-two, carrying the Sword of State before the Queen during a royal procession on its way to St. George's Chapel, June 18, 1572, the occasion being the installation of the French Duc de Montmorenci as a Knight of the Garter.

At this same period Oxford was known to be Elizabeth's favorite entertainer, putting on shows and pageants for the Queen's delectation.

And if, as Dr. Cairncross, Prof. T. W. Baldwin and others opine, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was produced as a part of the colorful Garter festival of April 23, 1593, this date would fit the realistic Oxfordian chronology very aptly indeed. For at that time the chief candidate for the high honor of installation in the Order of the Garter was Lord Oxford's friend and fellow patron of theatrical enterprise, Edward Somerset Earl of Worcester.

The two groups of players who wore the liveries of Worcester and Oxford were among the ablest in the realm. Privy Council records show that in March, 1602, a special request from the Counselors was addressed to the Lord Mayor of London to lift a previously enforced ban and allow a joint company of actors patronized by both of these Earls to continue to give public performances at the Boar's Head Tavern, "the place they have

especially used and do like best of." It seems superfluous to point out that the old Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap — about two minutes' walk across Candlewick Street from Lord Oxford's ancestral city residence, Oxford Court — is also the scene of the bohemian revels of Falstaff and Prince Hal in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays.

Also significant is the fact that Philip Henslowe, the theatrical manager, lists in his famous *Diary* the names of William Kemp and John Lowin as actors lately included in this Worcester-Oxford group in 1602.

Both Kemp and Lowin are permanently identified with the presentation of Shakespearean works. In the introductory pages to the First Folio of 1623, they are mentioned among "the Principall Actors in all these Playes."

The editor of the Tudor Edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* suggests that William Kemp may have been the original creator of the clownish figure of Sir John Oldcastle (later renamed Falstaff) in the Windsor comedy.

Such testimony argues circumstantially for Lord Oxford's personal connection with Shakespearean theatrical affairs. His friend and copatron of well known Shakespearean actors, Lord Worcester, seems to have been one of the inner circle of aristocratic intellectuals who knew the facts behind the authorship of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and most of the other First Folio plays. If the personal papers and correspondence of Edward Somerset Earl of Worcester are still in existence and happen to survive the present blitzkrieg, they may provide some interesting corroborative sidelights on the great authorship mystery.

Worcester was the nephew of Sir Thomas North whose English version of Plutarch's *Lives* was used so extensively by Shakespeare in writing *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*.

Oxford himself owned a copy of Plutarch. We learn this from an account book still on file at Hatfield House which lists the Earl's personal expenses in 1569. Among various other items which bear witness to the young nobleman's literary proclivities is the notation of a payment to William Seres, the London stationer, for "Plutarch's works in French, with other books and papers."

This was the excellent and readable French translation of the Roman biographer that had been

made by Jacques Amyot. It should be noted that Sir Thomas North utilized Amyot's work for his English edition, instead of going back to Plutarch's original Latin.

Everybody knows that Shakespeare follows the Amyot-North treatment of the Roman Lives very closely, particularly in *Coriolanus*. Oxfordians also know that Edward de Vere possessed colloquial command of both Latin and French. Moreover, if we consider the playwriting Earl as the real Shakespeare, it is a reasonable possibility that he may have taken an active hand with Sir Thomas North in rendering Amyot's Plutarch into English during the 1569-79 decade, just as he can be shown to have collaborated with other popular translators of his day, such as Thomas Bedingfield, Bartholomew Clerke and Anthony Munday.

Incidentally, no Stratfordian authority has ever been able to bring William Shakspeare within documentary hailing distance of this particular literary circle.

And though the Nazi hordes, bent on the destruction of English-French civilization, may with the same tragic stupidity that characterizes the rest of their "intellectual" effort, "spare" Stratford-on-Avon, their loudly trumpeted purpose to "rehabilitate" the Bard as a true German prophet remains as ridiculous as it is impertinent.

We may well imagine what type of "Shakespeare" might emerge from the colossal sausage-machines of Goebbels' propaganda portfolio. The early butcher's apprentice of Stratfordia would come into his own with a vengeance.

But over and beyond such a ghastly harlequinade — too terrible to contemplate — the voice of the true Shakespeare, speaking to all lovers of justice, truth and courage throughout the world will continue to inspire unfettered men in their grapple to the death with the forces of soul-destroying slavery now menacing those civilizations which the Bard in his own lifetime wished to see joined in amity and enlightened progress.

Charles Wisner Barrell

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While boarding a train at Waterloo Station, London, during April, Mr. Percy Allen, who edits the British NEWS-LETTER of the Shakespeare Fellowship, was held up by footpads. The thieves got away with Mr. Allen's wallet containing private papers and some 15 pounds in currency but fortunately did not injure him physically.

## Oxford-Shakespeare Birthday Party

Some eighty persons, including members of The Shakespeare Fellowship and friends interested in the Oxford authorship evidence attended the Birthday meeting held Tuesday afternoon, April 23rd, at the Hotel Beekman, 575 Park Avenue in New York City.

As all readers of the NEWS-LETTER should know, April 23rd, which is celebrated throughout the world as Shakespeare's Birthday, is really the exact date, according to the reformed calendar, of the birth of Edward de Vere Earl of Oxford, at Castle Hedingham, Essex, England. It seemed, therefore, most appropriate to hold our first open meeting on the 390th anniversary of the playwright Earl's nativity.

Dr. Louis P. Bénézet of Dartmouth, President of the American Branch of The Shakespeare Fellowship, occupied the chair.

After briefly reviewing the growth of the Oxford-Shakespeare movement throughout the world, following the establishment of The Fellowship in London eighteen years ago under the leadership of Sir George Greenwood, Dr. Benezet gave a brief but stimulating talk on the contrasting creative psychologies of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. The gist of his well-reasoned conclusions is reproduced elsewhere in this issue.

Mr. Severo Mallet-Prevost of the New York Bar followed with an analysis of the Oxford theory from the point of view of a legal expert, steeped in Shakespearean lore.

His arguments, in turn, were reenforced by Mr. James Stewart Cushman, who has studied much of the Oxfordian documentation at first hand over a long period.

Mrs. Eva Turner Clark also presented an interesting review of the work of The Fellowship, pointing out the need for a strong organization and an adequate endowment to complete important developments now in hand.

Mr. William Thornton, the actor, who has recently joined The Fellowship, then read the poem, "Edward de Vere: Accepting Him As Author of Shakespeare" by Mr. Alfred A. Furman.

The final hour was devoted to a lecture by Mr. Charles Wisner Barrell on his investigation of the ancient painted portraits of the Bard. Mr. Barrell projected a complete set of stereopticon slides of his remarkable X-ray and infra-red studies of the

Ashbourne portrait of "William Shakespeare" which show in graphic detail the personal symbols and slightly disguised features of Lord Oxford beneath the outer coats of the ancient painting.

Members and guests were most enthusiastic in their praise of the various angles of interest presented at this first Oxford-Shakespeare Birthday Celebration to be held in America.

To Mrs. Eva Turner Clark, who undertook arrangements for the celebration, is due chief credit for the outstanding success of the affair.

Several new members have been added to our roster as a direct result of the meeting. Numerous books and pamphlets on the Oxford evidence have also been sold.

Teachers of English, librarians and personalities prominent in literary, stage and legal circles made up the bulk of the audience on April 23rd. More than one was heard to remark that the next meeting of The Fellowship should bring out hundreds of interested auditors, as the Oxford evidence can no longer be ignored by anyone with an interest in the actual personality of the Bard.

### A LETTER FROM FRANCE

A recent letter from the eminent and venerable French-Elizabethan scholar, Professor Abel Lefranc of the Institut de France, informs us that he is now living at Royan in the Department of Charente-Inferieure, on the Bay of Biscay. This town is far from the present war zone, a fact that will please the Professor's many friends in America.

Professor Lefranc is generally acknowledged to be the foremost living French authority on Elizabethan literature. During the 1920's he served as an Exchange Professor at both Harvard and the University of Chicago. He is, moreover, an active disbeliever in the Stratfordian legend. His book, *Sous le Masque de "William Shakespeare,"* published twenty-one years ago, is devoted to the theory that William Stanley Earl of Derby was the author of the plays.

Derby, it happens, was Lord Oxford's son-in-law and closely associated with the poet-Earl during the last ten years of Oxford's life.

Professor Lefranc is a member of The Shakespeare Fellowship of England and greatly interested in all of the Oxfordian evidence.

## Shakespeare and Ben Jonson

As one reads the plays of these two greatest dramatists of the Elizabethan-Jacobean era one is immediately struck by a great contrast between them. One is aristocratic, the other bourgeois. The noblemen of one author are natural, at ease, convincing. They talk the language of their class, both in matter and manner. Even more is this true of Shakespeare's heroines. They are aristocrats to the core. On the other hand in portraying the lower classes Shakespeare is unconvincing. He makes them clods or dolts or clowns, and has them amuse us by their gaucheries. He gives them undignified names: Wart, Bullcalf, Mouldy, Bottom, Dogberry, Snout, etc. Only occasionally does Shakespeare hold up a gentleman to ridicule, as he does in the case of Slender and Aguecheek, said by Professor Dowden to represent the same person, a sentiment strongly seconded by certain Oxfordians, who see Philip Sidney as the original.

On the other hand Jonson's bourgeois characters are natural, while his nobles are caricatures.

They bear the same kind of names that Shakespeare gives to his commoners: Sir Paul Eitherside, Sir Amorous La-Foole, Sir Epicure Mammon, Lady Haughty, Sir Diaphanous Silkworm, etc.

There is always a strong tendency on the part of English writers from the upper middle class to be resentful of the attitude assumed toward them by the titled nobility.

This same ridiculing of class distinction is a mark of talented commoners. Recall Dickens' Lord Mitanhed and Lord Verisopht, Sheridan's Sir Benjamin Backbite and Lady Sneerwell, W. S. Gilbert's Lord Tolloller and Lord Mountarat.

It is characteristic of Ben Jonson. He has no sympathy with aristocratic aloofness and superiority.

On the other hand Shakespeare is the natural aristocrat. He never has to think to make his characters of gentle blood act their parts. They do so as naturally as they breathe. Says Edmund of Gloucester of his distinguished brother Edgar:

"In wisdom I should ask thy name;  
But, since thy outside looks so fair and war-  
like,  
And that thy tongue some say of breeding  
breathes,  
What safe and nicely I might well delay  
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn."  
*Louis P. Bénézet*

## A Master of Double-Talk

"Honest" Ben Jonson's comments on the Bard are considered conclusive evidence by all right-thinking authorities that "Mr. William Shakespeare" was the citizen of Stratford-on-Avon.

"Jonson could not have lent his name to subterfuge."

"It would have been beneath a man of Ben Jonson's forthright nature to have participated in a deliberate fraud — such as the switching of personalities to obscure the real author of the Shakespearean works."

These are some of the statements frequently advanced by orthodox Stratfordians to bolster faith in Jonson as the chief pillar of the generally accepted theory of authorship.

Meanwhile, the fact is completely overlooked that Jonson's own works prove him to have been the outstanding master of double-talk in his own period.

*Cynthia's Revels, The Poetaster and Every Man*

*Out Of His Humour* are all known to have been satirical portrait galleries of Jonson's contemporaries. Not only John Marston and Thomas Dekker were bitterly caricatured. All modern editors of *Every Man Out Of His Humour* agree that William Shakspeare of Stratford must have been in Jonson's mind when he drew the devastating characterization of Sogliardo in that ill-natured comedy. The boorish, money-grabbing climber that Jonson presents here could not, by the same token, be the "gentle" genius who wrote the plays and poems.

Jonson's career was that of a professional opportunist, entirely capable of participating in a pious fraud — where it served his own interests. He is known to have changed his religion and later to have acted as a spy upon members of the church wherein he was listed as a communicant. Those who claim he was above subterfuge in the Shakespearean authorship mystery simply do not know their man.

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Charles Wisner Barrell

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 43rd Street, New York, N. Y.

## Invasions

The most active of continental European Oxfordians, Monsieur Charles Boissevain of Geneva, Switzerland, informed us in May that he had completed all arrangements with the publication *Haagsch Maandblad* of The Hague to publish his translation of Mr. Barrell's article on the Shakespeare portraits which appeared in the January *Scientific American*.

Since the invasion of Holland by Hitler's army and the disruption of all forms of civilized activity in that country, it can be taken for granted that Monsieur Boissevain's work will not appear as scheduled.

It seems, however, that a ridiculous and muddle-headed version of Mr. Barrell's "Identifying 'Shakespeare' With X-Rays and Infra-Red Photography" was published in the Italian journal *Sapete* of Milan on February 15th, last. Without bother-

ing to ask permission of the original author or the editors of *Scientific American*, a resolute Fascist scribe who signs himself Giuseppe de Florentiis herein presents his version of Mr. Barrell's investigation, profusely illustrated with all of the original photo-engravings, copyrighted and otherwise.

Giuseppe's knowledge of the English language may possibly be as defective as his reasoning powers. In any event, he reaches the conclusion that "Shakespeare is a myth," the poet having diffused himself so widely in so many directions that all traces of personality have dissolved like "the cloud-capp'd towers" of Prospero to "leave not a rack behind."

This is the most novel solution of the authorship mystery we have ever seen expounded.

And if Signor Giuseppe de Florentiis' plagiaristic essay is to be taken as a sample of approved journalistic "reasoning" under totalitarian censorship, it becomes apparent that common sense as well as common courtesy is at a discount in that part of Europe where the ironically named *Sapete* is published.

## Oxford's Life Dramatized

The life of Edward Earl of Oxford as "William Shakespeare" has been dramatized by Warren P. Munsell, Jr., of New York City and will be produced with a top-flight cast at the McCarter Theatre, Princeton, New Jersey, the week of July 29th.

Mr. Munsell, who won high praise at Princeton for his work in the drama, has spent two years writing his Oxford-Shakespeare play. It is entitled "By Any Other Name." Those who have read the script declare that it is a thrilling and realistic presentation of the playwright Earl's undercover career in Elizabethan times.

The author's father, Mr. Warren P. Munsell, Sr., who is one of the executives of the Theatre Guild, will direct "By Any Other Name." A large representation of Oxfordians is expected at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton on the opening night. Further details will be mailed direct to all members of The Fellowship early in July.

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An interesting letter from our Canadian member, Mr. Garfield A. King of Vancouver, gives us news of an address on the Oxford theory which Mr. King delivered during April before the Shakespeare Society of that city.

## He Must Build Churches Then

Aubrey de Vere came into England with William of Normandy, ever afterward to be known as William the Conqueror, and by William was granted extensive estates in several English counties. In Essex, where he made his home, Aubrey built the great Norman castle called Hedingham, for nearly six centuries the seat of the Vere family. At nearby Colne, he founded a priory, dedicated to St. Andrew, where many of his descendants lie buried. At Kensington, his place in Middlesex, he gave a church to the Abbey of Abingdon.

The second Aubrey, who succeeded in 1088, fought in the first Crusade and the legend concerning the silver mullet of the Veres traces to him. He was the first Vere to be made Lord Great Chamberlain.

The third Aubrey (s. 1141), also a Crusader, was the first Earl of Oxford. He founded the Priory of Hatfield Broad Oak in Essex and endowed it with "the tythes of the town." His third wife, Countess Lucia, founded at Castle Hedingham a small Benedictine Nunnery, which the Veres endowed with the Rectories of Gosfield and Hedingham.

The fourth Aubrey, second Earl of Oxford (s. 1194), is said by Morant to have built and endowed the church at Castle Hedingham.

Robert de Vere, third Earl of Oxford (s. 1214), a Crusader, left no record of building activity, but his brother William, Bishop of Hereford, was "a great builder of castles and churches."

Hugh de Vere, fourth Earl of Oxford (s. 1221), a Crusader, founded a Hospital at Hedingham—in reality for religious services, not for nursing sick people—also called New Abbey, to which was attached a chapel attended by three chaplains.

There appears to be no record of building by the fifth and sixth Earls.

John de Vere, seventh Earl of Oxford (s. 1331), a great soldier who lost his life at Rheims, was brought to England for burial at Colne. He left a fabulous estate in ten counties and in his will bequeathed 100 marks towards the building of the church at Colne, and a like sum for re-edifying the chapel called the New Abbey at Castle Hedingham.

There is no building record for the next five Earls, the period being one of political turmoil.

John de Vere, thirteenth Earl of Oxford (s.

1461), was a great Lancastrian during the Wars of the Roses and was of immense assistance in helping the Earl of Richmond to win the throne as Henry VII. The King bestowed many lands and honours on him and in 1491 he acted as godfather to Prince Henry, later Henry VIII. On returning to Hedingham in 1485, the Earl found the Castle (meaning all the buildings on Castle Hill) "in very bad repair, . . . so that all the building that now is there was in a manner of this old Earl's building, except the Gate House and the great Dungeon Tower." He also built, together with the rich wool merchant, Thomas Spring, the beautiful church at Lavenham in Suffolk.

John de Vere, fifteenth Earl of Oxford (s. 1526), cousin of the fourteenth Earl (whose record is unimportant), is said to have built the church at Sible Hedingham, where he is buried under a tomb of black marble.

John de Vere, sixteenth Earl of Oxford (s. 1540), in his youth a soldier, was nearly ruined by the Duke of Somerset when he was Lord Protector; after the Duke's execution, the Earl recovered most of his estates, though some of the properties were given to his cousins. In 1561, he entertained Queen Elizabeth lavishly and was host to Prince Eric of Sweden when he visited England. He was a noted shot and was probably the most famous sportsman of his time.

Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford (s. 1562), poet and dramatist, favorite of Queen Elizabeth, married Anne Cecil, daughter of Lord Treasurer Burghley, and gradually lost the great estates he had inherited. In 1586, he received a grant from Queen Elizabeth of 1000 pounds a year, for what purpose the record does not state; the grant was continued by King James (who called him "great Oxford").

Though Edward de Vere was known as the best dramatist of the time through a large part of Elizabeth's reign, no plays were published under his name (convention forbidding this to a man of his rank) and it is now contended by many students that the plays published under the name of William Shakespeare are in reality the "lost plays" of Edward de Vere. The arguments are many and varied and the evidence for this contention has much to commend it.

It is to add a suggestive allusion to the evidence elsewhere assembled that the church-

building forefathers of Edward de Vere have here been listed, at least half of them remembered for the very fact that they built and endowed churches, though several of them had gone to the Crusades and a number of them had been very famous soldiers.

Hamlet, in talking to Ophelia, says,

"Then there's hope a great man's memory  
may outlive his life half a year: but, y'r  
lady, he must build churches then; or else  
shall he suffer not thinking on."

(*Hamlet*, III, ii. 142).

Any author might have written these lines, whether or not he or his ancestors had ever given a penny to a church, but it would seem a very natural thought to a man whose ancestors' military services and other important acts had given them a fame which should have endured, yet he found them remembered after a lapse of time only by the churches they had left behind them as monuments, as were the ancestors of Edward de Vere.

Innumerable allusions in the Shakespeare plays point to Edward de Vere as their author and "he must build churches then" must be added to the number.

*Eva Turner Clark*

*The above account of the Earls of Oxford and their church-building has been taken from "Some Account of the Family of De Vere, The Earls of Oxford, and of Hedingham Castle in Essex," by the Rev. Severne A. Ashurst Majendia.*

## Baltimore Discovers Oxford

On the evening of May 8th, Mr. Charles Wisner Barrell gave his illustrated lecture on the identification of the "Shakespeare" portraits with X-rays and infra-red photography, before the University Club at Baltimore.

A distinguished and critical audience gathered for the occasion, including members of the faculties of Johns Hopkins University, St. John's College, Annapolis, Temple University and executives of the Baltimore public schools. Leading members of the Maryland bar, well known writers, editors and representatives of the consular service rubbed elbows with city officials, industrial leaders, inventors and technical engineers.

According to all accounts received from Baltimore the lecture created something of a sensation.

Mr. Barrell was introduced at 7:20 p.m. and did not leave the platform until nearly three hours later, when he was given an ovation. The interest

that his presentation of the pictorial evidence in the Oxford-Shakespeare case aroused may be gathered from the statement of an official of the University Club that there were more seats occupied at the end of the lecture than there were when the meeting was called to order.

While concentrating on the disservice photographic material which proves that Lord Oxford is the disguised original of the Ashbourne "Shakespeare," Mr. Barrell also projected some of the pictorial evidence he has in hand which identifies the same literary nobleman beneath the outer coats of the Felton and Hampton Court paintings of the Bard.

The case was presented as a detective story throughout, backed with a strong assortment of literary and historical documentation.

During the questions and answers period, fully twenty members of the audience participated. Mr. Barrell was especially commended for the well-chosen arguments he advanced to buttress his pictorial testimony.

Orthodox proponents of the Stratfordian point of view were frankly astounded to find how vulnerable their own case appeared when subjected to the searchlight of scientific media — plus Oxfordian research.

Many of the academicians who had come to scoff remained until nearly midnight, seeking additional information. More than fifty members of the University Club made requests for copies of the NEWS-LETTER and other literature.

Shakespeare had suddenly become one of the liveliest topics of conversation among the moulders of thought in the free city of Baltimore.

When the present war excitement subsides, it is safe to predict that Mr. Barrell and other Oxfordian lecturers will continue to arouse enthusiasm for the Oxford cause in other cities throughout the United States and Canada.

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All Fellowship members on our roster, as of July 1st, will receive a special "dividend" volume of Oxfordian research.

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Books and pamphlets relating to the Oxford-Shakespeare authorship theory which have been listed in previous issues of the NEWS-LETTER may be ordered through the Secretary of The Fellowship.

## King Lear in the News

Including an Estimate by Algernon Charles Swinburne

With vast areas of civilized Europe crashing into physical ruin and intellectual night, black as the eclipse that shrouds the middle ages, closing down upon their horizons, Shakespeare's titanic tragedy of *King Lear* becomes required reading.

The mood of this 16th century masterpiece is again suited to the times. "The wheel is come full circle," bearing out the belief of certain modern analysts that Lear was conceived as an allegory of Britain beset by enemies at home and abroad as she was in the latter years of Elizabeth.

Like Hitler, Philip II of Spain consecrated his life to the task of conquering the island. Un-counted millions were spent by the Spanish zealot in financing armadas, as well as anti-British actionists in Ireland and Scotland, and in maintaining swarms of spies, resolute assassins and "Fifth Column" agents in the very heart of the threatened kingdom. At times it seemed that the English government — like Lear himself — bereft of eyesight and self-deprived of honest counsellors, would surely perish in the rising storm. Crisis after crisis developed as Elizabeth became stricken in years and incorruptible men like Hunsdon, Walsingham and Burghley either passed from the scene or became superannuated, and were succeeded by rash egotists such as Essex and his group. Philip Earl of Arundel was not the only great nobleman on the banks of the Thames who prayed for the success of the Spanish Armada.

Meanwhile, loyal and far-seeing statesmen of the type of Edward Earl of Oxford, Charles Lord Howard of Effingham and Edward Earl of Worcester could only bide their time as they watched the vain and aged Queen give credence to undercover traitors such as Lord Henry Howard, while delegating sufficient authority to Essex to whet his appetite for the Crown itself.

Indeed, many wise statesmen of the period must have felt that the integrity of national life must collapse as the government zigzagged blindly across the storm-beaten moors of unpredictable policy during the final decade of the Elizabethan Age. One must read a documentary history of the times or a work such as Martin Hume's *Treason and Plot* to realize what really went on behind the gilded facade of officialdom.

For instance, "Sir Edward Stafford, the English Ambassador in Paris, had sold to Spain every

secret he possessed up to the time of the Armada," (1589). Sir Robert Cecil, the Principal Secretary of State, "was himself a Spanish Pensioner;" while Sir William Monson, Admiral of the Channel Fleet, augmented his pay with a regular stipend from the coffers of Madrid.

As a commentary on such a situation, *King Lear* rings true. To assume that it is merely the story of a foolish old monarch and his ungrateful daughters is to miss underlying motives of high import.

This is a tragedy of statesmanship, written by a statesman who knew Elizabethan England from Council Chamber to common pillory.

As seems fitting at this time, when the fate of Britain again appears to totter in the balance, we reproduce herewith some comments by Algernon Charles Swinburne on the play that Shelley has declared is: "The most perfect specimen of the dramatic art existing in the world."

*The Editors.*

The author of the *Book of Job*, the author of the *Eumenides*, can show nothing to be set beside the third act of *King Lear*. All that is best and all that is worst in man might have been brought together and flashed together upon the mind's eye of the spectator or the student without the intervention of such servile ministers as take part with Goneril and Regan against their father's Storm and lightning, thunder and rain, become to us, even as they became to Lear, no less conscious and responsible partners in the superhuman inhumanity of an unimaginable crime. The close of the *Prometheus* itself seems less spiritually and overpoweringly fearful by comparison with a scene which is not the close and is less terrible than the close of *King Lear*. And it is no whit more terrible than it is beautiful. The splendour of the lightning and the menace of the thunder serve only or mainly to relieve or to enhance the effect of suffering and the potency of passion on the spirit and the conscience of a man. The sufferer is transfigured: but he is not transformed. Mad or sane, living and dying, he is passionate and vehement, single-hearted and self-willed. And therefore it is that the fierce appeal, the fiery protest against the social iniquities and the legal atrocities of civilized mankind, which none before the greatest of all Englishmen had ever dreamed of daring to utter in song or set forth upon the stage, comes

not from Hamlet, but from Lear. The young man whose infinite capacity of thought and whose delicate scrupulosity of conscience at once half disabled and half defied him could never have seen what was revealed by suffering to an old man who had never thought or felt more deeply or more keenly than an average labourer or an average king. Lear's madness, at all events, was assuredly not his enemy, but his friend.

The rule of Elizabeth and her successor may have been more arbitrary than we can now understand how the commonwealth of England could accept and could endure; but how far it was from a monarchy, from a government really deserving of that odious and ignominious name, we may judge by the fact that this play could be acted and published. Among all its other great qualities, among all the many other attributes which mark it for ever as matchless among the works of man, it has this above all, that it is the first great utterance of a cry from the heights and the depths of the human spirit on behalf of the outcasts of the

world — on behalf of the social sufferer, clean or unclean, innocent or criminal, thrall or free.

To satisfy the sense of righteousness, the craving for justice, as unknown and unimaginable by Dante as by Chaucer, a change must come upon the social scheme of things which shall make an end of the actual relations between the judge and the cutpurse, the beadle and the prostitute, the beggar and the king.

All this could be uttered, could be prophesied, could be thundered from the English stage at the dawn of the seventeenth century.

Were it within the power of omnipotence to create a German or a Russian Shakespeare, could anything of the sort be whispered or muttered or hinted or suggested from the boards of a Russian or a German theatre at the dawn of the twentieth?

When a Tolstoi or a Sudermann can do this, and can do it with impunity in success, it will be allowed that his country is not more than three centuries behind England in civilization and freedom.

From *Three Plays of Shakespeare* (1909).

## Was Edward De Vere Shakespeare?

I believe he was. You who read this, I beg you not to condemn me and the theory, but to read further on.

A week ago I still believed that William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon was the author of the great plays that have borne his name for three hundred years. Heretofore, any suggestion calling this into question incurred my antagonism, and my enmity to the idea bristled up instantly, "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." In fact, so intolerant was I of the barest hint of any other than the Stratford belief that to relinquish such a fixed idea with all the time-honored atmosphere that has grown around the Warwickshire lore, was not easy.

However, a book fell into my hands, "*Shakespeare Identified*," by J. Thomas Looney, published in 1920. I opened it with prejudice and deep contempt and antagonism. I had no intention to surrender the William Shakspeare of Stratford for any theory. Long ago I had rejected Bacon and every other new candidate brought forward. But I read on and on, much impressed with the modesty of the discoverer of the new author, much enthralled by his careful and original process of discovery, the fine marshalling of facts and logical deductions, the painstaking examination of the

evidence, and the skill, honesty, and charm of the presentation of the theory.

Amazed, fascinated, and with mind clarified, I rose from a study of the book. I read it again, and then I read it for the third time (a big book of 458 pages, too). And I now pronounce myself a believer in the theory that Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was the author of the great Shakespearean plays.

I wish I believed in everything with the same conviction. Moreover, I feel I have been enriched by the acquaintance with this great personality with whom I have been living now for a week! I cannot get him out of my mind. He passes between everything I try to do. I can turn to no duty until I record my belief and pay tribute, small and insignificant as it is, to this mighty genius.

I cannot explain the effect that this discovery has had upon me. All the plays that I know so well, that I have read and re-read since childhood until they have become bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, are now more wonderful. Some things that have been obscure have become as clear as glass; more true in their philosophy; more brilliant in their wit; more sincere in their scholarship; more charming in their tenderness; more subtle in their delicacy; more penetrating in their

wisdom; and truer to life when it is known that their author, instead of being a middle class man of mean associations and little or no education, rather sordid in money matters, and with no connection with people of culture was a man of aristocratic lineage, a courtier himself, a man accomplished in all the arts, graces, sports, and pastimes of the age — a gifted genius with whom the "time is out of joint." The plays themselves become autobiographical.

And at last, thanks to Mr. Looney, we can find our Shakespeare, the dramatist, in such characters as Hamlet (biographical throughout), Biron in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and Bertram in *All's Well* (another biography).

I used to take refuge in the old generality, "you can't limit genius," and felt that by some supernatural means the superior Shakespeare had existed, disregarding the lack of correspondence between the plays and the scanty records of their ostensible author's life. Like Mr. Podsnap, with a wave of the hand, I swept all this behind my back. I read the plays as works apart, dissociating them from their author. But now — it is all so clear, so plain, so reasonable, and so delightful.

I ask myself, how could a man like the Shakspeare of Stratford portray with such intimacy elegant men and women, particularly the Queen herself. Take the Duke in *Twelfth Night*; Benedick in *Much Ado*; Bassanio, Antonio, Romeo, Mercutio, Paris. The more you look at it the simpler it becomes — the life of the Elizabethan bloods, the high-spirited, hot-headed, witty-tongued, to parry and thrust with words as with swords — could the butcher-boy of Stratford ever do that?

In the historical plays the sympathy with the Lancastrian cause is most marked. Shakespeare must have been a member of a family of Lancastrian leanings.

The large number of plays with Italian settings or derived from Italian sources. Shakespeare must have known Italy — everything bespeaks an Italian enthusiast. Also one highly educated in music. His attitude towards money shows that he abhorred money as such. It is the arch-villain, such as Iago, the time-serving politician, such as Polonius, the cruel Shylock, who are the money-lenders. Antonio, who gives freely to his friend, and Bassanio, the spendthrift, are of the dramatist's chosen ilk. But William Shakspeare, the Stratford Shakspeare, was a man who, after he had be-

come prosperous, prosecuted others for petty sums!

Sir Sidney Lee, a believer in the Stratford theory, says: "His literary attainments and successes were chiefly valued as serving the prosaic end of providing permanently for himself and his daughters." Compare that statement with what the Bard himself says:

How quickly nature falls into revolt  
When gold becomes her object!  
For this the foolish over-careful fathers  
Have broke their sleep with thoughts, their  
brains with care,  
Their bones with industry;  
For this they have engrossed and pil'd up  
The canker'd heaps of strange-achieved gold.  
2 Henry IV, IV.5.66.

A close inspection of Shakespeare's work reveals a more intimate personal connection with aristocracy than would be furnished by mere family tradition. Kings and queens, earls and countesses, knights and ladies move on and off his stage "as to the manner born." They are no mere tinsel models representing mechanically the class to which they belong, but living men and women. It is rather his ordinary "citizens" that are the automata walking woodenly onto the stage to speak for their class. The suggestion of an aristocratic author for the plays is, therefore, the simple common sense of the situation, and is no more in opposition to modern democratic tendencies than the belief that William Shakespeare was indebted to aristocratic patrons and participated in the enclosure of common lands. "We feel entitled, therefore" as Mr. Looney states, "to claim for Shakespeare high social rank and even a close proximity to Royalty itself."

Esther Singleton, New York, 1921.

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The late Esther Singleton, author of many books on art, historical and literary subjects, including the delightful Shakespeare's Garden, was one of the first writers in America to accept wholeheartedly the identification of Edward de Vere Earl of Oxford as the living personality behind the pen-name of "William Shakespeare." The above article, in which Miss Singleton relates her conversion to the new authorship theory, was recently discovered among her unpublished papers by her sister, Mrs. Fitzroy Carrington of London. Miss Singleton died at Stonington, Connecticut, July 2, 1930. Readers generally should find this statement of Esther Singleton's belief in the validity of the Oxfordian evidence of unusual interest.

The Editors.

## The "Honor" of Authorship

*"But in these days (although some learned Princes may take delight in Poets) yet universally it is not so. For as well Poets as Poesie are despised, and the name become of honourable infamous, subject to scorn and derision, and rather a reproach than a praise to any that useth it."*

The Arte of English Poesie, 1589.

One of the first questions that casual students of the Oxford-Shakespeare authorship theory ask, runs somewhat as follows:

"If the Earl of Oxford really wrote the Shakespearean plays as your evidence indicates, why didn't he, or some of his surviving friends and descendants, ever claim the honor?"

*Answer No. 1*

The social history of the 16th and early 17th centuries shows that no English nobleman of those days ever did win honor from his own class by writing in the vernacular for the edification of the common people — which was "Mr. William Shakespeare's" avowed purpose in life, according to Ben Jonson's statement in the 1623 First Folio.

The nobleman who practised any of the creative arts publicly for a livelihood was considered dangerously eccentric. Henry Peacham in his *Compleat Gentleman* (1622) says that such men could claim no share at all in true nobility. The 17th century historian, Humphrey Bohun, lists several Elizabethan noblemen who had lost caste by writing and acting in plays instead of playing politics. The name of Edward Earl of Oxford is prominent on Bohun's page. The historian clucks dismally over the waste of such promising aristocratic material.

Another 16th century Englishman of high position and even higher intellectual attainments whose life was a tragic failure officially, was Sir Thomas More. As a member of the Privy Council of Henry VIII and Lord Chancellor of the realm, Sir Thomas had a bright political future. But the man was also a literary artist with an artist's conscientious integrity. He refused to knuckle under to a mad tyrant's whims and as a result, lost his head on the scaffold.

Today, Sir Thomas More is known in England chiefly as the author of *Utopia*, a work that he did not dare print in his own country in his own language during his own lifetime. Under the title of *Libellus vere aureus*, this classic appeal for better standards of living for humanity was written in Latin and published first at Louvain.

It was not issued in an English translation until sixteen years after More's death.

And now comes the parallel to the concealment of Lord Oxford's association with the Shakespeare plays.

When William Roper, the devoted son-in-law of Sir Thomas More, wrote the great man's life, he studiously avoided all mention of the *Utopia*, considering the work unworthy of mention.

So if we had to depend for our information about the *Utopia* upon More's closest relatives, one of whom was his authoritative biographer, we should have no inkling of Sir Thomas More's authorship of the one book that insures his literary immortality!

### TO BEAR IN MIND

Copies of the first British edition of "*Shakespeare Identified In Edward de Vere 17th Earl of Oxford*" by J. Thomas Looney, the basic book of Oxfordian research, may still be secured by members of The Fellowship at \$4.10 per copy.

International conditions being what they are, it is extremely doubtful whether any new edition of Mr. Looney's masterpiece will be issued for some time to come.

Members who do not possess a copy of "*Shakespeare Identified*" should, therefore, avail themselves of the opportunity before it is too late.

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Mr. Paul McAllister, well known stage and screen actor of New York and Hollywood, is one of America's pioneer Oxfordians. Mr. McAllister, who recently joined The Fellowship, says that he read "*Shakespeare Identified*" within a week or two of its publication in 1920 and ever since then has been a fervent admirer of Mr. Looney's great work. Some years ago Mr. McAllister was known as one of the foremost Shakespearean players on Broadway. We should like to see him in the cast of the forthcoming Munsell play, "By Any Other Name," if he could be persuaded to take time off from his film commitments.