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News-Letter

THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

— AMERICAN BRANCH —

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A Nineteenth Century Revolt Against the Stratford Theory

Now Time for An Oxford-Shakspere Debate,
Says President Bénézet

*Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.*

Hamlet, V.ii.398.

As a high school boy in the early '90's I used to read, with great avidity, a magazine called "The Arena." It was the organ of the unorthodox, whether in religion or politics or literature. A writer with a radical idea which Harper's, Scribner's, or The Atlantic refused to print, could generally find a sympathetic reader in B. O. Flower, The Arena's editor.

In the year 1892 Mr. Flower decided that it was time to give a thorough airing to the "Bacon-Shakespeare controversy." Accordingly he invited two Baconites, Mr. Edwin Reed and Hon. Ignatius Donnelly, and four Stratfordians: Rev. A. Nicholson, LL.D., Dr. W. J. Rolfe, Mr. F. J. Furnivall and Professor F. E. Schelling, to debate the question. A distinguished group of people agreed to read all the articles and give their votes, as a jury. The debate ran through ten or eleven numbers of the magazine, with the statements of the debaters followed by the verdicts of the members of the panel. There is not space to reproduce all the arguments, but I shall try to analyze the reasons for the votes of the jury, who were twenty-five in number. There was only one vote for Bacon, cast by the distinguished wood-engraver, Mr. G. Kruell, who said that his belief that the Stratford man never could have written the plays had only been strengthened; therefore, since Bacon was the only other possible candidate, he was voting for Bacon.

Twenty of the jurors voted for Shakspeare, most of them on the grounds that, even if there were gaping voids in the Stratford story, the opponents had not made out a strong enough case for Lord Verulam. Many of them spoke of the fact that Bacon's

genius was of a totally different variety than that of the author of the plays. Among these were Henry George, Sir Henry Irving, Rev. C. A. Bartol, Franklin H. Head, Gov. Wm. E. Russell, Professor N. S. Shaler, A. H. H. Dawson, Edmund Gosse and Edmund Clarence Stedman. Luther R. Marsh says that the Baconites have not proved their point, for, since we know practically nothing about Shakspeare's youth we can't be sure that he did not spend it in acquiring all this marvellous training in law, music, war, foreign languages, etc. A few of the jurors show a strong bias in favor of the Stratford version and make unwarranted statements which the debaters would not, in every case, support. For example, Hon. A. A. Adee says dogmatically that "Shakspeare was the daily associate of Jonson, Chapman, Greene, Marlowe, Nash, Peele, Lodge, Chettle, Armin," etc., that he was intimate with John Florio, Southampton's Italian tutor, which explains where he got all the plots from Italian sources untranslated into English. "Until it is proved that Jonson, Digges, Meres, Heminge and Condell were copartners in covering up an open fraud with a tissue of sarcastic laudation, I must vote for Shakspeare."

The Marquis of Lorne says that it means nothing when no manuscripts can be found, for "Shakspeare's daughter and granddaughter were very strict Puritans" and probably burned the originals. He forgets the "grand possessors" who owned them when "Troilus and Cressida" was stolen.

Mr. A. B. Brown thinks that Shakspeare wrote the plays, but did it in a trance, inspired by the ghosts of Aristophanes, Plautus, etc.!

General Marcus J. Wright and Wm. E. Sheldon give their votes for Shakspeare without comment.

George Makepeace Towle simply says that the arguments of the Baconians have not convinced him that their man wrote the plays. He does not say that he is convinced that the Stratford man wrote them.

Mr. L. L. Lawrence, after pointing out flaws in the reasoning of the Stratfordians, votes for Shakspeare, simply because he is in possession and because he can find flaws in the Baconian arguments, too.

The distinguished English scientist, Alfred Russel Wallace, shows the greatest bias toward the Stratford cause. Not content with giving his vote for Shakspeare, he undertakes to meet all the Baconian arguments. Forgetting that thousands of Warwickshire youths of that period did not become poets, he says that the beauties of the county gave young William "that sympathy with all of nature's moods and aspects which are manifested throughout his works." He points out that Warwick and Kenilworth Castles were only "a dozen miles away, so friendly servants and retainers" could slide little William in through the back door at times of festivity to listen in on "the language and manners of nobles and kings." Imagine John the Tapster sending a message over to Stratford to John Shacksper by Wat the Huxter: "The court will be here next week. Be sure to send Willie over. I'll plant him with his stylus and tablet behind some potted plants in the great hall, so that he can take it all down. He'll need this later when he writes his plays."

Mr. Wallace accounts for Shakspeare's legal knowledge by pointing out that there were ample opportunities "at law courts at Westminster for extension of the knowledge of law begun at coroner's inquests in his native town"! Through his foreign acquaintances, says Mr. Wallace, he might (therefore he did) obtain translations of Italian or Spanish tales.

Imagine Will accosting a returned traveller: "Worthy sir, I hear you are from Spain. This is a Spanish book, which may be a romance or a treatise on the Inquisition. Prithce take a week and read it to me. I need a plot for a play which I am to write."

"Get thee hence, arrant knave. I am a gentleman with no time for vagabond actors. Read thee Spanish, quotha? Here, let me see thee walk Spanish!"

Rev. Minot J. Savage confesses that he is in difficulty with either theory. He tells how he stood by the Stratford grave with a lawyer friend in 1880. Suddenly the barrister exclaimed, "Savage, you

can't make me believe that the man who wrote those plays is the same man who left his second-best bedstead to Ann Hathaway."

"Mr. Savage goes on to quote: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" He asks why we haven't one legible autograph "of the man who is said to have written the plays without erasure or plot." "Why did he show no care for his literary children? Why are the six years of his retirement at Stratford barren of anything that even hints a literary taste?"

On the other hand, Mr. Savage finds difficulty with some of the Baconian arguments. He concludes that Wm. Shakspeare is in possession, therefore it will take a stronger case than anything which has been brought out against him to date to dispossess him.

Mrs. Mary A. Livermore confesses that she is not an unprejudiced juror, for years ago at Stratford she made some independent investigations which convinced her that the Shakspeare story was a hoax. Nevertheless, she has not been convinced by the Bacon arguments. Her verdict is that the real author of the plays is yet to be found.

Another juror, the Rev. O. B. Frothingham, decides that the authorship of Shakspeare and of Bacon "are equally impossible." He quotes the Stratfordians as saying that the Sonnets are an insuperable obstacle to the Baconian cause and shows that they prove just as effective a hurdle for the orthodox case. The cruelty of the Stratford man in sending to jail the impoverished debtor and his attitude towards the enclosure of the common lands, which the supposedly soulless corporation of Stratford opposed because it would oppress the poorer classes, show an inhuman streak that does not fit the philosophy of the author of the plays. Mr. Frothingham finally confesses that the authorship of the plays "is a mystery that may never be solved."

Mr. Appleton Morgan confesses that he once wrote a book (The Shakespeare Myth) to prove that Shakspeare did not write the plays. At that time he was inclined toward Bacon. Having studied the claims of the Baconians very carefully, and being unconvinced, he had been obliged to fall back on the Stratford man.

Miss Frances E. Willard says that the real author of the plays, in her opinion, is neither Shakspeare nor Bacon. She says that the "prosaic Bacon could not have written anything that partook of the universal mind so largely as these plays do." "Neither do I believe," says Miss Willard, "that a man with the little learning that Shakspeare possessed, even

with the cast of the old plays before him could have produced so scholarly a work as these dramas." Miss Willard's final suggestion is that a number of the brilliant thinkers of the Elizabethan era *who were nobles*, and who, owing to the position of the stage, would not care to have their names associated with the drama, composed the plays, and the Stratford man recast them for the stage.

The most scholarly analysis of the debate is given by the last juror, Professor A. E. Dolbear of Tufts. He points out that "until lately commentators have found in the works evidence of great and varied accomplishments: knowledge of ancient and modern languages, of history, of law, of science and philosophy. Attainments in these fields imply much more than genius: they imply improved opportunities. Genius can dispense with learning in music, in mathematics, in mechanism; but there is no such thing as innate knowledge of language or law or history or science. It is a necessary presumption that whoever possesses any of them in any degree has acquired so much, and eminence implies great and persistent efforts. There is no evidence that Shakspeare had either opportunity or inclination to concern himself with any such matters. On the contrary his known tastes were a long remove from them. Fancy, if one can, Bacon retiring from London as a money-lender and beer brewer."

Professor Dolbear quotes Dr. Rolfe's statement: "It is amazing that any Shakespearean scholar should have ever conceived that there is evidence of learning in the plays." Nevertheless," says Dolbear, "he is well aware that the most eminent of them have found abundance of it there. If it be not there, it shows that the judgment of Shakespearean scholars is not to be trusted when inferences are to be drawn. It was found there until it became apparent that it damaged Shakspeare's claim. As the defence seems to acquiesce in the statements of the Baconians concerning what is really known of Wm. Shakspeare and draws its inferences from a hypothetical Shakespeare rather than the one we know something about, it appears from the evidence presented that it is highly improbable that Wm. Shakspeare either did or could have written what has been attributed to him. That Bacon wrote it does not seem so certain."

There is not space to give a recapitulation of the arguments of the debaters. Perhaps this may be used as the basis of an article in some future number of the NEWS-LETTER.

Analyzing the opinions of the jury, we can see that only twelve of the twenty-five show that they

are convinced that the Stratford man is the true author. Several of the others vote for him on the ground that they must cast a ballot for one or the other of the two candidates, and the Baconians have not made an iron-clad case for their man. As against the seven or eight jurors who plainly would not open their minds to the possibility that anyone other than Will of Stratford wrote the plays, we find one equally dogmatic Baconian.

Of the rest, it is surprising to find four strongly stating that neither Bacon nor Shakspeare is the real genius back of the plays, and three others hinting the same thing. Had Mr. Looney's book and Mr. Barrell's account of the portraits been in existence, it is safe to say that a majority of this distinguished panel would have given their votes, not to Bacon or Shakspeare, but to that hitherto unknown genius, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford.

Here is a grand opportunity for some magazine which is looking for something besides wholesale suffering and devastation, and international intrigue, with which to fill its columns, to run an Oxford-Shakspeare debate through several numbers, and invite several jurors, chosen from other professions besides teachers of English Literature, who would naturally be as open-minded on the question as a group of Catholic bishops voting on the infallibility of the Pope, to say whether common-sense and reason uphold the Stratford story or whether it is time that the brains of the 20th century saw through a hoax which was framed up to deceive the masses of the 17th.

Louis P. Bénézet

Dr. Sanders and the Miracle

In his article, "The Secret of Shakespeare's Irish Sympathies" (June NEWS-LETTER), Mr. Barrell calls attention to my identification of the original of the character, Saunter Simpcox, the fraudulent miracle-worker in *2 Henry VI*, as Dr. Nicholas Sanders, a figure of some importance in the early part of Elizabeth's reign.

When my *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays* (in which I made this identification) was published, I had not discovered an account of the event which was the basis of the "miracle" in the play. It deserves going into at some length, and helps to confirm the conclusion already arrived at on other grounds.

In 1577 Dr. Sanders reported to the King of Spain "a miracle" in England, showing, he said,

that "God is fighting on our side." The report is found in a document headed "What Sandero (*i.e.*, Dr. Sanders) has received from England," and is described as the Relation of a great miracle which Our Lady has worked in England. "In the month of July of this year 1577 in the city of Oxford (which was formerly a flourishing seat of learning and is now a school of heresy) certain judges and the principal people of the province were met together to judge criminal cases. The hearing of mass is held to be a crime, as is also the confession of sins to a priest, submission to the supreme pontiff, and the carrying or venerating of the cross or *Agnus Dei*; and these crimes were amongst those for hearing. Suddenly, in the midst of their deliberations, the wrath of God fell upon them in such a way that, although all were present had been perfectly well previously, the two principal judges, two viscounts, eight of the twelve jurymen, and many of the people in Court, fell ill of a strange malady. Numbers of them died on the spot, many others on their road home, and many more as they entered their houses, so that within twenty-four hours, 200 of these people were dead, and in the course of three days, 150 more, and the malady was still raging when the letter was written. . . . It will thus be seen that God is fighting on our side." (*Calendar of State Papers—Spanish State Papers—Elizabeth*, p. 541, no. 462.)

"The Great Sicknesse at Oxford" is thus described in Stowe's *Annales* (p. 681): "The 4, 5, and 6 dayes of July (1577) were the Assizes holden at Oxford, where was arraigned and condemned one Rowland Jenkes for his seditious tongue, at which time there arose amongst the people such a dampe, that almost all were smothered, very fewe escaped that were not taken at that instant: the Jurors died presently: shortly after died Sir Robert Ball Lord Chiefe Baron, Sir Robert de Olie, Sir William Babington, Master Weneman, Master de Olie high Sheriffe, Master Dauers, Master Harcurt, Master Kirie, Master Pherelace, Master Greenwood, Master Foster, Master Nash, Sergeant Baram, Master Steuens, etc.: there died in Oxford 300 persons, and sickened there but died in other places 200 and odde, from the 6 of July to the 12 of August, after which day died not one of that sicknesse, for one of them infected not another, nor any one woman or childe died thereof."

Nichols, in *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth* (II, 64), gives a slightly different account which is

taken from a letter, dated August 4, 1577, written by Lord Burghley to the Earl of Shrewsbury. After describing the "epidemic" at Oxford, Lord Burghley states that "there are deade Sir Robert Doyly and an uncle of his, William Danvers of Banbury, Mr. Wayneman, and the most parte of thee freeholders that were at the Assizes in Oxford; 50 schollers and 20 townesmen are deade." He continues, "The Queene's Ma^{tie} stayeth her determination of any progresse, doubtlesse leaste this sicknesse might increase farther, w^{ch} I truste God of his mercie will stave." Nichols says, "By this fearful sickness more than 300 persons perished; amongst whom were Bell, Chief Baron of the Exchequer; Sir William Babington, Harcourt, Fettiplace, and Barham, an eminent lawyer."

Stowe's description of the onset of "this great sickness," which he says was "such a dampe, that almost all were smothered," makes it seem that this was a very early use of poison gas. The cause of this "epidemic" would be an interesting subject on which to speculate, but it is only the "miracle" with which we are concerned.

When Hamlet says that the players "are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time," we know he means the lines they speak. This statement is sufficient warrant for us to expect to find allusions to contemporary events in the plays written by Shakespeare. Under the Stratford theory of authorship, such allusions cannot be found, with the exception of a very few and even those noted may have been misinterpreted or were later interpolations. When the plays are placed in an earlier period and in a different chronological sequence than the Stratfordians place them, topical allusions are found in abundance. The plays are actually "the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time."

The historical play of *2 Henry VI* is filled with episodes which echo events of 1579 and preceding months. The marriage of King Henry and Queen Margaret and its unpopularity in England is paralleled by the unpopularity of the projected marriage of Queen Elizabeth with the French Duc d'Alençon, the opposition of the Earl of Leicester being notable, as is that of Gloucester in the play. John Stubbes, who wrote a pamphlet against the French marriage, lost his right hand for his pains, and in parallel, we find Jack Cade saying in the play (for which there is no historical warrant):

Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment? that parchment, being scribbled o'er, should undo

a man? Some say the bee stings; but I say, 'tis the bee's wax, for I did but seal once to a thing, and I was never mine own man since.

Elizabeth was greatly irritated in 1579 by the secret marriage of her favorite, Lord Leicester, with the widowed Countess of Essex, who injudiciously flaunted her beautiful clothes about the Court in such a manner as to add further flame to the Queen's wrath over the marriage and on one occasion Elizabeth boxed her soundly on the ear and forbade her the Court; just such a scene is found in the play when Queen Margaret boxes the ear of the Duchess of Gloucester, though history does not record such an incident.

While near St. Albans on her Progress through Essex and Suffolk in 1579, Queen Elizabeth received news that James Fitzmaurice and Nicholas Sanders, Papal Envoys to Ireland, had hoisted the Papal banner at Smerwick on the west coast of Ireland. Lord Grey of Wilton, Viceroy of Ireland, was quickly despatched with troops and ships to quell this reckless invasion. Fitzmaurice was soon killed and the affair continued under the leadership of Sanders, though Grey was not long in subduing it. This was the same Nicholas Sanders who, two years earlier, had reported the account of the "miracle" at Oxford when hundreds of persons had died of a sudden and mysterious illness, concluding with the comment, "God is fighting on our side." As an echo of this historical incident, the play tells of the miracle of the blind man, Saunder Simpcox, receiving his sight at the shrine of St. Albans, which is acclaimed by the populace within the hearing of the King, but the miracle is quickly proved false.

It is this impostor, Saunder Simpcox, with whom we are immediately concerned. The very name betrays him. "Saunder" is simply a variation in spelling of Sanders, which was as often spelled Saunders, and "Simpcox" can have no other meaning than simpleton. It is evident that Nicholas Sanders showed little common sense in his attempt to invade Ireland with so small a force at his command and, like Saunder Simpcox fleeing from the beadle's whip, he fled from the wrath of Lord Grey's troops. The miracle scene in the play confirms the identification of Saunder Simpcox as Nicholas Sanders, because Sanders, in reporting to the Spanish King the account of the mysterious malady at Oxford falsely called it a "miracle."

No other event of Queen Elizabeth's day has been recorded as a miracle.

Eva Turner Clark

The Cambridge Bibliography

The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, edited by F. W. Bateson, has recently been published by the Cambridge University Press in four stout volumes (£7.7s.). Of this important work, *The Times Literary Supplement* (21 Dec. 1940) says, "The author and subject catalogues of many great libraries, pre-eminently the British Museum Library, have done much the same for specific collections of books: Mr. Bateson's collection comprehends all the books in all the libraries. It is a work that no library, great or small, can afford to be without."

Commenting editorially on Mr. Bateson's *magnum opus*, the T.L.S. (28 Dec. 1940) says, in part, "It is not inopportune, at a time when English culture is threatened by barbarism of the most wanton kind, to relate this great catalogue of literature, compiled in peace, to the war which has failed to prevent its publication. The Germans have sometimes claimed Shakespeare for their own. To say that in the past they have contributed more than any other foreign race to the understanding of Shakespeare is in no way to admit the claim. But the Cambridge Bibliography is full of evidences of the strong—it had seemed, the indissoluble—bond between German scholarship and English literature. Not only in Shakespearian studies and in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English (here, perhaps, the bond of race is closest) do names like Liebermann and Klaeber and Schücking constantly appear; but when Mr. Bateson covers English 'literary relations with the Continent' during the nineteenth century it is German authors, critics, and translators who claim most space. The link, we may still hope, will be reformed in happier days. For the present the breaking of it can only be added reproach against a nation that has run so true to its military, and so false to its cultural, traditions."

"Nor, in reality, is the 'staying' of these Shakespearian Quartos [As You Like It, Henry V, Much Ado, 4 Aug. 1600] of any real importance; it is worth mentioning only as another happy instance of our utter ignorance of Shakespeare's mortal life." H. H. Furness in Preface to *Much Ado About Nothing*, FURNESS VARIORUM.

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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 per 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.

"Hidden Allusions"

In 1931, William Farquhar Payson published a volume by Eva Turner Clark entitled *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays*. The book was printed in England about the same time as *Shakespeare's Plays in the Order of Their Writing*. The two titles combined are more descriptive of the book than either one alone, for by the allusions found in the plays the chronology is determined.

Upon the death of Mr. Payson, Mrs. Clark purchased from his estate the remaining volumes of the American edition. She has now decided to celebrate the tenth anniversary of its publication by sending copies of this book to members of the Shakespeare Fellowship, American Branch. Because of difficult shipping conditions, it is not feasible to attempt to send copies to England.

Since the book was published, numerous allusions have been noted, a few having appeared in the NEWS-LETTER, which serve to confirm the conclusions already arrived at.

Members who have purchased this book will confer a favor upon the author if they will give the new copy to a friend who may be interested in the subject or place it in the local library.

Re-Ordered

All of the half-dozen copies of Captain B. M. Ward's *Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, announced for sale at the Shakespeare Fellowship office in the June NEWS-LETTER, were sold almost before the announcement was in print. We are happy to observe so much interest in the subject and are glad to assure others who may wish to own a copy of this valuable book that a new order was promptly placed. However, with shipping conditions what they are, we are unable to promise prompt delivery. The price of this book is \$6.00, and 10 cents additional for postage.

The Book Club of California

The Book Club of California, founded in 1912, a non-commercial, non-profit association of book-lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast literature and fine printing, is the oldest and largest club of its kind in the country. Its board of directors is made up of men who are among the most eminent citizens of California, men who are always found in the vanguard of every cultural movement on the Pacific Coast.

Among the Club's activities is the publication of two or three books each year on subjects which merit fine editions. These books, in format and typography, are examples of the work of the foremost printers of the West, and are issued in limited editions and sold only to members. Of the 59 books already published by the Club, only 14 are now available, an indication of the keen interest of members, with whom the purchase is optional.

The Club issues a quarterly periodical, called the *News-Letter*, which keeps members informed on current and future activities and provides a medium for the discussion of Club policies and projects. Each number contains one or more authoritative papers on various phases of book collecting, with special reference to the interests of Western collectors.

Shakespeare's "Fluellen" Identified As a Retainer of the Earl of Oxford

Contemporary Letter Provides Evidence that the Author of *King Henry the Fifth* Drew a Famous Stage Characterization from the Poet Earl's Personal Circle

*For I do know Fluellen valiant,
And, touch'd with choler, hot as gunpowder,
And quickly will return an injury . . .*

King Henry the Fifth, IV, 7, 171.

All serious students of the documentary evidence which shows the personality of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, dominating the plays and poems published under the obvious pseudonym of "William Shakespeare," know that this testimony is too voluminous and far too diverse to be merely a tissue of coincidences.

As Mr. J. Thomas Looney, original discoverer of the Oxford-Shakespeare parallels, has pointed out, much of the legal evidence that plays so important a part in the administration of civilized courts of justice is based upon coincidence, backed with documentary or personal affirmation.

If coincidence should be declared inadmissible, very few verdicts could be rendered by either judge or jury in what we know today as courts of law and equity. There can be no argument on that score.

Yet in the realm of Shakespearean research, self-appointed "authority" either ignores or distorts the whole issue of coincidence here involved; and to protect a well-established vested interest of its own, has nothing but scorn and contempt for Oxfordian investigators of the admitted mystery of the Bard's personal identity as a man among the men of his own times.

The very fact that the Oxfordian point of view is that of the scientific realist, who sets out to track down the long-missing personality to match the masterly works that have never before been satisfactorily explained from the point of view of human accomplishment, seems enough to set the orthodox pundits in a dither of voluble negation. Not only is the law of coincidence vehemently denied by these gentry: Sir Oracle would prevent all such heretics from submitting the new Oxford evidence to the court of public opinion. He who opens his mouth to question the moth-eaten and illogical tenets of the highly commercialized Stratford tetrarchs is in for unscrupulous handling and must be capable of wielding a well-loaded blackthorn of his own.

The opening chapter of Prof. E. E. Stoll's new book, *Shakespeare and Other Masters*, provides a

good example of the ill-natured, opinionated belittlement which professional Stratfordians offer in lieu of logical rebuttal of the Oxford-Shakespeare evidence.

Meanwhile, Oxfordian research industriously continues to pile documentary proof upon documentary proof that the literary nobleman, Edward de Vere—amply certified by his contemporaries as the foremost poet at Elizabeth's Court—is inextricably bound up with the very warp and woof of the Shakespearean creative mystery. Where William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon fails most signally to present credentials of personal accomplishment, Lord Oxford appears in person to answer the oft-repeated question:

"How could Shakespeare have known that point of law, that particular bit of Court etiquette—or that Elizabethan notable so well?"

The long-observed personality of this eccentric genius who disposed bit by bit of one of the greatest earldoms in the Tudor realm to help bring to flower the golden age of English drama, comes to light between the lines of the Shakespeare plays as unmistakably as his hidden features and personal symbols have been brought to the surface of the most ancient of the painted portraits of the Bard.

We are in position to prove, beyond all reasonable doubt, that it is in this man's life and activities that the true and satisfying answers to the most thorny questions of the Shakespearean creative background are to be found. Edward de Vere provides the human solution to every problem that has gone by default when submitted to the uncouth and inarticulate business man of Stratford who had such difficulty in writing his own name legibly.

Instead of Stratfordian *assumptions*, based upon familiarity with the printed works without attempting to account for the human agency which made them possible, Oxfordians offer facts relating to the many-sided genius of the cruelly misunderstood peer who looked like Shakespeare, wrote like Shakespeare and had so many of the personal experiences

and personal associations which are adumbrated in the plays and poems.

The discovery of a new and highly significant Shakespearean association of the literary Earl can now be announced. This brings to our attention, one of the most picturesque real life notables of Elizabethan times, the doughty Sir Roger Williams, the Welsh soldier of fortune, who is said by all modern editors of *King Henry the Fifth* to have been the prototype of Shakespeare's characterization of Captain Fluellen.

Both Sir Sidney Lee and Prof. John Dover Wilson of Cambridge have written at length to prove that the dramatist had Williams clearly in mind when he drew the colorful figure of the Welsh firebrand. The idiosyncrasies of the living soldier and his stage counterpart are, as a matter of fact, identical. The parallels embrace not only broad outlines of appearance, nativity and calling, but extend to those known tricks of speech, peculiarities of reasoning, and reaction to events, as well as the telling *defects of character* which lend verisimilitude to all true portraits.

No one who studies the contemporary accounts of Sir Roger Williams, together with the published writings of this remarkable washbuckler—with his delightful mixture of bravery, impulsiveness, native honesty, chauvinism, pawky humor and resolute devotion to "discipline"—can for one moment doubt that the author of *Henry the Fifth* had this particular Elizabethan notable before his mind's eye when he created Fluellen. The two men think, speak and act exactly alike. They even use the same verbal similes and the same historical incidents to drive home identical arguments.

In his sketch of Sir Roger Williams in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Sir Sidney Lee tells us that the Welsh hero was born in Monmouthshire (exactly the same county which Fluellen so pridefully claims as his birthplace); 1540 is the year given as the most probable date for this event. Anthony à Wood says that Williams studied at Brasenose College, Oxford, beginning in 1554, and that soon after he left Oxford, he became a soldier of fortune.

From other sources, including his own writings, it is known that Williams was among the first British soldiery to serve on the Continent during Elizabeth's reign. In fact, nearly all of his mature life can be shown to have been spent in active service in the Lowlands, in France and other Continental countries.

In referring to Sir Roger's character, Lee states:

"He rapidly acquired a wide reputation for exceptional courage and daring. Like Shakespeare's Fluellen, he was constitutionally of a choleric temper and blunt of speech, but the defects of judgment with which he is commonly credited seem exaggerated."

Serving under Henry of Navarre during the late 1580's and early 1590's, after a long experience in the Low Countries, Sir Roger Williams finally returned to London in 1594 with the French Ambassador. His first book, *A Brief Discourse of War, with his Opinion concerning some part of Military Discipline* had been published in London in 1590. It was not until 1618, however, that the volume upon which his literary fame rests, *The Actions of the Lowe Countries*, was finally printed.

Broken in health, Williams did not long survive his return to Elizabeth's Court in 1594. His death was the occasion of public mourning during the following year.

While the evidence proving Sir Roger Williams to have been the prototype of Shakespeare's Fluellen is too voluminous and clear-cut to admit of doubt, no particle of proof has ever been adduced to show that William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon ever came face to face with this dashing Welsh military hero. Neither can it be shown that Shakspeare was ever vouchsafed a glance at the manuscript of Williams' book, *The Actions of the Lowe Countries*, published posthumously in 1618, though many of the speeches that the author of *Henry the Fifth* puts in the mouth of the argumentative Fluellen are merely poetical paraphrases of Sir Roger's own arguments and "instances" in the *Actions*.

Both Williams and his stage double are extravagant admirers of Edward III and his military exploits. (See Williams' account of the Battle of Middleburgh and Fluellen's reference to Edward III in *Henry the Fifth*, IV, 7, 89.) Both men refer quaintly to Alexander the Great, speak boastfully of their native soil and evince reverence for "the literature of the wars." Williams is a firm advocate of military discipline, which he expatiates upon endlessly and uses in the wording of two of his book titles. This same insistence upon "discipline" becomes a catchword with Fluellen: "the disciplines of the wars," "the disciplines of the pristine wars of the Romans," "the true disciplines of the wars," *ad infinitum*. In his amusing encounter with the Irish engineer, Captain Macmorris, Fluellen immediately suggests, "a few *disputations* with you, as partly touching or concerning the disciplines of

the wars." At the end of his chapter describing the Battle of Middleburgh in the *Actions*, Williams exclaims in the unmistakable phraseology of Fluellen:

"But I will dispute against any *souldier*, that no fight hath been comparable unto it by sea, these five hundred yeares . . ."

These are but a few of the verbal parallels. Space does not permit at this time of a complete presentation of the Williams-Fluellen characterization.

The portrait is, indeed, so realistic that it is abundantly evident that the creator of the stage Fluellen knew Sir Roger Williams as intimately as Charles Dickens knew the original of the irrepressible Mr. Micawber. Yet it is not susceptible of proof that the Stratford native ever came into contact with the Welsh soldier of fortune. What is the answer to this riddle?

As usual, we find a reasonable and satisfying answer in the documentation relating to the 17th Earl of Oxford, the great concealed dramatist of Elizabeth's Court.

In Volume 17 of the *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, published 1938 by the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission, I have come across the transcript of a holograph letter written by Sir Francis Vere, favorite cousin and intimate friend of the 17th Earl of Oxford, to Sir Robert Cecil, Principal Secretary of State. It is dated November 17, 1605, and evidently accompanied another letter from one Thomas Morgan, a notorious spy, at this time in the pay of certain Continental interests desirous of stirring up trouble in England. The first paragraph of Vere's letter reads as follows:

"I received the enclosed from Thomas Morgan this morning by an Englishman, a stranger to me, but as he says well known to Sir William Waad. It was delivered to him by Sir Robert Dormer. The contents are strange to me, for I never borrowed money of him, nor to my remembrance spake with him; but such a man I saw when I was very young at Paris, by reason of the company I kept with Sir Roger Williams and one Denys a Frenchman, followers of my Lord of Oxford's, to whom he sometimes resorted."

Here we have unquestionable contemporary proof that the playwriting Earl of Oxford knew the living prototype of Shakespeare's Fluellen from personal contact!

"Merely a coincidence . . . ?"

But as these innumerable coincidences continue to come to light, their cumulative effect creates a

documentary case history of impressive proportions.

To paraphrase a speech from the comedy, *Once In a Lifetime*:

"The whole thing couldn't be a coincidence, could it?"

The answer is:

"Yes, and the kind of all-embracing coincidence that wins verdicts in the highest courts in the land."

For, as we have shown in other instances too numerous to mention, Oxford is the one man who can be proven to have possessed the poetical genius, plus the particular knowledge and essential *opportunity* to meet the definite requirements of "Mr. William Shakespeare's" role in this all-important matter of creative background. Where William of Stratford is merely the pale simulacrum of a random guess, the playwriting Earl appears as a documented entity in the known Shakespearean circle.

Such evidence as this which shows the close relationship between Lord Oxford and the original Fluellen cannot help but strengthen belief that the Shakespeare plays are—contrary to orthodox pronouncement—full of topical allusions and alive with speaking portraits and biting satires of many famous Elizabethan characters.

Both Mrs. Eva Turner Clark and Dr. Lily B. Campbell are fundamentally right in emphasizing this highly important aspect of the plays.

When all of the existing documentation relating to Lord Oxford's activities and personal associations is printed, it should be possible to convince all who study the evidence with open minds that the true personality behind these immortal works was deliberately concealed primarily because his creative approach was so largely autobiographical.

In other words, Edward de Vere, publicly designated as one whose "countenance shakes a spear" by Gabriel Harvey, had committed the unforgivable social error of "holding the mirror up to nature," of realistically featuring both himself and many of his personal associates as "a motley to the view." As a result, he could never acknowledge authorship of these creations without scandalizing his caste beyond all redemption.

Robert Louis Stevenson tells us in his account of the writing of *Treasure Island* how he evolved the characterization of Long John Silver from a slightly accentuated study of his friend and collaborator, William Ernest Henley.

This method of literary creation is thoroughly sound. And Stevenson, living in a different age, and belonging to a different stratum of society, could have his fun and invite the whole reading public to enjoy it with him. But the Lord Chamberlain of England obviously could do no such thing in the days of Good Queen Bess.

But, by the same token, it is undoubtedly this very quality of lifelike portraiture in the dramatic recreation of such personalities as Sir Roger Williams as Fluellen, the Great Lord Burghley as Polonius, Sir Christopher Hatton as Malvolio and Oxford himself as Bertram and Hamlet—to mention but two of several self-portraits—which has given these stage figures their deathless vitality down the centuries.

Charles Wisner Barrell

The Huntington Library

The thirteenth Annual Report of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, is at hand with an interesting account of the research accomplished at that wonderful institution during the past year. A few excerpts from the Report will be of interest to our members.

"The immediate effect of the closing of foreign libraries, because of the war, was to bring to San Marino a number of students who would otherwise have gone abroad. It promised to send a larger number during the summer, when so many persons in academic life have been accustomed to spend their vacations in study in England and on the Continent. The research staff of the Huntington Library was fully conscious that the presence of so many scholars studying English civilization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries invited—even demanded—the arrangement of a Renaissance conference, which has accordingly been scheduled for the latter part of August. The underlying idea is to provide an occasion for explaining the conception of literary and historical research prevailing at the Library, to take stock of the existing state of Renaissance scholarship, and to suggest profitable regions for further exploration. Announcement was also made of research seminars, to be held during the academic year—of which the first series would be devoted to the latter part of the English Renaissance."

Among scholars who have been reading at the Huntington Library through the past year on subjects of the Elizabethan period, all of which have a more or less close connection with a study of Shakespeare, are the following; as listed in the

Report:

Lily B. Campbell finished editing the parts added to the *Mirror for Magistrates* by John Higgins and Thomas Blenerhasset, to be published for the Huntington Library by the Cambridge University Press, and carried further her study of Shakespeare's historical plays. (Now in press).

Willard Farnham, University of California, continued his study of Elizabethan writers of tragic drama.

Samuel C. Chew, Bryn Mawr College, the relation of the pictorial arts to Elizabethan literature.

Richard F. Jones, Washington University, the Elizabethan interest in language.

Edythe N. Backus, Monrovia, California, a bibliography of Elizabethan music in the Huntington Library.

Caroline B. Bourland, Smith College, Gabriel Harvey's marginalia in Huntington Library books.

Dan Boughner, Northwestern University, relationships between Italian and English drama in the Elizabethan period.

Stanley Johnson, Northwestern University, studies of the family of Sir Philip Sidney.

Paul H. Kocher, University of Washington, the dramatic works of Christopher Marlowe.

Robert A. Law, University of Texas, problems in Elizabethan drama.

A. M. Pelligrini, University of Washington, a study of Giordano and his influence on English thought.

George F. Reynolds, University of Colorado, Elizabethan theatrical history.

William A. Ringer, Princeton University, critics of the Elizabethan stage.

Morris P. Tilley, University of Michigan, proverb lore in Elizabethan literature.

Ernest Strathmann, Pomona College, a history of skepticism in the age of Shakespeare.

Kathrine Koller, Bryn Mawr College, Elizabethan concepts of death and the literary use of the theme of death.

Also named in the Report but not here listed are a number of students working on the life of Edmund Spenser and various aspects of his poetry. All studies of Spenser should have an interest to students of the Oxford-Shakespeare problem, as Spenser and the Earl of Oxford were almost exact contemporaries and there is evidence of their knowledge of each other's work which should be given more research than it has had.

"Words for Music"

In a review of "Words for Music," published in the *Herald Tribune*, 1 June 1941, Mr. Virgil Thomson writes the following astonishing paragraph:

The war between music and poetry goes back to Elizabethan times. I should be inclined to credit Shakespeare, himself no mean lyricist, with administering that final blow to the prestige of musical art in England that placed it forever afterwards outside the pale of serious expression. He rarely mentioned it, in fact, without going out of his way to snub it, to put it in its place as a mere "concourse of sweet sounds" or worse, as "the food of love." One can imagine what fury of protest would have sprung up if Byrd or Morley had said anything like that about poetry, or if Spenser, say, had tried to get away with any such attack on the sister art fifty years earlier. But Queen Elizabeth was not music-minded, and James I fancied himself as a poetic author, and the rising Puritan revolution was suspicious of music's ancient intimacies with both the Catholic Church and the dance. And so Shakespeare did get away with it; and neither Purcell nor his poetic collaborators, Dryden and Tate, though they wrote some pretty fine musico-poetic works, were able to put Humpty-Dumpty together again in any permanent way.

Shakespeare "snub" music? Come, come, Mr. Thomson! How long since you have read your Shakespeare? What about "Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,"—"a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it"? There is the song, "Who is Silvia?" "How now! are you sadder than you were before? the music likes you not." Could Shakespeare have had in mind such a man as Mr. Thomson when he had his musicians sing

Pinch him, fairies, mutually;
Pinch him for his villainy;
Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
Till candles and star-light and moonshine be out.

Here is, "by my troth, a good song":
Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.

And there is "Under the greenwood tree" and
Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.
It is an ancient device to take words out of their

context and twist their meaning. The expression, "concourse [*sic*] of sweet sounds," is surely taken from the talk about music, on that lovely night at Belmont, which Lorenzo thus concludes:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music!
Is there any "snub" to music in the complete text? Shakespeare does not say music is "the food of love." He is never so crass, but words are necessary to clothe thoughts and his thoughts are generally shown in shining garments:

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.

One does not need to be a romantic to believe that love and music are not incompatible.

We cannot agree that Queen Elizabeth was "not music-minded." Historians tell us that she was "an excellent musician," that she was extremely fond of the lute, the harpsichord, and singing, and that she danced with "a high magnificence" that was a delight to all beholders. One must be music-minded to be a good dancer.

Why place Spenser "fifty years earlier" than Shakespeare? Though he used an antiquated language in which to express his poetry, which brought protests from some of his friends, he was in reality a contemporary of Shakespeare.

Whatever war Mr. Thomson finds between music and poetry, it cannot be traced to Shakespeare. Several writers who have made a profound study of the plays from the standpoint of music have marveled at the expert knowledge of the divine art displayed.

Such knowledge, we know, was at the command of Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, for, as John Farmer said, he understood the art better than most of those who made it a profession. Of no other dramatist of the Elizabethan period can so much be said. It is one of the many strong points upon which the Oxford theory of Shakespeare authorship is based. That so devoted a student of the art was responsible for a "war between music and poetry" is a suggestion that no serious reader of the plays can harbor for an instant.

The Genevan Bible

Several commentators in the past have shown that the many scriptural parallels throughout the plays prove Shakespeare's familiarity with the Genevan Bible of 1560, rather than the Bishop's Bible of 1568. Carter says, "Many of the Biblical passages quoted by Shakespeare are found only in the Genevan version."

This statement seems a natural corollary to the fact that, at the age of nineteen, the Earl of Oxford purchased a copy of the Genevan Bible, as shown by an old account book of 1569.

Messaline

My name is Sebastian . . . my father was that Sebastian of Messaline, whom I know you have heard of.

Twelfth Night, II.i.17.

Furness tells us that "inasmuch as this locality is unknown to geographers, Hamner changed it to *Metelin* (the modern name, as Capell points out, of *Mitylene*), utterly regardless of the identity of Sebastian's father, who, we may be very sure, was never in Metelin in his life. He was 'Sebastian of Messaline,' and if we do not know where Messaline was, it merely proves that we know less than the Captain of the ship, an ignorance which is not humiliating. I think Messaline was the chief town on Prospero's island." That is, Furness believes it to be a quite fictitious name.

Could Shakespeare have had in mind those wandering religious fanatics called "Messalians," when he coined the place-name Messaline? In the fourth or fifth century, hordes of these people left a section of what seems to have been northern Syria and spread into southern Syria, Armenia, and other parts of Asia Minor, causing great scandal by their begging and idle mode of life. The word is said to be Syrian, meaning "those who pray."

The probable centre from which these people came was, in Elizabeth's time, that great commercial point on the overland route to India, Aleppo. During the later period, English merchants kept up a steady trade with Aleppo and other near-Eastern places, among the ships employed on this route being the *Tiger*, mentioned in *Twelfth Night*, so that considerable knowledge of the section was readily available to the alert mind, even the fact that a thousand years before, the people who went from there were called Messalians, hence their country must have been "Messaline."

I do not mean to imply that any person in the play was actually a Messalian, but there is a parallel intended between that word and the activities of Don Antonio, who, upon the death of King Sebastian, made claim to the throne of Portugal. The Pretender was the natural son of John II of Portugal and a Jewess, the mother's race possibly suggesting the Semitic Messalians. Don Antonio appealed to the heads of other states to help him establish his claim, to which they were inclined to agree, as they feared Philip of Spain who had immediately upon the death of Sebastian cast covetous eyes in the direction of Portugal.

Writing about events of 1580, Hume says, "When the envoys came from the Portuguese Pretender, Don Antonio, they brought bribes and presents in plenty for Leicester, who entertained them splendidly, and urged their suit for assistance for their master; but again Lord Burghley pointed out to the Queen . . . the risks she would incur in a war with Spain, and one Ambassador after another went back discomfited."

The Earl of Oxford was in a position to be entirely familiar with all of these efforts being made in 1580 in behalf of Don Antonio and likened them to the prayers of the Messalians in the statement that Sebastian's father was "that Sebastian of Messaline," suggesting Don Antonio's claim of being the true successor of King Sebastian. This seems to be another allusion that must be added to the many of 1580 already pointed out in *Twelfth Night*.

Eva Turner Clark

San Francisco's Interest

One of our San Francisco members, Mr. Flodden W. Heron, addressed three different groups in one week in June on the subject, "The Man Who Was Shakespeare." Perhaps the largest of these meetings was that of the Literary and Allied Arts Discussion Group, held on June 7th. Several professional people were present and keen interest was shown in the subject.

As he talks, Mr. Heron illustrates his lectures by displaying books, manuscripts, and pictures from his collection of Shakespeariana, a most effective way of registering his points.

Mr. Heron is one of the noted bibliophiles on the Pacific Coast and keeps himself informed on the famous libraries of London, New York, and elsewhere. His own fine library contains many rarities. Although a busy lawyer, Mr. Heron finds time to study and to thoroughly enjoy his fascinating collection of books.