News-Letter

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Was Lord Oxford Buried in Westminster Abbey?

Renowned Spenser lye a thought more nigh
To learned Chaucer and rare Beaumont lie
A little nearer Spenser to make room
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold tomb.
To lodge all four in one bed make a shift
Until Domesday, for hardly will a fifth
Betwixt this day and that by fate be slain
For whom your curtain may be drawn again.
If your precedence in death doth bar
A fourth place in your sacred sepulchre,
Under this carved marble of thine own
Sleep, rare Tragedian Shakespeare, sleep alone;
Thy unmolested peace, unshared cave
Possess as Lord, not Tenant, of thy grave
That unto us and others it may be
Honour hereafter to be laid by thee.

William Basse

Was Shakespeare, the author of the immortal plays and sonnets, known throughout the world by his name, buried in Westminster Abbey? In these strange and significant lines, written prior to 1623, Basse suggests that Shakespeare was, or was about to be, buried in Westminster Abbey near his fellow poets Chaucer, Spenser and Beaumont.

Now let us jump a year or two and pass to 1623 and the publication of the First Folio of "Shakespeare." This volume contained all the famous plays except *Pericles*, twenty of them being printed for the first time. To this edition, as all the world knows, Ben Jonson contributed a poetical preface, and here we are faced with the interesting fact that Jonson makes an immediate reference to Basse. Here are Jonson's lines:

My Shakespeare, rise; I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye
A little further, to make thee a roome:
Thou art a Moniment, without a tombe,
And art alive still, while thy Book doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.

In the poem quoted at the beginning of this article, Basse clearly indicates that he believes Shakespeare was, or was soon to be, buried in Westminster Abbey; while Jonson, who interprets the lines of Basse in this sense, reinforces the same thought here when he says he will not lodge Shakespeare by Chaucer, etc. The two writers thus corroborate each other by referring to the matter of Abbey burial, whether it took place in fact or not. Jonson had undoubtedly been instructed to avoid specific personal statements as far as possible, although in everything he contributed to the First Folio regarding the Bard's actual identification, he can be proved to have employed phraseology subject to more than one meaning.

In considering the three principal claimants for

the authorship of the plays, William Shakspere of Stratford, Francis Bacon and Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, let us examine some of the facts connected with the dates of death and burial of each of the three men.

Francis Bacon, Lord St. Albans, did not die until 1626. Obviously, his death could not have been referred to by Basse, prior to the publication of the First Folio in 1623.

It is universally accepted that William Shakspere died in 1616 and was buried in the chancel of Trinity Church at Stratford. No name nor dates appear on the stone that is believed to mark his grave: only the doggerel lines of warning to body-snatchers, which seem to have deterred any one from opening his grave from the date of his burial to this day. It is entirely possible that these crude verses were placed on the Stratford stone for the express purpose of making it clear to future generations that the bones of the deceased must continue to rest where they were first laid. The Stratford citizen's body was never vouchsafed a grave in the Abbey.

Lord Oxford died June 24, 1604, and was buried on July 6 in St. Augustine's Church, Hackney, of which the tower alone now stands. King's Place, later known as Brooke House, where Oxford died and which his widow retained until 1608, stands about half a mile north of St. Augustine's Church. The immediate cause of his death seems to have been the plague, since the words, "ye plague," are written in the margin of the page of the Parish Register which contains the entry of his burial. The Earl's grave was marked by neither stone nor name*; but when his widowed Countess died six weeks after making her will on November 25, 1612, she desired "to be buried in the Church of Hackney within the Countie of Middlesex, as neare unto the bodie of my said late deare and noble lorde and husband as maye bee and that to be done as privately and with as little pompe and ceremonie as possible maye bee. Onlie I will that there bee in the said Church erected for us a tombe fittinge our degree and of such chardge as shall seem good to myne Executors."

John Strype, who was lecturer in the Church of St. Augustine from 1689 to 1723, thus describes what must have been the Oxford tomb in his *Continuation of Stow's Survey* (1721): "On the north side of the chancel, first an ancient Table Monument with a fair grey marble. There were coats-of-armes on the sides, but torn off. This monument is concealed by the schoolmaster's pew."

The monument itself has disappeared, but a drawing of it made some time during the eighteenth century, possibly when the church fell into disrepair and was demolished, exists in the Hackney Public Library. This drawing shows the place originally occupied by the two coats-of-arms, probably those of Vere and Trentham. Whether the tomb bore any inscription or identification beyond the coats-of-arms cannot be stated with accuracy. It is highly probable that it did not, as many of the circumstances connected with the later years of Lord Oxford's life are shrouded in mystery. We also have his own words in Sonnets 71, 72, and 81 that he wished to be forgotten after his death.

The inference seems clear. The lines at the head of this article must refer to Oxford, since neither Will of Stratford nor Francis Bacon could have been apostrophized by Basse. Let us now examine the evidence for this contention which recent research and scholarship have brought to light.

A most interesting pamphlet entitled "When Shakespeare Died," by our late member, Mr. Ernest Allen, sheds much light on this subject. He goes fully into the evidence which led him to the conclusion that without any shadow of doubt Oxford was buried in Westminster Abbey, and that both Basse and Jonson knew it.

In the May, 1937, issue of the British Shakespeare Fellowship NEWS-LETTER, Captain B. M. Ward published an article on the subject of Lord Oxford's burial in Westminster Abbey, but at that time, as far as I am aware, Basse's poem had not been related to the Oxford Case, although it was well known. Sir Sidney Lee treated the poem as a plea for the burial of Will of Stratford in Westminster Abbey and contended that there was a popular demand for such a burial: for any such demand there is no evidence whatever.

The problem seemed nearer solution when Mr. Percy Allen made the interesting discovery of a manuscript book (Vincent 445) in the Herald's College written by Percival Golding, youngest son of Arthur Golding and therefore Edward de Vere's first cousin.

The title-page of this manuscript book reads as follows:

*The Life Story of Edward de Vere as "William Shakespeare," by Percy Allen. 1932.

The Armes, Honours, Matches and Issues of the Ancient and Illustrious family of Veer.
Described in the honourable progeny of the Earles of Oxenford and other branches thereof from the first Originall to the present tyme.
Together with a genealogicall Deduction of this noble family from the bloud of twelve forreine Princes, viz., three Emperours three Kings three Dukes and three Earles conveyed through the principall houses of Christendome. Gathered out of the History, Records and Other Monuments of Antiquity.

By

Persiuall Golding.

On page 51 of this interesting book we read:

EDWARD DE VEER, only sonne of John, borne ye Twelveth day of Aprill A° 1550, Earle of Oxenforde, high Chamberlayne, Lord Bolebec, Sandford and Badelesmere, Steward of ye fforest in Essex, and of ye priuy Counsell to the Kings Matie that now is: Of whom I will only speake, what all mens voices Confirm; he was a man in mind and body absolutely accomplished with honourable endowments: he died at his house at Hackney in the moneth of June Anno 1604 and *lieth buried att Westminster.* (Italics mine.)

This statement by one so closely connected with the de Vere family as Percival Golding adds greatly to the evidence that Lord Oxford was buried in Westminster Abbey. Golding was unquestionably in a position to have information which would not have been available to the general public, especially if the interment were secret, as, considering the mystery which surrounds the last years of Lord Oxford's life, seems probable. Although the book is undated, it would appear from the internal evidence of the passage quoted above that it was written during the reign of James I, some time between 1604 and 1625.

There seems to be some justification for the belief that Lord Oxford's body was not removed from his grave in Hackney to the Vere tomb in the Abbey until after the death of his Countess early in 1613. If this were the case, it may be the reason why no reference to such a burial appears in the Abbey Records—because it had already appeared in the "burial" register of St. Augustine's Church at Hackney. In any event, the secret has been well kept.

Readers are aware that Lord Oxford's two favorite cousins were Sir Francis and Sir Horace, or Horatio Vere, accepted by many Oxfordians as Francisco and Horatio in *Hamlet.* When Sir Francis Vere died in 1609, he was buried in the Chapel of St. John the Evangelist at the south-east corner of the north transept of Westminster Abbey. His widow erected a magnificent monument to him, suggested by the tomb of Engelbrecht II, Count of Nassau, at Breda. It consists of two slabs of black marble; upon the lower lies the effigy, in white marble, of Sir Francis Vere, with his cloak wrapped around him like a Roman toga. Upon the upper slab, which is supported by four kneeling knights, are the pieces of his armour, to show that he died in his bed, and not upon the field of battle. The following is an epitaph upon Sir Francis Vere, given in Pettigrew's collection:

When Vere sought death arm'd with the sword and shield,
Death was afraid to meet him in the field,
But when his weapons he had laid aside
Death, like a coward, struck him, and he died!

A fuller description together with a photograph of this beautiful monument can be seen in *The Mystery of "Mr. W. H.,"* by Colonel B. R. Ward.

Lord Oxford, just before his death in 1604, appointed Sir Francis Vere guardian of his eleven-year-old son Henry, afterward 18th Earl of Oxford. When Henry de Vere died from wounds received while fighting under Sir Horatio Vere in the Low Countries in 1625, at the early age of thirty-two, he was buried in Sir Francis Vere's tomb in the Abbey.

Sir Horatio Vere, the great Lord Vere of Tilbury, died in 1635, and he too was laid beside his brother, Sir Francis.

It would seem, therefore, that Sir Francis Vere's tomb was regarded as a family vault. As neither Sir Horatio Vere nor Henry de Vere died until after 1621, it is probable that they were instrumental in having Lord Oxford's body removed from his grave in Hackney Church and reinterred in the Abbey.

It is impossible to be exact as to dates, but if about 1620 or 1621 Basse had knowledge of an intention to reinter Lord Oxford's body in the

Abbey, or if he knew that such a thing had already been done, his poem becomes intelligible, and Jonson's reference to it in the preface to the First Folio some two years later falls into place. It would seem, therefore, that the great secret has been solved, and we are now able to show exactly what Basse and Jonson meant.

It is both fitting and gratifying to be in a position to believe that the greatest of English poets rests in the Abbey, where, because of his importance at the Court of Elizabeth as well as from his exalted family rank, he has every right to lie. Oxfordians who visit the Abbey will feel a sense of gratification when they see the beautiful Vere tomb, in thinking that perhaps the bones of Edward de Vere, the Poet Earl, lie within.

Phyllis Carrington

The Editors welcome Miss Phyllis Carrington as a new contributor to the NEWS-LETTER, not only on her own account, for her article is of extreme interest, but because she is a niece of the late Esther Singleton, author of many valuable books, whose declaration of her belief in the Oxford authorship of the "Shakespeare" plays was published after her death in the NEWS-LETTER of June, 1940. The war found Miss Carrington, with her mother and sister, living in London, but for some time they have made their home at "South View," Shillingford, near Bampton, North Devon.

The Duke of Portland And His Portrait Collection At Welbeck Abbey

The sixth Duke of Portland died at his home, Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire, on April 26. He was eighty-five years old. The sixth Duke was the son of Lieutenant General Arthur Cavendish-Bentinck and a cousin of the eccentric fifth Duke, who is remembered for the costly excavations made under the old Abbey and the construction of a vast apartment including a picture gallery and a ballroom. The Marquis of Titchfield, eldest son of the sixth Duke, will inherit the dukedom as the seventh Duke of Portland.

The recent death of the sixth Duke of Portland focuses attention again on his famous collection of pictures at Welbeck Abbey. The collection consists mainly of portraits of members of the families of Cavendish, Talbot, Pierrepont, Holles, Vere, Harley, Bentinck, Wriothesley, and Scott, according to C. Fairfax Murray's *Catalogue Raisonne* (The Chiswick Press, London, 1894). Besides careful descriptions of the pictures, this catalogue carries fifty-six handsome plates. Equally important, though without plates, is the "Catalogue of the Pictures belonging to his Grace the Duke of Portland, at Welbeck Abbey, 17 Hill Street, London, and Langwell House," compiled for the sixth Duke by Richard W. Goulding, Librarian at Welbeck Abbey, 1902-1929, and finally revised for the press by C. K. Adams, Assistant in the National Portrait Gallery (Cambridge University Press, 1936).

Regarding the Holles and Vere part of the collection, Goulding says that Lady Margaret Cavendish, daughter and heiress of the second Duke of Newcastle, married her first cousin, John Holles, fourth Earl of Clare, who was later created Duke of Newcastle. He possessed portraits of five generations of the Holles family. The seven Vere portraits came from his grandmother, wife of the second Earl of Clare, daughter and co-heiress of Lord Vere of Tilbury.

The portrait of this collection in which Shakespeare lovers are interested is listed as follows on page 209 of the Goulding Catalogue and on page 147 (with plate opposite) of the Murray Catalogue, both carrying the same number:

> No. 522. Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, 1550-1604. Painting of 1575, artist unknown. Nearly half-length, to the right; black hat (the rim ornamented with pairs of gold buttons, a small brown and white feather at the side) cocked on right side of his head; a thin moustache; closely fitting lace ruff; pale mauve doublet with high collar, horizontal lines of narrow gold braid; a black cloak braided with gold over his left shoulder; his right arm akimbo. 42 x 25 in. canvas, inscribed on the left: *Aetatis suae 25, 1575*, and on the right: *Edward Vere 17th Earle of Oxford Lord high Chamberlaine of Engld Married 1st Anne Daughter to Wm Cecil Lord Burghley, 2dly Eliz. Daughter to Tho Trentham of Roucester in Com: Stafford and died 24th of June 1604.*

The conclusion of the experts who have examined this portrait—"Artist unknown"—is a challenge to believers in the Oxford authorship of the Shakespeare plays and it is now thought that they can identify the man who painted it in 1575. This problem will be taken up in the next issue of the NEWS-LETTER.

Creative Calendar

An Illuminating Shaw-Shakespeare Parallel with Ben Jonson's Testimony

Regarding the true creative chronology of the Shakespeare plays—many of which were not publicly produced on a commercial basis until ten or fifteen years after they were written by the Earl of Oxford—we have an interesting parallel situation in the modern career of George Bernard Shaw.

Both Shaw and the eccentric nobleman who used the pen-name of "William Shakespeare" were advanced realists as compared to their contemporaries; experimenters in dramatic forms; explorers whose findings were at first considered caviare to the general.

Oxford's early plays were produced at Court and for the restricted audiences of the little private theatre in Blackfriars during the 1570's and 1580's.

Shaw says he found an outlet for his first dramatic work in various "absurd hole and corner" places where his Socialist confreres foregathered; supplemented with brief and financially unprofitable productions for the Independent Theatre. And many years had passed before either the Elizabethan or the Victorian trail-blazer was widely known to or accepted by the great public at large. Let us particularize.

At the end of the year 1896, Shaw had passed his fortieth birthday and had written six full-length plays and a couple of curtain-raisers or "interludes."

Some of these had been conceived in the 1880's and completed in 1892-3. But only two—*Widowers' Houses* and *Arms and the Man*—had been accorded adequate presentation. In 1896, so far as the general playgoing public was concerned, such works as *The Philanderer* (now acknowledged to be an autobiographical comedy), *Mrs. Warren's Profession, You Never Can Tell* and *Candida* were unknown. In fact, it was not until the new century was well under weigh that adventurous stars such as Arnold Daly; Mary Shaw, Robert Lorraine and their novelty-seeking backers had succeeded in giving the world anything approaching a fair idea of Shaw's real genius.

And when New York audiences, for instance, found themselves during such years as 1904-06 gasping and gurgling over the "new" playwright's "advanced" conceits and cutting "contemporary" allusions, nobody seems to have realized that many of his up-to-the-minute effects had really been written anywhere from eight to fourteen years previously.

In other words, if a chronological "expert" of the type that has arbitrarily fixed the dates of composition of the Shakespearean works had been called upon to decide the nativity of the Irish dramatist's brain-children according to the same laws of evidence that have been applied to the Bard's, it is obvious that such decisions would have been wide of the mark. Only a miracle of lucky guesswork could prevent the misdating of Shaw's early plays by the application of approved Stratfordian methods. Without the author's own testimony as a guide or an accurate set of his working schedules derived from close associates, it is a foregone conclusion that the first fifteen years of the Shavian creative chronology would be quite as blind a mystery as the Bard's has been—up to the time that the Earl of Oxford was discovered as the real personality behind the Elizabethan masterpieces.

Students of the Oxford evidence should keep this telling Shaw parallel in mind whenever Stratfordian "experts" announce with authoritative finality that *Hamlet* was written as late as 1602; that *Othello* cannot be dated earlier than 1604; that *Macbeth* was composed in 1606 or 1607; and that the "internal evidence" of such plays as *Antony and Cleopatra, Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* show they were written between 1608 and 1611.

The tragedy of "The Moor of Venice" provides a striking example of the confusion that besets orthodox biographers of the Bard. Knight dates its composition in 1602; Lee assigns it to 1604; Harrison to 1605; Malone to 1611 and Chalmers to 1614. Prof. Dowden admits he does not know when *Othello* was written, but states that the earliest allusion to the play was in 1610. Such wild conjectures are little short of astounding when there has been in existence for over three hundred years a perfectly reliable contemporary reference to *Othello* by Ben Jonson which dates from 1600-1601. This occurs in Jonson's esoteric comedy of *The Poetaster*, presented by the boy actors of the Queen's Chapel in 1601. To carry any point at all, such satirical com-

ments must presuppose that the object of satire is thoroughly familiar to the audience addressed. Therefore, we may assume that the characterization of Shakespeare's jealous Moor was already considered a stock piece in which every well-trained tragedian had tested his mettle when Jonson brought him into this sophisticated comedy. It is still impossible for me to believe that so direct a reference has been entirely overlooked by the high-powered authorities who have handed down their decisions on the Shakespearean chronology. But as such indeed seems to be the case, the evidence will bear reproduction here.

Act Three of *The Poetaster* finds the swashbuckling critic, Captain Tucca,* on the "Via Sacra" (or, as we would say, the Rialto) of the Southwark theatrical district, in contact with one Histrio, a stalking tragedian, evidently made up to caricature Ned Alleyn, stentorian favorite of the Elizabethan "groundlings." Tucca proceeds to upbraid Histrio as a "stinkard," and a "two-penny tear-mouth" who has grown so "rich" and "proud" through having "FORTUNE" and "the good year" on his side that he can no longer remember his former friends. Alleyn is known to have been one of the proprietors of the Fortune Theatre at this time, on terms of acquaintance with such members of the aristocracy as Sir Henry Goodyere (Drayton's patron), and was also rapidly accumulating wealth. So there can be no doubt that Jonson is aiming at him directly in this characterization of Histrio. By the same token, this gives us a key to the timely realism of the satire as a whole.

In an effort to divert Tucca's anger from Histrio, some other players in the group offer the bellicose Captain various samples of "the quality" that Histrio professes. These consist of a farrago of burlesqued lines and catch-phrases from Marlowe, *The Spanish Tragedy, Titus Andronicus, Hamlet* and other well-worn favorites. Finally, one of the imitators announces:

"Now you shall see me do the Moor: master, lend me your scarf a little."

"Here, 'tis at thy service, boy." And Tucca hands over his neckcloth.

But then Histrio himself engages Tucca in conversation, and as they walk aside, the imitator cries:

"Stay, thou shalt see me do the Moor ere thou goest—"

These references to the "the Moor" and the "scarf" recall *Othello* just as clearly as the allusions to "The Ghost" and the cries of "Vindicta" (Revenge) and the womanly screams of "Murder!" in the same burlesque vein recall *Hamlet.*

The fact that Jonson considered these tragedies to be good subject matter for laughter by the cognoscenti in the years 1600-1601, should long since have made it plain to every alert reader of *The Poetaster* that the orthodox method of dating the Shakespeare plays to conform to the lifespan of Shakspere of Stratford is quite untrustworthy.

Moreover, where a single allusion within the texture of a Shakespeare play may indicate to an assured Stratfordian some date of composition such as 1607, say, the Oxford investigator can usually turn up a dozen more realistic allusions in the same work to indicate that it was composed or presented a decade or two earlier.

Finally, it is equally patent that many of the 1570-1580 Shakespeare productions known chiefly to the restricted audiences of the Court and the private theatre of Blackfriars were "new" when revived for the general audiences at the Globe during the last years of Elizabeth and the first decade of James I. That is to say, they were "new" in exactly the same sense that a whole list of Shaw's plays were "new" to popular audiences in London and New York long years after their author had first committed them to manuscript.

Charles Wisner Barrell

What Members Are Doing

While in Florida the past winter, Mr. James Stewart Cushman gave a lecture at Harder Hall, a hotel in Sebring, on the subject of Oxford authorship of the Shakespeare plays. The lecture was attended by about one hundred guests of the hotel and was received with marked attention. A lawyer who was present complimented Mr. Cushman afterwards by saying, "I had never heard this theory before. I do not know if you are a lawyer or not, but you built your case up like a lawyer, and it is unanswerable."

Mr. James McKee of Philadelphia has written a paper on the relationship of "Shakespeare" to Sir Philip Sidney. That these two Elizabethans do obviously refer to each other in their works is well known. Mr. McKee supplements the original research of Mr. J. T. Looney in presenting effective new evidence which will appear in a later issue of the NEWS-LETTER.

*It seems to me that the characterization of Captain Tucca can be associated with the personality of Jonson himself who was vain of his military exploits in the Lowlands and frequently lashed his contemporaries with the same unsparing tongue that he gives Tucca. C.W.B.

Look in the Chronicles

II

(Continued from the April issue of the NEWS-LETTER)

A college professor of history who had become a convert to the Oxford theory once asked me to expound it to one of his close friends, a writer and a professor of literature at a well-known university in New England. He arranged for an interview between us. As we sat down, the writer said:

"Before we begin I wish to ask you one question."

"Go ahead."

"When did the Earl of Oxford die?"

"In June, 1604," was my answer.

"Then you can't talk to me."

"Why not?"

"Because Shakespeare wrote some of his best plays after that time."

"Name them."

"Well, to begin with, *Lear* and *Macbeth*, written in 1605."

"How do you prove that *Lear* was written in 1605?"

"There is a reference to the eclipses of the sun and moon which followed each other so closely. These eclipses took place in September, 1605, according to Chambers."

"Did you know that the only part of the present British Empire in which these eclipses were visible was British North Borneo?"

No, he hadn't heard that.

"What is more, did you know that the only pair of eclipses during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, which followed each other at a two week interval and were visible in England, took place in 1588? Chambers, by the way, knows so little about astronomy that he sets his pair on September 27th and October 2nd."

No, he didn't know that.

"Have you read Cairncross' *The Problem of Hamlet—A Solution?*"

No, he hadn't read it.

"In this book you will read that 'Leir,' a memory piracy on *Lear*, was entered on the Stationers' Register in 1594. Many of its lines are stolen from *Lear*, but there are others from *The Merchant of Venice*, from *Henry VI*, part 2, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and there are phrases from Marlowe and Peele. If we follow the old theory that 'Leir' was the original play, as Cairncross says, we have the curious situation in which Shakespeare borrows the plot and four-fifths of the lines from the older play, but omits with meticulous care all the phrases which echo *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry VI* and the *Dream*, as well as all the lines from Marlowe and Peele. Besides, Henslowe, in 1594, twice records that he produced 'King Leare,' not 'Leir.' Now, what fixes *Macbeth* in 1605?"

"There is the reference to equivocation, a doctrine prominently mentioned in 1605, in connection with the Gunpowder Plot."

"But did you know that the doctrine of equivocation was even more prominently mentioned in 1586, in connection with the Babington plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth?"

No, he didn't know that.

"But," said he, "What about *Cymbeline* and *Timon*, *Pericles*, *Coriolanus*, *Winter's Tale*, and *Henry VIII?*"

"No one knows the exact date of the composition of a single Shakespeare play," I answered. "*Pericles* is dated 1609 in most orthodox lists. Yet Dryden insists that it was Shakespeare's earliest. And Cairncross points out that there are lines unmistakably lifted from *Pericles* in the 'Bad Quarto' of *Hamlet*, which was faked up in 1593, printed in 1603, and is very plainly a memory piracy upon the genuine play. As for the others that you mention, every one contains scenes that are attributed to inferior dramatists. Sir Sidney Lee, you recall, is puzzled to know why Shakespeare in 1607, forty-three years old and in the prime of life and dramatic power, has to fall back upon his 'old habit of collaboration' to produce, with the aid of an inferior helper, *Timon of Athens*. Why should he need help in finishing *Timon*, or *Cymbeline*, or *Winter's Tale?* He managed to complete *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Lear* without help. Look at the table of faulty lines, as given by Neilson and Thorndike. For the older plays, ending with *Macbeth*, they average fewer than five to the play. But for these late plays left unfinished by the Master and completed by a second-rater, they run over a hundred

per drama. The answer is that 'Shakespeare' was dead in 1607."

"What about *Henry VIII*, in which Shakespere and Fletcher collaborated in 1612?"

"Who can prove that *Henry VIII* was written in 1612? In that year Fletcher was sharing his lodging, his purse, and his bed with Beaumont. Do you mean to tell me that Fletcher deserted his twin soul in order to spend four or five months in the bookless house at New Place, while he and Will composed *Henry VIII?* Or did Shakspere leave his family again and repair to London to push Beaumont out of the rooms and the bed which he shared with Fletcher, while he and the latter wrote the play? Remember the lawyer's clerk who went to Stratford in 1612 to get Shakspere's deposition in the matter of the Mountjoy-Belott law suit, and recall the sorry mess that the Bard makes of the testimony? He can't remember this and he is not sure of that, all of which causes Chambers and others of his biographers to admit that by this year (aged forty-eight) his mighty brain had cracked and his magnificent memory had deserted him. No,—no one can tell me that such a man wrote any part of *Henry VIII* in 1612."

The professor had shot his bolt; he raised a few more objections, but they no longer dealt with chronology. Then he subsided and settled himself to listen.

At the end of an hour and a half he admitted: "You have something there. I'm going to have some fun propounding some of your questions to my colleagues in the English Department."

As I told him, no one can date with certainty the composition of a single Shakespeare play. But (and this is significant), almost every change in the time assigned has been to set them earlier. For example, for years the date of *Twelfth Night* had been set at 1613. Then some one discovered the reference to the play in Manningham's diary of February 1602, and back went the date to 1601.

Not long ago, Dr. Leslie Hotson, digging into the Public Record Office, found unmistakable evidence that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Twelfth Night* were played in 1596 and 1597, indicating that not only these two plays, but *Henry V* and the two parts of *Henry IV*, must have been written before 1596, for *The Merry Wives* is a sequel to the *Henrys*. The evidence keeps piling up against the old list of dates for the plays, as given below from two editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica:*

1894 Edition	1937 Edition
1587-94. *Henry VI* (parts 1, 2, 3), *Love's Labour's Lost, Comedy of Errors, Titus Andronicus, Two Gentlemen of Verona,* "the first sketches of *Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet,* and *Richard III.*"	1590-1. *Henry VI* (parts 2, 3). 1591-2. *Henry VI* (part 1). 1592-3. *Richard III, Comedy of Errors.* 1593-4. *Titus Andronicus, Taming of the Shrew.* 1594-5. *Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost, Romeo and Juliet.*
1595-1600. *Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, Midsummer Night's Dream, All's Well That Ends Well, Merchant of Venice* "prior to 1598." Subsequent to 1597: *Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night.*	1595-6. *Richard II, Midsummer Night's Dream.* 1596-7. *John, Merchant of Venice.* 1597-8. *Henry IV* (parts 1, 2). 1598-9. *Much Ado About Nothing, Henry V.* 1599-1600. *Julius Caesar, Merry Wives of Windsor, As You Like It.*
1601-1607. *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Troilus and Cressida, Timon of Athens, Measure for Measure.*	1600-1. *Twelfth Night, Hamlet.* 1601-2. *Troilus and Cressida.* 1602-3. *All's Well That Ends Well.* 1603-5. *Measure for Measure, Othello.* 1605-6. *Macbeth, King Lear.* 1606-7. *Antony and Cleopatra.* 1607-8. *Coriolanus, Timon of Athens.*
1608 to "about" 1612. *Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, The Tempest.*	1608-9. *Pericles.* 1609-10. *Cymbeline.* 1610-11. *Winter's Tale.* 1611-12. *The Tempest.* 1612-13. *Henry VIII, Two Noble Kinsmen.*

Note that the writer of the 1894 article does not care to hazard a guess as to the dates of *King John*, or *Henry VIII*, or *The Taming of the Shrew*. Also that he is careful to say that the "first sketch" of *Hamlet* was written before 1595, but puts the finished play among the compositions of the early years of the seventeenth century.

Now let us test the two lists by Henslowe's diary. One of them dates *Henry V* at 1598-99, the other puts it just prior to 1598. But here is Henslowe producing "Harey the Vth" on "the 14 of Maye 1592." Three times in the fall of 1595 he gives the same play, followed by several more performances during the next winter and spring. Henslowe produced "King Leare" twice in April 1593, and *Hamlet* on the 9th of June, 1594. *Titus Andronicus* was played several times in January and February, 1593, and the "Tamynge of a Shrowe" in June, 1594.

It was on July 30th, 1594. that Henslowe produced the play which he calls "the marchant of eamden," followed five times afterward by performances of "the Venesyon comedy," all of which is explainable only by the assumption that he confused the title of the popular ballad with *The Merchant of Venice*, as previously told. Again the lists of the *Encyclopedia* are two or three years tardy.

Now let us raise another question. Can we be sure that the "First Folio" contains *all* of Shakespeare's plays? There is much evidence to the contrary. In the first place, *Pericles* is omitted, although every modern edition includes it as a genuine play. In the second place, it is evident that it was the original intention of the editors to leave out *Troilus and Cressida* also, for it is not listed in the table of contents. *The Sonnets* are conspicuous by their absence. Meres tells us of a Shakespeare play named "Love's Labour Won," which has disappeared. *Edward III*, a play with magnificent Shakespearean lines, including one straight from Sonnet 94 ("Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds"), has not been identified as the work of another author and is generally referred to as "anonymous." Many critics have attributed it to Shakespeare, and indeed the Countess of Salisbury scenes could hardly have been written by an inferior dramatist.

Just how the editors of the First Folio made up the list of plays which should be included we do not know. That Heminge and Condell received the "true and originall" copies, written out for them by the author with "scarse a blot" is the most transparent fiction imaginable. Sir Sidney Lee and other biographers tell of books and prompt-copies collected from actors for the volume, which, in many cases, betray these sources by indicating the names of the actors opposite certain speeches instead of the names of the characters in the plays. (*E.g.*—"Kempe" instead of "Dogberry.") In the *Richard III* of the Folio are reproduced, with faithful precision, the twelve typesetter's or proofreader's errors that are found in the 1622 edition of that play.

One fact is fairly evident: we can by no means be sure that all of the works of the Master are to be found in the First Folio. Much of his early, apprentice stuff is missing.

With this in mind, let us consider certain entries in Henslowe which run through the years 1594 and 1595. First, he produces "Seser and pompie," then, six months later, "the 2 pte of sesore"; then on two successive days, "the j pte of seaser" and "the 2 pte of seaser." Then there are several entries for "sesor" or "seaser" alone. We are told that there was an old play, "anonymous," which was finally published in 1607, named "Caesar and Pompey." Could this have been a memory piracy on a "Shakespeare" play of the same name? The story of the contest between the two men for the control of the Roman world is a dramatic one and lends itself easily to tragedy. If there were two parts to the life of Caesar, as portrayed in drama, certainly the *Julius Caesar* that we have is very decidedly the second part,—the story of the last few weeks of his life, in fact. If this "2 pte of seaser" is not Shakespeare's *Caesar*, then what is it? What has become of it, if it is not the play which we have? And, conversely, who was producing Shakespeare's *Caesar* in these very years? For Cairncross, staunch Stratfordian though he be, places *Caesar* among those plays which date from the first half of the decade of the 1590's.

At this point let us summon another witness: Edward Alleyn, Henslowe's son-in-law. This famous actor's career began about 1585, and by 1592 he was at the height of his powers, for Nashe in that year commends him for his playing in *Pierce Penniless*, referring to him as "famous Ned Alleyn".

There was found in Dulwich College, which he founded, in Alleyn's own handwriting, an inventory of the costumes which he owned and used. It is not dated, but, as stated in the "Memoirs of Edward Alleyn," published by the Shakespeare Society, "it is unquestionably early." Even though

it be as late as 1595, it provides another bombshell to explode the orthodox chronology. If John Payne Collier, who edited it for publication, had been honest and open-minded, he might have set the Shakespearean world upon the right track in pursuit of the real author three-quarters of a century earlier than J. Thomas Looney. But Collier could see nothing but the Stratford version, so not only did he close his eyes and his mind to the facts that were revealed to him, but, when he could find no evidence of contemporary references to the Stratford man as author of the plays, actually forged ten or twelve documents, one so skilfully as to have it stamped with the official seal and inserted in the papers of the Public Record Office.

There are 82 entries in Alleyn's list, ten of which are named as belonging to special plays or rôles. Of the ten, five are unquestionably Shakespearean: "a scarlett cloke" for Lear; "a purpell satin-Romeos"; "Hary the VIII gowne"; "blew damask cote for the Moore in Venis"; and "spangled hoes in Pericles." Collier admits that this shows Shakespearean titles to plays that were being produced in the early 1590's, but, after conceding that they might have been the real dramas, falls back upon the favorite Stratfordian refuge, that they are "probably" earlier plays with the same titles, but written by some "anonymous" other writers! Somehow it never seems to occur to our Stratfordian friends that their version pictures their hero as the rankest plagiarist of all times, who not only never wrote an original play, but was so lacking in inventiveness that he was obliged to give, to some ten of his works, the same titles which their sources had borne.

In addition to the "Hary the VIII gowne," in the same list is "a Cardinalls gowne." So here it appears that *Henry VIII*, instead of being a collaboration with Fletcher in 1612, is dated about twenty years earlier, and belongs among the historical collaborations (like *Henry VI*, part 1, and *Edward III)*, of the first part of the last decade of the 16th century.

Here is *Othello*, usually dated 1604, played by Alleyn at least ten years prior to this date. And *Pericles*, always credited to 1608 or 1609, dating back fifteen years before that time, just as Dr. Cairncross shows in *The Problem of Hamlet*. But this installment is already too long, and we shall reserve Cairncross and the story of Collier's forgeries, for our next number.

Louis P. Bénézet

(To be continued)

England's Annual Shakespeare Lecture

Mr. John Molloy, a New York member of the Fellowship, has generously provided us with a copy of the Annual Shakespeare Lecture of the British Academy for 1942, entitled "Hamlet, The Prince or the Poem?" presented by C. S. Lewis.

Mr. Lewis divides the interpreters of Hamlet's character into three schools: (1) the actions of Hamlet have not been given adequate motives and that the play is so far bad—Hanmer points out that Hamlet is made to procrastinate and that Shakespeare ought to have "contrived some good reason" for the procrastination; (2) Ritson and others think he did not delay at all but went to work as quickly as the circumstances permitted; (3) critics who admit that Hamlet procrastinates and who explain the procrastination by his psychology, a group which claim to represent the orthodox line of Hamlet criticism. The speaker dilates upon the three interpretations, here so simplified, and gives each one an air of plausibility, then goes on to say why he does not agree with any one of them.

"In so far as my own ideas about Shakespeare are worth classifying at all," says Mr. Lewis, "I confess myself a member of that school which has lately been withdrawing our attention from the characters to fix it on the plays. . . . What has attached me to this way of thinking is the fact that it explains my own experience. When I tried to read Shakespeare in my teens the character criticism of the nineteenth century stood between me and my enjoyment. There were all sorts of things in the plays which I could have enjoyed; but I had got it into my head that the only proper and grown-up way of appreciating Shakespeare was to be very interested in the truth and subtlety of his character drawing."

The lecturer gives a number of examples to illustrate his conception, and continues, "I believe that we read Hamlet's speeches with interest chiefly because they describe so well a certain spiritual region through which most of us have passed and any one in his circumstances might be expected to pass, rather than because of our concern to understand how and why this particular man entered it. . . . To interest is the first duty of art; no other excellences will even begin to compensate for failure in this, and very serious faults will be covered by this, as by charity. The hypothesis that this play interests by being good and not by being bad has

therefore the first claim on our consideration. The burden of proof rests on the other side. Is not the fascinated interest of the critics most naturally explained by supposing that this is the precise effect the play was written to produce? They may be finding the mystery in the wrong place; but the fact that they can never leave *Hamlet* alone, the continual groping, the sense, unextinguished by over a century of failures, that we have here something of inestimable importance, is surely the best evidence that the real and lasting mystery of our human situation has been greatly depicted."

Mr. Lewis concludes, "You must not think I am setting up a sort of literary Peter Pan who does not grow up. On the contrary, I claim that only those adults who have retained, with whatever additions and enrichments, their first childish response to poetry unimpaired, can be said to have grown up at all. Mere change is not growth. Growth is the synthesis of change and continuity, and where there is no continuity there is no growth."

A Woman of Genius

Mrs. Gabrielle Margaret Long, distinguished member of The Shakespeare Fellowship and a constant reader of the NEWS-LETTER, is the subject of an unusually readable biographical sketch, entitled "The Extraordinary Mrs. Long," in The New York Times Book Review for May 2nd by Edward Wagenknecht.

For the first time, it appears, Mr. Wagenknecht undertakes to give an accurate list of all the books that Mrs. Long has written during the past thirty-seven years under her five different pen-names of "Marjorie Bowen," "George R. Preedy," "Robert Paye," "John Winch," "Joseph Shearing" and "Margaret Campbell."

Beginning with the stirring historical novel, *The Viper of Milan*, which she published as a schoolgirl in 1906—and which won her the acclaim of no less a judge than Mark Twain—Mrs. Long is said to have turned out some 156 books. These include more than 130 novels, many of which involved considerable historical research, essays, studies in the psychology of crime and mystery, and several brilliantly executed biographies. Dumas the elder hardly surpassed the amazing fecundity of this charming English lady who was born in the "rackety, eccentric poverty" of bohemia and frequently "went hungry" until she started to write—while her hair was still in pigtails!

"But," says Mr. Wagenknecht, "she is more than 'a born story-teller'; she is a witch, a genius in the creation of atmosphere. When she is at her best, this atmosphere (generally centering about a place or an object which becomes a symbol of it) is of a sinister or semi-supernatural variety; it stirs the blood and quickens the pace of life . . .

"Where will you find better historical fiction than in *Dickon*, with its daring rehabilitation of Richard III, or the trilogy on the spiritual life of England in the seventeenth century—*God and the Wedding Dress, Mr. Tyler's Saints* and *The Circle In the Water?* Or, if you insist on the element of mystery, where will you find a more telling narrative than in Preedy's *Painted Angel?*

Mrs. Long has followed the Oxford-Shakespeare evidence very closely for many years. She has a keen appreciation of all the elements involved and is particularly interested in the discoveries that have been made concerning the long-hidden facts of Lord Oxford's private life. She knows that the public—and even personal friends—can be completely baffled by the use of nom de plumes.

We hope to persuade her to write some of her impressions of the Oxford case for the NEWS-LETTER one of these days.

April Activities

Mr. Flodden W. Heron of San Francisco gave five talks in April before different groups in his city on the subject, WHO WROTE SHAKESPEARE? Radio KGO carried the story on Friday, April 23rd. Mr. Heron is a collector of rare books, manuscripts, and documents, and, before giving one of his talks, arranges before his audience an exhibition of his Oxford-Shakespeare collection, to different items of which he refers from time to time as his lecture proceeds. His most recent acquisition is a document bearing the personal signature of Lord Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England and Master of the Court of Royal Wards. Lord Burghley could not foresee that his brilliant ward and son-in-law would far out-shine his own greatness in the centuries to come.

A compilation of excerpts from Mr. Heron's lectures was published in April under the auspices of The Literary Anniversary Club of San Francisco, of which club he was one of the founders. The title of the booklet is *Who Wrote Shakespeare?*

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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. The Shakespeare Fellowship, 17 East 48th Street, New York, N. Y.

Spreading the News

Reactions to our April issue, containing the first of Prof. Bénézet's papers on the anti-Stratford evidence in Henslowe's *Diary* and Mr. Barrell's telling exposé of Alden Brooks' mishandling of historical fact in *Will Shakspere and the Dyer's Hand*, have been interesting indeed.

A prominent member of The Fellowship who has also been on the faculty of Yale University for some years, informs us that he had placed an order for the Brooks volume as soon as it was announced. But upon reading the review in the NEWS-LETTER, he cancelled the purchase order forthwith.

Mr. Samuel R. Gaines, Boston representative of The Fellowship, writes: "Your last issue was truly breath-taking. How you fellows are piling up the evidence!"

Copies of the April number were sent to many of the well-known critics who reviewed *Will Shakspere and the Dyer's Hand*. This was done in the interest of truth and fair-play, as Mr. Brooks' general misreading of the Elizabethan records is surpassed in error only by the reckless and irresponsible manner in which he libels Edward de Vere's memory. Acknowledgments have been received from some of these critics. Mr. William A. P. White, who reviewed the book for *The San Francisco Chronicle*, says:

> I was indeed interested in Mr. Barrell's review of Alden Brooks, and in the NEWS-LETTER in general. So much so, indeed, that I begin to fear that I have read the wrong essays in Oxonian theory. If the publications of The Shakespeare Fellowship include a brief bibliography for prospective converts, I shall be happy to receive a copy.

And finally, we have a keen little commentary from Mr. George Frisbee, author of *Edward de Vere —a Great Elizabethan* and the satirical essay, "The Shame of the Professors," which we expect to reprint in these columns before the year is out.

Mr. Frisbee goes straight to the point with the writer of *Will Shakspere and the Dyer's Hand* for accepting so many of the discredited, smoking-room tales of old John Aubrey, affecting the good name of Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke. Brooks has done this in order to provide some sort of love intrigue in Sir Edward Dyer's otherwise drably celibate career. Remarks Mr. Frisbee:

> On pp. 457 and 590, Brooks makes much of the slanderous gossip of Aubrey regarding Mary, Countess of Pembroke. I quote.
>
> "Aubrey records that the Earl (of Pembroke) was advised by his father to keep a close eye on the Countess, his wife."
>
> Here are the facts:
>
> Mary Sidney was born October 27, 1561.
>
> William Herbert, the old Earl of Pembroke, died 1570.
>
> Henry Herbert, his son, had married for the second time, 1562.
>
> This second wife died 1575.
>
> Henry, Earl of Pembroke, married Mary Sidney April 21, 1577. Now, when the old Earl of Pembroke died, 1570, his son was happily married to his second wife and lived with her until her death five years later, while in the year 1570 Mary Sidney was a mere child of nine.