News-Letter

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A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres

Spraeta tamen vivunt, Identified as the Posy of Thomas Watson

An Interesting Discovery

An early book of poetry, called *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* (1573), has been the cause of considerable controversy among Elizabethan students of literature because of the fact that, less than two years after its original publication, the book was republished with many alterations as the work of the soldier-poet, George Gascoigne, under the new title, *The Posies of George Gascoigne*. A great part of the *Flowres* was written by Gascoigne, but it is stated in numerous instances in that volume that the poems were written by "sundrie gentlemen," who signed them with their "posies," Gascoigne among them.

In 1926 Captain B. M. Ward published a Reprint of *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* which he prefaced with an Introduction. In his Introduction, Captain Ward gives his reasons for believing that the poems were written by several individuals, making the volume one of the earliest Elizabethan anthologies. He goes further and attempts to identify those posies that are not avowedly Gascoigne's. One of them, *Meritum petere, gravè*, signed to sixteen poems, is also found on the title-page, where the name of the author of a book is ordinarily found. Space forbids me to give the evidence brought out by Ward, but his conclusion is that *Meritum petere, gravè* was the posy of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford; that he not only wrote the sixteen poems signed by that posy, but was responsible for the publication of the collection, without the permission of the other authors, as he had been the same year, 1573, with Thomas Bedingfield's translation of *Cardanus' Comfort*.

Ward identifies another posy, *Si fortunatus infælix*, as that of Christopher Hatton (knighted later), through an annotation made by Gabriel Harvey* in his copy of *The Posies of George Gascoigne* (1575). Not only does Ward assign to Hatton the seventeen poems signed *Si fortunatus infælix*, but also the preceding story, "The Adventures of Master F. I.," containing several poems, the initials standing for the principal words in the posy, already identified with Hatton.

Hatton was at the Spa recovering from an illness when the *Flowres* was published. As Captain of the Queen's Bodyguard and a prime favorite, Hatton's consternation may be imagined when he heard that his love lyrics and the story of his escapades had been printed and were being circulated at Court, as Ward remarks.

Ward finds that Hatton persuaded Gascoigne to claim the authorship by bringing out a new volume based on the *Flowres*, but materially changed, and now to be called *The Posies of George Gascoigne*. Gascoigne, who had in the meantime been soldiering in the Low Countries, addressed an "Epistle" to "The Reverend Divines," in which he apologizes for the scandal created by the publication during his absence of *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, and the Epistle is included in *The Posies*. He says:

> I understand that sundry well-disposed minds have taken offence at certain words and phrases passed in the *Fable of Ferdinando Ieronimi, and the Lady Elionora de Valasco*, which in the first edition was termed *The Adventures of Master F. I.* And that also therewith some busy conjecturers have presumed to think that the same was indeed written to the *scandalizing of some*

*See *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia*, by Dr. G. C. Moore Smith.

worthy personages (Ward's italics), whom they would seem to know thereby.

Hatton was intensely jealous of Lord Oxford, ten years younger, and throughout his life let no opportunity slip to put stumbling blocks in the latter's way. As the young Earl was not likely to accept affronts without some kind of remonstrance, it may well be that he thought that the publication of Hatton's discreditable verses would give him pause. Not for long, however, for Hatton bethought him of Gascoigne and of having him take over the opprobrium by publishing a new and greatly changed edition, *The Posies.*

Ward's Introduction gives a fascinating and plausible theory.

In a new edition (1942) of *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres,* with Introduction and Notes, C. T. Prouty, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English at the University of Missouri, attempts a refutation of Ward's thesis, declares that the poems included in the original publication were entirely by George Gascoigne and that it is in no sense an anthology.

Professor Prouty contributes several items not found in Captain Ward's edition; for example, he lists as now known to be in existence ten copies of the original work, while Ward mentions only four known to him, though that is not of particular importance in comparison with the identification of the "posies" used as signatures to the various poems. The number of existing copies, where they are, and how they differ, lies in the field of bibliography and need not concern our special problem.

Another item contributed by Dr. Prouty is the inclusion of all the prose of *The Adventures of Master F. I.,* a large part of which Ward omits as being too long for his edition, and not germane to his subject, that is, the identification of the poets whose verses appear in the book.

Ward prints *The Adventures of Master F. I.* with the final letter *I,* which, it may be supposed, is the way it is printed in the original *Flowres,* while Prouty prints it "Master F. J." It is quite true that the Elizabethan printer used *i* and *j* more or less interchangeably, but in this case, it makes a vast amount of difference. Ward identifies *F. I.* with the posy, *Fortunatus Infœlix.* Gascoigne, in rewriting *The Adventures of Master F. I.* for *The Posies,* changed the title, calling it *The Fable of Ferdinando Jeronimi,* thus altering the initials previously used, and from this fact, Prouty may have felt privileged to make the change from *I* to *J* in his edition of the *Flowres.* I am unable to see a copy of the 1573 edition and cannot decide on this point, as to which man has taken the liberty of unjustified change.

Ward's theory that *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* is an early anthology has received support from a number of important scholars in the field of Elizabethan literature. He bases it partly on the statements in three letters which preface the book, one by *H. W.* and two by *G. T.* The letter by *H. W.* is printed first and states in part: "In August last passed my familiar friend Master *G. T.* bestowed uppon me y^e^ reading of a written Booke, wherin he had collected divers discourses & verses, invented uppon sundrie occasions, *by sundrie gentlemen* (in mine opinion) right commendable for their capacitie." While *H. W.* returns the original "Booke," he keeps a copy which he decides is "worthy to be published." His letter continues, "Yet I my selfe have reaped this commoditie, to sit and smile at the fond devises of such as have enchayned *them selves* in the golden fetters of fantasie, and having bewrayed *them selves* to the whole world, do yet conjecture y^t^ *they* walke unseene in a net." . . . "And so I commend the praise of *other mens* travailes together with the pardon of mine owne rashnes, unto the well willing minds of discrete readers." (Italics mine.)

Regarding the "Booke" he has loaned to his friend, *G. T.* says, "You shall find a number of *Sonets,* layes, letters, Ballades, Rondlets, verlayes and verses, the workes of your friend and myne *Master F. I.* and *divers others.*" *G. T.* asks that they not be made common, "For otherwise I shall not onely provoke *all the aucthors* to be offended with mee but further shall leese the opertunitie of a greater matter . . . " Again, he writes, "When I had with no small entreatie obteyned of *Master F. I.* and *sundry other toward young gentlemen,* the sundry copies of these sundry matters, then as well for that the number of them was great, as also that I found none of them, so barreyne, but that (in my judgment) had in it *Aliquid Salis,* and especially being considered by the very proper occasion whereuppon it was written (as *they them selves* did alwayes with the verse reherse* unto me the cause y^t^ then moved *them* to write) I did with more labour gather them into some order, and so placed them in this register."

As printed, the three letters lead off *The Adven-*

*It is interesting to note the combination "verse-reherse" in this letter, as the words are frequently rhymed in the *Flowres.*

tures of Master F. I. When that story is concluded, there follow seventeen poems signed with the posy, *Si fortunatus infœlix.* As there is no suggestion of a change of authorship at this point, it may be assumed that the writer of *The Adventures of Master F. I.* and the writer of the poems signed *Si fortunatus infœlix* were one and the same.

Immediately after the last poem signed *Si fortunatus infœlix,* the following statement appears:

> *Now to begin with another man, take these verses written to be sent with a ryng, wherein were engraved a Patrich in a Merlines foote.*

Seven poems are then printed signed with the posy, *Spræta tamen vivunt.*

A straunge passion of another Author is the heading for a group of three poems signed *Ferenda Natura.*

The last *Ferenda Natura* poem is followed by a rather long heading:

> *Now I must desire you with patience to hearken unto the works of another writer, who though he may not compare with the rest passed, yit such things as he wrote upon sundrie occasions, I will rehearse, beginning with this prayse of a Countesse.*

Then come sixteen poems signed by *Meritum petere, gravè,* the same posy which appears on the title-page, identified by B. M. Ward as the posy of the Earl of Oxford.

A somewhat equivocal statement follows next:

> *I will now deliver unto you so many more of Master Gascoignes Poems as have come to my hands, who hath never beene dayntie of his doings, and therfore I conceale not his name: but his word or posie he hath often changed and therfore I will deliver his verses with such sundrie posies as I received them. And first I will begin with Gascoigns Anatomie.*

The sentence, "I will now deliver unto you so many *more* of Master Gascoignes Poems," does suggest that the preceding poems were by Gascoigne, but such a mere suggestion cannot overcome the strength of the earlier statements in letters and headings to the effect that four different authors, known only by their posies, wrote the different poems. Also, since it is declared that Gascoigne "hath never beene dayntie of his doings, and therfore I conceale not his name," why should his name have been concealed in connection with the preceding poems? Common reason tells us he did not write them.

Gascoigne's declared poems follow, taking up more than half the book. They are signed by different posies, doubtless as he had signed them when they, or some of them circulated in manuscript, as commonly happened at that time.

Dr. Prouty disagrees with Captain Ward and his identification of *Meritum petere, gravè* as the posy of Lord Oxford, and is particularly scornful of the acrostic discovered by Ward in the poem, *The absent lover (in ciphers) disciphering his name, doth crave some spedie relief as followeth,* which is signed *Meritum petere, gravè.*

Prouty then asserts—

> Gascoigne can be identified with *Meritum petere, gravè* by the evidence of poem No. 38 [Prouty's numbering], which is signed with that posy. The whole poem is concerned with the respective merits of G[ascoigne] and B[oyes], and definite proof of the author's identity is found in the fourth line where the anagram A.O.G.N.C.S. may be arranged to read "Gascon."

Unquestionably, the anagram has been correctly interpreted, but the tone of the poem suggests that it was written by some mischievous friend of Gascoigne, rather than the man himself, some one familiar with the unhappy situation in which Gascoigne found himself as the husband of a woman* married to two men at the same time. It is unthinkable that a man, a gentleman, as Gascoigne was, would write about his beloved wife and a rival for her affections in the light vein in which the poem is cast.

The whole subject is one with which Captain Ward is far more familiar than am I and I shall leave to him the rebuttal in this argument.

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*The woman was Elizabeth Bacon, daughter of John Bacon and cousin of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper. Her first husband, William Breton, by whom she was the mother of Nicholas Breton, the poet, died in 1558-9. Three months later her father died and in his will mentioned "my daughter Boyes" and "Mr. Boyes my son-in-law." Less than three months a widow when she married Boyes, Elizabeth complicated matters by marrying George Gascoigne while still married to Boyes. After a fray between the two men and their followers in 1562, Sir Nicholas Bacon issued an order forbidding either man to visit Elizabeth until it should be adjudged whose wife she was. Full details of the double marriage are not known, but she was eventually adjudged the wife of Gascoigne. (Condensed from Ward's account of Gascoigne in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres.*)

My one reason for entering the controversy is my interest in the posy, *Spræta tamen vivunt*, not identified by Ward. Nor, of course, is it identified by Prouty, as he assumes, despite the statements of *H. W.* and *G. T.*, that all of the poems came from the pen of George Gascoigne, that the book is not an anthology at all, as Ward claims. My small contribution gives support to Ward's theory.

On page 53 of Ward's edition of *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, and on page 122 of Prouty's, appears a poem of nine six-line stanzas signed *Spræta tamen vivunt*. The poem is entitled *A Loving Lady being wounded in the spring time, and now galded eftsones with the remembrance of the spring, doth therfore thus bewayle*. Four stanzas of this poem, beginning with the fourth, are almost word for word the same as two sonnets, No. 47 and No. 48, of Thomas Watson's *The Tears of Fancie*, as will be seen later.

Thomas Watson, poet, translator and traveller, wrote verse in both English and Latin which was highly regarded by his contemporaries. Lord Oxford was his patron for a time and that indicates their common interest in the literature of the period, and of the ancients as well, for both were classical scholars. The conditions under which they wrote and their literary relations suggest the possibility, even the probability, of their having been associated in preparing the poems of "sundry gentlemen" for publication as *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*.

Watson's first important printed work, *The Hekatompathia, or Passionate Centurie of Love* (1582), was dedicated to the Earl of Oxford. Edward Arber, in his edition of 1895, remarks—

> Whoever reads this remarkable work will wonder how it could have fallen into such oblivion. On the poems themselves we shall here say nothing. They reveal themselves. Each of them is headed with an "annotation." To these short introductions we would call attention. They are most skilfully written. Who wrote them? Who was the Annotator? May he have been the Earl of Oxford? Was he the friend whom Watson addresses in No. LXXI as "Deere Titus mine, my auncient friend"?
>
> Or was he the author himself, writing in the third person? We cannot say. Whoever he was, he was perfectly informed—certainly by the poet himself—as to every allusion made, every author imitated or referred to.
>
> It is an interesting point that the secondary title

of Watson's *Hekatompathia, The Passionate Centurie of Love*, is suggestive of *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* in one particular, and that is the plan of using a *hundred* as the limit of the number of verses in one instance, of the poems in the other.

Referring now to the four stanzas of the poem signed *Spræta tamen vivunt* and their correspondence with two of Thomas Watson's sonnets in *The Tears of Fancie*, the striking likeness between them is shown as they appear below in parallel columns. Slight variations will be noticed, largely made for the purpose of expanding the twenty-four lines of the stanzas into the twenty-eight of the two sonnets. Sometimes, lines identical in stanzas and sonnets are differently placed with relation to other lines. The poem and the sonnets, however, can only be the work of one author.

The four stanzas

Alas (quod she) behold eche pleasaunt greene,
Will now renew, his sommers livery,
The fragrant flowers, which have not long bene seene,
Will florish now, (ere long) in bravery:
The tender buddes, whom colde hath long kept in,
Will spring and sproute, as they do now begin.

But I (alas) within whose mourning mynde,
The graftes of grief, are onely given to growe,
Cannot enjoy the spring which others finde,
But still my will, must wyther all in woe:
The cold of care, so nippes my joyes at roote,
No sunne doth shine, that well can do them boote.

The lustie *Ver* which whillome might exchange
My griefe to joy, and then my joyes encrease,
Springs now elsewhere, and showes to me but strange,
My winters woe, therfore can never cease:
In other coasts, his sunne full clere doth shyne,
And comfort lends to ev'ry mould but myne.

What plant can spring that feeles no force of *Ver?*
What flower can florish, where no sunne doth shyne?
These Bales (quod she) within my breast I beare,
To breake my barke, and make my pyth to pyne:
Needs must I fall, I fade both roote and rynde,
My braunches bowe, at blast of ev'ry wynde.

Sonnets 47 and 48

Behold deare Mistres how each pleasant greene,
Will now renew his sommers liverie:
The fragrant flowers which have not long beene seene,

Will flourish now ere long in braverie.
But I alas within whose mourning mind,
The grafts of griefe are onelie given to grow:
Cannot injoy the spring which others find,
But still my will must wither all in woe.
The lustie ver that whilome might exchange,
My griefe to joy, and my delight increase:
Springs now else where and showes to me but strange,
My winters woe therefore can never cease.
In other coasts his sunne doth clearely shine,
And comfort lend to every mould but mine.

The tender buds whom cold hath long kept in,
And winters rage inforst to hide their head:
Will spring and sprowt as they doe now begin,
That everie one will joy to see them spread.
But cold of care so nips my joies at roote,
There is no hope to recover what is lost:
No sunne doth shine that well can doe it boote,
Yet still I strive but loose both toile and cost.
For what can spring that feeles no force of ver,
What hower can flourish where no sunne doth shine:
These balles deare love, within my brest I beare,
To breake my barke and make my pith to pine.
Needs must I fall, I fade both root and rinde,
My branches bowe at blast of everie winde.

The Tears of Fancie, in which the two quoted sonnets appear, was printed in 1593, the year following Watson's death, but, says Arber, its authorship is established by the initials T. W. at the end: and more positively by the following registration:

> 11 Aug. (1593). John Danter. Item entred for his copie, &c., a booke intituled *The teares of fansie, or love disdained.* By T. Watson.

Futhermore, *The Tears of Fancie* is very reminiscent in thought and expression of Watson's earlier work, *The Hekatompathia, or the Passionate Centurie of Love.* No one would think of questioning the authorship.

To write of unrequited love was a fashion of the period, perhaps due largely to the study and translation of the work of earlier foreign poets. The result of this study was a similarity in thought and vocabulary of English authors of Elizabeth's time.

George Gascoigne was rather more inventive in choice of subjects than most of his contemporaries, but his vocabulary ranks with theirs. Such rhymes as *hart (heart)-smart, joy-annoy, woe-foe, desire-fire*, were commonplace and were used by all of them.

Proverbial similes like "the fly and the flame," or "the child and the fire," are and were then quite ordinary. For instance, in the second poem by *Spræta tamen vivunt* is found the couplet—

> The scorched flie, which once hath scapt the flame,
> Will hardly come, to play againe with fire.

Watson writes a similar couplet in *The Hekatompathia*, XLVIII—

> Or, as the Flye, when candles are alight,
> Still playes about the flame untill he burne.

Again, in the same work, LXXXIIII, he uses the same thought with "the child-fire" simile—

> The childe, whose finger once hath felt the fire,
> To playe therewith will have but smale desire.

"Weep and wail," "griping grief," "pine in pain," and similar expressions were common to our luckless poets (even if they were so only by translation). They cultivated Melancholy.

In his sixth poem, "An absent Dame thus complayneth," *Spræta tamen vivunt* writes—

> Onely that pang of payne, which passeth all the rest,
>
> . . . . .
>
> That present griefe now grypeth me, & strives to stop my breath.

Watson, in *The Hekatompathia*, LXXXV, comparing Love with a ship, completes the simile by saying—

> Despaire the cable twisted all with Doubt,
> Held Griping Griefe the pyked Anchor fast;
> Beauty was all the rockes.

"The silly bird" is an expression used in two poems by *Spræta tamen vivunt* and is likewise found in Watson's *Hekatompathia*, XLVIII—

Like as the sillie Bird amids the night,
When Birders beate the bush, and shake his nest
He fluttring forth streight flies unto the light.

In his fifth poem, "The lover being disdaynfully abjected by a dame of high calling, who had chosen (in his place) a playe fellow of baser condicion: doth therfore step a side, and before his departure giveth hir this farewell in verse," *Sprœta tamen vivunt* includes this couplet—

For thou hast caught a proper paragon,
A theefe, a coward, and a Peacocke foole.

Watson, in *The Hekatompathia,* XVII, says—

You that will know why Sol afoordes her love,
Seeke but the cawse why Peakocks draw the place.

These two couplets seem to be a real parallel, a reference to a certain situation in which *Sprœta tamen vivunt* was involved and repeated with personal feeling by Watson, surely the same man as the one of the posy.

The comparison given here between the few poems of *Sprœta tamen vivunt* in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* and the hundred short poems by Thomas Watson in *The Hekatompathia* is quite inadequate for the subject, but will serve to show the same turn of thought and the same choice of expressions in both and links still more closely Watson's sonnets in *The Tears of Fancie* with the stanzas of *Sprœta tamen vivunt.*

Eva Turner Clark

From Shakespeare's Library?

The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library at Washington has recently acquired a damaged copy of William Lambarde's *Archaionomia,* published in London in 1568. On the title-page, which was badly creased, was found in a line, presumably by Lambarde, which says: "This to be kept for ye Impression is out nor like to be reprinted." On the inside of the vellum wrapper was written in a supposed 17th century hand: "Mr. W^m^ Shakespere Lived at No 1 Little Crown St Westminster—NB near Dorset steps."

This inscription, naming an address with which Shakespeare has never been associated, aroused interest among the examiners of the book and they sent it to the binder for special repairs. In his competent hands, by ironing out the creases in the title-page, he discovered a faint signature, "W^m^ Shakespere." Whereupon, the book was placed in the hands of experts who have given the signature all manner of scientific tests with the result that the Library authorities believe they have in their possession a volume from Shakespeare's library and with his own signature, making the seventh known.

This is an interesting acquisition for the Folger Library and we shall hope to hear more about it. Also, it will be worth while to learn something more definite about Shakespeare's alleged residence at Little Crown Street, Westminster, for this address would locate him in the most aristocratic district of the old town—seemingly immediately contiguous to Cannon Row, where the playwright Earl of Oxford spent many of his latter days at the house of his daughter and son-in-law, The Countess and Earl of Derby.

Statesman Speaks Out

The Honorable Friend W. Richardson, former Governor of California and now President of the Publishers Association of California, has become an ardent disciple of The Shakespeare Fellowship and upholds the case of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as the author of the plays in no uncertain terms.

The Hemet (Calif.) *News* of March 16, 1943, carries the following from his pen:

FIGHTING A MAN OF STRAW

Bacon was not the author of the so-called Shakespearean plays, according to Dr. Hans Reichenbach of the University of California at Los Angeles. I agree with the distinguished Professor of Philosophy that Bacon did not write the famous plays.

But who did write the plays? That "Will Shaksper," the illiterate Stratford bumpkin, could not have written them is generally admitted. Many distinguished authors have exploded the Stratford myth. Thus Dr. Reichenbach is fighting a man of straw. If he wanted to enlighten his scholars, why not tell them of the strong case in favor of Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, as the author?

The *News* is at liberty to run any criticisms of me that enraged votaries of "Will Shaksper" may write. I only hope that they will sign their names and not use a nom de plume as did the correspondent who assailed my editorial on the Primary Law.

Friend W. Richardson

The Real Sir Edward Dyer

The Facts of His Life *versus* the Fiction of Alden Brooks

O what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!
Sir Walter Scott

In the April NEWS-LETTER I pointed out some glaring instances of historical misinformation in Alden Brooks' recent book, *Will Shakspere and the Dyer's Hand*, wherein an attempt is made to present Sir Edward Dyer (1543-1607) as author or "Great Revisor" of the Shakespearean plays and poems.

My comments were meant chiefly to correct the absurdly false picture of the poet-dramatist Earl of Oxford that Mr. Brooks includes in his album of Elizabethan distortions.

Let us now consider some of the attested documentation relating to the actual career of Sir Edward Dyer—not in the fictionized form that Mr. Brooks offers it—but as such material appears in Ralph M. Sargent's authoritative life of Dyer, supplemented by the comments and correspondence of Sir Edward's contemporaries and associates. There are many such revealing references in the Elizabethan State Papers, the Hatton letters, the Cecil manuscripts, and the letters and documents of the Sidney family.

From these sources it can be shown that Alden Brooks misrepresents many of the vital circumstances of Dyer's own career quite as freely as he re-writes contemporary accounts of Lord Oxford's activities.

Such treatment of historical material may be tolerated in novels and in the never-never zone of cinema invention, but it certainly has no place at all in an alleged serious study of the Shakespeare authorship question.

To put it bluntly, this kind of writing is an imposition on unwary readers. It is indeed unfortunate that Mr. Brooks' publishers have not seen fit to label the fictionized handling of essential material in *Will Shakspere and the Dyer's Hand* in plain type on the dust-cover of the volume.

According to the authoritative testimony, Edward Dyer was the eldest sone of Sir Thomas Dyer, High Sheriff of Somerset and Dorset during the early years of Elizabeth's reign. Sir Thomas died in 1565, and from the *inquisition post mortem* on his estate, it appears that his son Edward was born in 1543. Lady Dyer, *née* Anne Poynings, a personal friend of the Queen, with some gifts as a versifier, had succumbed to a mental disorder in 1564.

Edward Dyer attended Broadgates College, Oxford, but left without taking a degree. He supplemented his formal education with some years of travel on the Continent, evidently familiarizing himself with the rudiments of the Latin languages. He had inherited his mother's poetical aptitude, and also made himself proficient in music.

Returning to England at about the time of his father's death, Dyer appeared at Court, where the Queen gave him good countenance. He was then about twenty-onc years of age.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, being at the height of his power, Dyer attached himself to the favorite's retinue and was soon known as Leicester's personal secretary and confidential agent. In 1560, Secretary of State Cecil (later Lord Burghley) had told the Spanish Ambassador Quadra:

"The Lord Robert has made himself master of the business of the state and of the person of the Queen."

Leicester was, indeed, generally recognized as having the authority of an uncrowned king of England—an authority, by the way, that he used with heartless and unscrupulous rapacity. In the eyes of most historians his career is forever stained by acts of selfish cruelty, oppression and the most unblushing disregard for the rights and lives of others —when they obscured his own.

A number of Leicester's contemporaries who were in position to know considerable about his doings have accused the Earl of personal implication in the sudden deaths of several prominent personages. These unfortunates included, among others, his first wife, Amy Robsart; the Lord Sheffield and Walter Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. It cannot be denied that in the demise of each of these the Queen's favorite found immediate personal advantage.

No less an authority than Sir Robert Naunton, author of the *Fragmenta Regalia,* a commentary on Elizabeth's chief courtiers, particularizes Leicester's known proficiency as "a rare Artist in poison," and passes him down to posterity as "well seen in the reaches of *Caesar Borgia.*"

In his conversations with Drummond of Hawthornden, Ben Jonson is quoted as saying that Leicester's own death finally came about through a well-merited stroke of retribution. Having married Lettice Knollys, Countess of Essex, immediately after her warrior husband's untimely taking off, Leicester soon found the union to be the reverse of a happy one. So he thoughtfully presented his third spouse with a bottle of "rare cordial," recommending it as a restorative in any faintness, "in the hope that she might be cut off by using it." But Lettice — whether wittingly or not — turned the tables on his Lordship by giving him a dose of his own medicine one day when he was feeling out of sorts.

Yet Leicester, despite his well-documented reputation for lawless ambition and polite homicide, had the hypocritical effrontery to represent himself as the head of the Puritan political interests in Parliament.

The Queen's great infatuation for her "Robin" may be attributed to his strikingly handsome exterior and his genius for flattery and dissimulation, combined with a flamboyant show of patriotism of a highly personalized and self-aggrandizing type.

This was the man to whose interests Edward Dyer devoted himself with zealous skill for many years and under whose patronage the lyricist made headway at Court.

Alden Brooks emphasizes this connection in an effort to prove that Dyer introduced pronounced Leicesterian propaganda elements into the Shakespeare plays and poems. In making up his "Pattern of the Poet," an arbitrary outline of requirements that he claims any candidate for the authorship of the works must meet, Brooks declares:

> The Poet was a friend of Leicester.
>
> The first version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* told of a quarrel between Titania (Elizabeth) and Oberon (Leicester) and the detailed account of the Kenilworth Water Spectacle, essential to that quarrel, is written in the Poet's style.*

**The Princely Pleasures of the Courte at Kenelworth,* the contemporary account of the spectacles put on for the Queen's entertainment at Leicester's seat in 1575, credits George Gascoigne with authorship of the most important of these devices. In her *Life of Elizabeth,* Agnes Strickland says that George Ferrers wrote the lines spoken in the water spectacle.

> The Poet was present at the Kenilworth Entertainment of 1575.
>
> The first version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a topical play written on Leicester's behalf to win the Queen's pardon for his marriage to Lettice Knollys.

Claims for such evidences of Leicesterian propaganda in the Shakespearean works cannot be substantiated. If Mr. Brooks has any real evidence of the existence of a so-called "first version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" especially designed to soften the Queen's rage over Leicester's bigamous marriage to Lettice Knollys, he should produce it forthwith, for it would establish his immortal fame as a discoverer.

Having already gone through a secret marriage ceremony with Lady Sheffield in 1573, Leicester also became the husband of the widow of the Earl of Essex in 1576. He took every possible precaution to hide these dual alliances, and the marriage to the Countess of Essex was only revealed some three years later by Simier, the French Ambassador. It was with great difficulty that Elizabeth was restrained from imprisoning Leicester in the Tower when this came out. And Lettice Knollys Devereux Dudley was prohibited from appearing at Court during Leicester's lifetime.

It is preposterous, under these circumstances, to state that Leicester would countenance the production of any play specifically designed to refocus the high-tempered Queen's attention upon his derelictions.

Contrary to these unwarranted conclusions of Mr. Brooks, no unprejudiced investigator has ever been able to point out any clear-cut pro-Leicester sentiment in the Shakespeare plays. Indeed, the opposite is the case. Kenilworth Castle is mentioned in *Part 2 Henry VI* under its original name of "Killingworth" as one of the 15th century strongholds of the Lancastrian King, but the reference has no further significance. On the other hand, the names of Dudley and Leicester as personal designations are conspicuously absent in Shakespeare's voluminous cast of characters, although the dialogue spoken during the enactment of *The Princely Pleasures at Kenelworth* in 1575 is loaded with direct and flattering references to the mighty Dud-

ley. It would, therefore, seem to be obvious that Shakespeare purposely avoids saying one good word for the Queen's longtime favorite. Neither does the Bard honor the Earl's Dudley progenitors in the chronicle plays. There was, it is true, very little that could be stated to their advantage: both the grandfather and the father of the Earl of Leicester having been executed for high crimes and misdemeanors. But not a line, not a syllable does the dramatist emit to extenuate or exculpate their faults. It seems to me that if Edward Dyer had been this dramatist he would certainly have used his great talents to some effect to whitewash the background of the nobleman in whose service he can otherwise be shown to have labored so assiduously.

Moreover, Leicester is known to have patronized several writers who furthered his curious Puritan policies. Why, then, we must ask Mr. Brooks, would the Earl's confidential secretary and avowed partisan—if he really were responsible for the Shakespearean works—adopt a course so contrary to his patron's interests by presenting the bitter satire of a hypocritical "Puritan politician" such as Malvolio is designated in *Twelfth Night;* and make it a habit to insert other unkind references to Puritanism throughout so many of his writings?

Like other of Mr. Brooks' key arguments, this one—that *"the Poet was a friend of Leicester"*—simply does not stand up under analysis.

In fact, it can be emphatically stated without the slightest fear of refutation that the creative spirit of the plays and poems is distinctly hostile to all those peculiar practices by which Leicester achieved and retained his power in the state.

Prof. Sargent tells us that in May, 1573, Edward Dyer acted as one of the witnesses to Robert Dudley's secret or "mock" marriage to Douglas Howard (Lady Sheffield)—who gave birth to Leicester's son three days later. This affair, immediately following the sudden death of the Lord Sheffield under circumstances that would undoubtedly have brought about Leicester's indictment in modern times, became one of the most unsavory scandals of the age. Yet on page 445 of his book, Mr. Brooks speaks of Dyer's part in the affair only as testifying to "the strength of his friendship for Leicester."

The new "Shakespeare," it would appear, must be one in whom servility supplants all conscientious scruple.

Again, Brooks reproduces a letter written by Dyer to Leicester on May 28, 1586, after his Lordship had gone to the Netherlands as General in command of all English troops sent out to assist the United Provinces in their heroic struggle against Spanish tyranny. Historians of the Lowlands wars tell us that at this time Leicester headed a fair-sized army of picked fighters, many of them proven veterans, well equipped and eager for action. But back in England, it seems, the Earl's confidential agent at Court is worried over the prospect of Leicester's being forced to give an account of himself in the field. So he writes this letter—unfortunately too long to quote here—the burden of which is *"that there be causes why a general should not fight . . . And the greater honour is to overcome without danger than with it."* In other words, play safe; take no chances . . . lest *"your Lordship be overthrown."* (My italics.)

Believe it or not, the author of *Will Shakspere and the Dyer's Hand* seriously offers this remarkable epistle as a sample of genuine Shakespearean correspondence, straight from the Great Revisor's quill!

Disregarding the distinctively *active* martial connotations of the name Shakespeare itself, who can picture the daring and dynamic soul who brought to life a galaxy such as Hotspur, Henry the Fifth, the fire-eating Fluellen and "the brave Talbot," ever putting ink to paper to advise the leader of a well-equipped English army on foreign soil *how not to fight?*

Of course such an effort would be futile. The temperament of Dyer, as exposed in his letters, and the creative temperament that gives the plays their abounding vitality are poles apart. Shakespeare was no cagy and careful "sure thing gambler" such as Dyer writes himself down. The Bard was a reckless and prodigal genius, expending his most loving brush-strokes upon those characters who neither fear their fate nor doubt their own deserts too much to risk an all-out grapple with destiny.

Finally, when Mr. Brooks attempts to use Dyer's letter to Leicester to demonstrate verbal parallels between his candidate and the writer of the plays, the effort becomes painful. For he cannot point out a single distinctively Shakespearean figure of speech in the whole document—which runs to more than four hundred words. The nearest he can come to it is in the dual use of the word *ornament,* as follows:

> . . . the many virtues and *ornaments* as the world acknowledgeth besides to be in you.
>
> DYER.
>
> Thou that art now the world's fresh *ornament*...
>
> Sonnet 1.

Of course, the word *ornament* as applied to a courtier in Elizabethan days was no more distinctively Shakespearean than the word courtier itself. But in *The Merchant of Venice*, the Bard uses it in a way that would apply very aptly to Leicester:

The world is still deceiv'd with *ornament.*

In any event, it appears to be the consensus of opinion that the Earl of Leicester's military reputation was not helped by his proneness to follow advice such as Dyer gave him. At the end of his biographical commentary on the Earl, Sir Robert Naunton remarks that as a general "we read not of his wonders; for they say that he had more of *Mercury* than of *Mars;* and that his device might have been, without prejudice to the Great *Caesar, Veni, vidi, redii.*" (I came, I saw, I came away.)

Also, in his chapter on The Defeat of the Spanish Armada in *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World,* Sir Edward Creasy curtly refers to "the imbecility of the Earl of Leicester" as a military leader. Yet Alden Brooks writes with apparent seriousness of Edward Dyer's relationship to this unproved hero as one of the determining factors in the development of the real Bard's patriotic and martial fervor!

Evidently through Leicester's backing, the Queen in 1570 bestowed upon Edward Dyer "the stewardship of the manor and woods of Woodstock, Oxford, and its members, for life, and the rangership and portership of the park." This was considered a choice plum of patronage and Dyer was much envied for his good fortune. But almost immediately afterwards he fell under the Queen's displeasure and was forbidden her presence.

Commentators on Dyer's life at this period have scented a mystery in Elizabeth's annoyance with her protégé. But the later disclosure of those circumstances which show Dyer as Leicester's witness at the time of the Earl's secret marriage to Lady Sheffield, indicate that the Queen had as early as 1571 learned of Dyer's activities as a liaison man in the promotion of Leicester's relationships with other women; so that personal jealousy and pique may have been the real explanation of Elizabeth's withdrawal of her favor from the Earl's secretary. We know that she had sought a new companion for herself just about this time in the person of Christopher Hatton. And, to balance matters, Dyer proceeds to cultivate Hatton and to give him detailed advice on how to retain the fickle affections of the Monarch, who has also expressed herself as exceedingly fond of the young Earl of Oxford.

In the famous letter from Dyer to Hatton, first reproduced by Nicolas in his *Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton,* Dyer warns Hatton against presuming too far on Elizabeth's frailities as a woman, but to make headway obliquely by

> . . . hating my Lord of (Oxon.) in the Queen's understanding for affection's sake and blaming him openly for seeking the Queen's favor.

This epistle, which bears date of October 9, 1572, is seldom quoted in its entirety, as it contains realistic comments reflecting on the "Virgin Queen's" chastity. But even more illuminating to our present purpose is the insight it offers into Dyer's own psychology. Here we see how well the pupil has learned his lessons at the feet of his Machiavellian master, Leicester. The supple convolutions of his thought glide and coil with truly ophidian grace. Listen, as Master Dyer advises Hatton how to further himself by making life miserable for Oxford, the Queen's admired wit and entertainer:

> . . . behaving yourself as I have said, your place shall keep you in worship, your presence in favour, your followers will stand to you. At the least you shall have no bold enemies, and you shall dwell in the way to take all advantages wisely and honestly to serve your turn at times. Marry, this much I would advise you, that you use no words of disgrace or reproach towards him to any, that he, being the less provoked, may sleep thinking all safe, while you do awake and attend your advantage.
>
> Otherwise you shall, as it were, warder him and keep him in order. And he will make the Queen think that he beareth all for her sake, which will be a merit in her sight; and the pursuing of his revenge shall be just in all men's opinions, by what means soever he and his friends shall ever be able.

Mr. Brooks again seeks diligently for Shakespearean connotations in this cynical document. He brings forth a parallel phrase or two, such as "common reason," "best and soundest," "avouched," "marry" and "friends" compared to "glue"—all of which may be found in everyday Elizabethan usage. But in the overall effect, the psychological import of this brief essay on *How to Stab an Unsuspecting Rival in the Back,* Mr. Brooks misses out completely. He never even mentions Iago.

That Shakespeare had known an Iago in real life, who can doubt? But that Iago was Shakespeare himself is not only doubtful—it is unbelievable.

The anti-Oxford intrigue that Dyer plotted in Hatton's behalf was apparently set afoot with the full knowledge and approval of Leicester, who had no use at all for the youthful Lord Chamberlain of England. "Gypsy Robin" disliked Oxford, not only because the Queen "took great delight" in the young courtier's unconventional wit, dancing, flair for theatricals and remarkable prowess as a "spear-shaker" in the lists, but for the reason that Edward de Vere was the avowed protégé and admirer of that representative of the old nobility, Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex.

Honest, able and skilled in the fine arts, a good soldier and a true gentleman, Sussex looms today as one of the patriots of the Elizabethan Age. A cousin of the Queen, he is said to have won Leicester's hatred by advising Elizabeth, after the unexplained death of Amy Robsart, that she would do well to disavow any serious intentions of marrying Leicester as the people of England would not tolerate their Monarch's alliance with a favorite, freed of previous matrimonial obligations under such circumstances. From that time forward, Sussex and the man he contemptuously dubbed "The Gypsy" were at swords' points. Posterity has long since decided who was the better representative of English honor. But in the days when Edward Dyer was doing Leicester's bidding, the fact that Lord Oxford was the close friend of Sussex, his student in military tactics and statesmanship, was enough to mark the youthful peer out for persecution by the Leicester faction—of which Dyer was "the brain."

Many of the unexpected thwarts and discomfitures experienced by the playwriting Earl ("the best for comedy among us") during the two decades that followed can be traced to the hatching of this Leicester-Dyer-Hatton conspiracy to destroy Oxford's personal credit. Dyer's part in the business —far from indicating him as the Great Revisor of the Shakespeare plays—testifies to nothing more than his genius for deceitful intrigue.

In addition to serving the undercover interests of Leicester and Hatton, Dyer helped Sir Francis Walsingham work out his vast and intricate secret service system. It can be gathered that he was excellently suited for such a task.

Later he attached himself to the rising star of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex—Leicester's stepson and successor in Elizabeth's affections. Characteristically enough, while ostensibly the confidential adviser of the overtrustful Essex, Master Dyer can now be proven by Prof. Sargent to have really been the intimate friend and political agent of Sir Robert Cecil—Essex's most wily and implacable enemy.*

It is, moreover, plain that Dyer insinuated himself into Essex's inner circle with the full knowledge and consent of Cecil for the express purpose of keeping the Cecil party informed of the rash young nobleman's affairs. In fact, when we examine the documentary evidence of Dyer's dual relationship to these bitter opponents in the struggle for political control during the climacteric last decade of Elizabeth, Dyer's rare achievement of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds is only explainable on the grounds that Cecil himself was master of the hunt.

> "I have been this morning at Winchester House to seek you, and I would have given a thousand pounds to have had one hour's speech with you, so much I would hearken to your counsel and so greatly do I esteem your friendship," writes Essex to Dyer in July, 1587, after the Queen has reproved him for insulting speeches he has directed at Sir Walter Raleigh in her presence.

It would appear from this situation very much as though Essex had been following the same advice that Dyer had given Hatton years before as to "hating my Lord of (Oxon.) in the Queen's understanding, etc."—but with youthful impetuosity had overdone the matter.

It is highly significant to note that the Dyer-Essex correspondence has been preserved among the private papers of Sir Robert Cecil. Another of Dyer's missives, addressed to the unsuspecting Essex, bears date of May, 1598:

> I beseech you to open all letters of mine that come that way and not to stay the time of sending to me. For so it is most meet. Of the rest I can say nothing but ever more and more bound, I am liking more and more, enkindled with desire, to do your Lordship grateful service.

*A notable lapse in Alden Brooks' general argument for Dyer as Shakespeare appears on p. 223 of his book, where he has *Richard III* staged as a lampoon on Dyer's benefactor, the physically misshapen Cecil.

In Sargent's book (p. 146) we are further informed:

> On the night of Essex's return (from Ireland in the autumn of 1599) Sir Edward Dyer was in the Court faction that dined with Essex.

Then we come across this statement by Sargent, based on his study of the extant evidence that Dyer was really Sir Robert Cecil's own active henchman from 1592 onward:

> . . . it was Cecil who procured him his chancellorship and knighthood; more, it was Cecil and Cecil alone who saved Dyer from financial disaster at every crisis of his later years . . . there was more than political association. When Sir Robert's wife died in 1597, he chose Sir Edward Dyer, as one of his closest friends, to be a pallbearer at her funeral.

We may be sure that a master-strategist of the caliber of Sir Robert Cecil would never have admitted Dyer into his confidence if he had not had positive assurance that Dyer was actually representing him, no matter how openly Sir Edward wore the Essex colors. Still true to his early training under Leicester, Dyer's proficiency in the art of double-dealing is unquestionably the key to his private character.

Alden Brooks draws no moral from this important circumstance beyond arguing from premise to conclusion that:

> The Poet was abnormally secretive . . . Dyer was abnormally secretive.
>
> The Poet possessed a deceptive public manner . . . Dyer possessed a deceptive public manner, etc.

But the *ultimate* conclusion to be drawn from the recorded facts of Dyer's career certainly cannot be that the man's pronounced predilection for deception, secretiveness and double-dealing in personal relationships automatically fits him into the heroic mould of the Bard.

Shakespeare, above other writers of his age, celebrates the sacred ties of friendship and faithfulness to an accepted trust. He gives us Antonio and Bassanio, Romeo and Mercutio, Hamlet and Horatio, Lear and Kent, and the litany to a loyalty that survives crime, neglect, the very "edge of doom" in the *Sonnets*. In fact, the Bard himself is the trustworthy companion and adviser of faltering humanity. Even in his blackest moods he never quite lets his friends down. It is inconceivable that in real life he would play the part of a Sir Edward Dyer, or, for that matter, of a Sir Francis Bacon in relationship to the unhappy Essex.

On the other hand—as J. Thomas Looney has pointed out—the extreme loyalty that the literary Earl of Oxford displayed to his friend, the Duke of Norfolk, in 1571 when the latter was sentenced to execution as a partisan of Mary Queen of Scots, is hardly to be matched in Elizabethan annals, except in the pages of Shakespeare.

One of the minor fallacies that is given currency by many editors as the plays and poems—and which is built up to exaggerated proportions by Alden Brooks—is the assumption that "Shakespeare was a follower of the Earl of Essex" and introduced laudatory allusions to him into the choruses of *Henry the Fifth* and elsewhere. The fact is that all of the early editions of this play published between 1600 and 1608 lacked the choruses and every one of the passages that have been construed as praiseful of Essex. And although promoters of the Essex rebellion are known to have bribed members of the Lord Chamberlain's Company to put on performances of *Richard II* featuring the banned scenes in which the Monarch is deposed, as propaganda for the Earl's scheme to depose Elizabeth, Shakespeare himself certainly had no hand in the matter, for the author of *Richard II* was not mentioned under this name or any other when the affair was later investigated by the Queen's authorities. The Bard cannot be shown to have favored the grandiose schemes of Leicester's step-son with any more enthusiasm than he displays on behalf of Leicester himself. Indeed, the distinctively negative reactions that the plays and poems yield in this respect, indicate that their author had no desire whatever to be accounted one of the Essex party. The fact that the young Earl of Southampton, to whom *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* were dedicated, became Essex's sworn adherent does not alter the evidence in the least as it relates to the creator of those works and his attitude toward the nobleman who was beheaded for treason in February, 1601.

We have seen that Dyer, for ulterior purposes, sought openly to curry favor with Essex, although no documentation can be produced to connect Southampton with the supple Sir Edward.

On the other hand, Southampton can be definitely connected with the literary Earl of Oxford

on a very intimate basis. Over a period of some two years, serious efforts were made to have Southampton contract himself to marry Oxford's eldest daughter—a circumstance that is generally believed by most Shakespearean students (even including Alden Brooks himself) to be commented upon at length in the first seventeen of *Shakespeare's Sonnets.*

Moreover, it can now be shown that although Lord Oxford wanted the handsome young Southampton for a son-in-law, he heartily disliked Essex.

In a letter addressed to Sir Robert Cecil under date of October 20, 1595,* Oxford encloses a message to Lord Burghley regarding the latter's suggestion that Oxford, to protect his chances of securing the Queen's approval of his long-sought right to the keepership of the Forest of Waltham and the Park of Havering, "make means to the Earl of Essex to forbear to deal for it." This, says Oxford, he "cannot do in honour, *having already received divers injuries and wrongs from him.*" (My italics.) And he adds, philosophically: "If her Majesty's affections be forfeits of men's estates, we must endure it."

This would seem to offer the best of personal reasons why the author of the Shakespearean works refrains from paying tribute to the otherwise highly lauded Earl of Essex.

In 1601 Oxford sat as one of the senior Lords Tryors of Essex and voted for his execution for high treason. But his action did not do violence to former pledges of undying loyalty to the misguided Earl. And it is to be noted that although Southampton also was sentenced to capital punishment by the same court, a special recommendation of mercy was entered in his behalf which resulted in a commutation of the extreme penalty. In other words, the man to whom *Venus and Adonis, Lucrece* and many of the *Sonnets* are addressed had a powerful friend at that particular court who came to his rescue in his hour of doom. Sir Robert Cecil filed the official plea for mercy. But behind Cecil was his brother-in-law Oxford ("most excellent in the rare devices of poetry") who had once sought Southampton as husband of his eldest daughter.

One of the points at which Alden Brooks abruptly departs from the documentary facts of Sir Edward Dyer's career occurs when Brooks attempts to build up his conjectural portrait of Dyer as a hack writer, employed by the Stratford literary agent. On page 481 of the Brooks opus we read:

> In the summer of 1591, Edward Dyer, forty-seven years old, *withdrew from active political life to reclusion in Winchester House.*

In 1592 Dyer had been "again returned to Parliament from Somerset" and took active part in the deliberations of that body, serving on important commissions.

We have already shown that Dyer was also engaged in the political concerns of the Earl of Essex in 1598 and later, quite evidently filling the role of an informer for the Cecil party.

> The records of Dyer's part (writes Sargent, ingenuously) *fell into the hands of Cecil, who preserved them.** (My italics.) One, a letter from Essex on 4 March 1598 to his agent John Udall, reveals that Sir Edward Dyer is acting as a liaison man between Essex and a Scottish nobleman who has offered to perform some secret services in Ireland.

Thus we see that Brooks' statement regarding Dyer's withdrawal from active affairs is entirely misleading. Dyer was actually a prominent Parliamentary figure during these years of alleged withdrawal "from active political life," besides being engaged in political intrigue which involved high stakes and important personages.

Furthermore, Sargent shows that during the years 1593-95, at least, Dyer was serving with Sir Thomas Heneage as under officer for the Duchy of Lancaster, an important post, involving the handling of considerable revenue. A report on the affairs of the Duchy, dated September, 1595, bears the joint signatures of Heneage as Chancellor and Dyer as his associate. Yet Brooks does not mention Heneage or the Duchy of Lancaster in his book—a circumstance that argues studied suppression. Even more reprehensible is the author's insistence that during the last sixteen years of his life Dyer was a forgotten man, a hermit in his lodgings at Winchester House, "one whose day has now passed, a frequenter of the shadows . . ," driven by want and

*Calendar of MSS. of the Earl of Salisbury, Vol. 5, p. 426.

*All circumstances considered, it seems perfectly clear that Dyer himself turned this correspondence over to Cecil.

neglect to toil as an editorial "*play doctor*" for the fictional Simon Legree of Stratford.

> At last (writes Sargent) in 1596 Dyer was knighted and made Chancellor of the Order of the Garter. The office carried a stipend of 100 pounds per annum* . . . As Chancellor of the Garter, however, he had been elevated to a place of uncommon esteem . . . Elizabeth especially guarded the prestige of the Order of the Garter as the most select honorary body in the kingdom. In the whole of her reign, only fifty-one persons, English noblemen or foreign potentates, were ever granted the Garter . . . Although Dyer's office admitted him to meetings of the order, it made him, as it were, an honorary servant of the members. His particular duty gave him custody of the Seal of the Order: *according to the rules of the body* (my italics) *he must be daily at Court*, ready to provide the Queen with the Seal whenever she might desire it. Whenever he appeared in public the Chancellor of the Garter wore about his neck a jewelled chain bearing 'a golden Rose enclosed within a Garter.' On all state occasions he took rank following the Privy Councillors and preceding the Chancellor of the Exchequer . . . In the eyes of many of his countrymen, Dyer, now Sir Edward, had become an enviable and venerable dignitary.

So it would seem to be abundantly apparent that Dyer—far from being a poverty-stricken and forgotten recluse at Winchester House, dependent upon the largess of the rough-and-ready go-getter from Stratford—was actually a prominent figure in the highest and most active social and political circles of his day.

Elizabeth's Court was the dynamic core from which all governmental and social influences radiated. And as Dyer's position as Chancellor of the Garter obliged him *to attend Court daily*, and be at the beck and call of the Queen, how foolish it is of Mr. Brooks to try to make the facts appear otherwise!

Finally, Rowland Whyte, the secretary of Sir Robert Sidney, specifically informs us that Dyer was one of the active figures at Court during the period that Brooks finds it necessary to picture him as a recluse-hack at Winchester House.* During 1597, Whyte writes to Sidney in reference to Sidney's efforts to become an official of the Royal Household:

> I have in deed too often troubled you with the Presence Chamber, but to give you Satisfaction, it was my Lady of *Warwick*, and Sir *Edward Dier*, that in their love to you, did wish your Enemies had not had that only Way to hurt you in her Maiesty's Favor, who speaks often of it . . . For Sir *Edward Dier* in plain Termes told me that he heard the Queen had such an Impression of it grounded in her, as she thought you too young for any Place about her.

Here is the real Dyer: in the thick of Court politics to his ears, and plainly taking a hand in guiding the Queen's choice of her confidential servants. What nonsense it would be to suppose that the Chancellor of the Noble Order of the Garter, *a daily attendant upon the Queen*, would sacrifice a position so ideally suited to his temperament to become the hack-writing puppet of the synthetic Stratford bounder that Alden Brooks has created!

Charles Wisner Barrell

*Together with other worth-white perquisites, for any person filling this office was assured ample funds to maintain the dignity of the position.

**Sidney Papers*, Collins, Vol. 2, p. 31.

Radar

The Reader's Digest for June prints an article, condensed from Collier's, under the title, The Greatest "Secret Weapon" of the War. This "secret weapon," "pioneered" in Britain, is Radar, a radio detection device which, it is said, was "the one weapon that won the Battle of Britain." Not only does it locate enemy planes with exactness, but it is being used with equal success in the campaign against enemy ships in the Atlantic.

One paragraph of this article is here quoted:

> By 1930 we [in America] had apparatus which could detect a plane in flight. By 1934 we could measure the distance between detector and plane, and our navy had already installed radar on a number of warships and shore stations. The navy engineered its own apparatus. Much of the basic research was done by the Bureau of Standards' radio division, under Dr. J. H. Dellinger.

With pride, we point to the fact that Dr. J. H. Dellinger of Washington is a member of The Shakespeare Fellowship. To him and to others associated with him in perfecting the "magic eye," we extend congratulations and a heart full of gratitude for their remarkable contribution towards circumventing our brutal enemy.

NEWS-LETTER
THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP
AMERICAN BRANCH

VOLUME IV AUGUST, 1943 No. 5

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.

The Fellowship Disclaims

The Shakespeare Fellowship disclaims extravagant theories which have no basis in documentary proofs. The desire of this organization is to show by factual evidence that the Earl of Oxford was the author of the plays known by the name "William Shakespeare," following the lead so well set forth by Mr. J. Thomas Looney in his *"Shakespeare" Identified in the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* (1920).

The most recent unsubstantiated claim to attract attention is that Lord Oxford was the author of numerous poems known to have been written by George Gascoigne, the soldier-poet. Gascoigne was quite definitely on his own account an author of both poetry and prose and his work was much admired by his contemporaries.

Except that sixteen of Lord Oxford's early poems were included in an anthology which contained poems by Gascoigne, Hatton, and others, and that he was responsible for the publication of the lot in one volume, *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres** (1573), there is no reason to believe for a moment that the Earl ever had anything to do with any prose or verse written by Gascoigne. There was room for both of them in the literary world of London.

False claims have likewise been made to the effect that the Earl of Oxford was the author of Edmund Spenser's poems. Such fantastic theories are to be deplored.

Documentary proofs of sufficient weight and numbers have established, to the satisfaction of members of The Shakespeare Fellowship, that the Earl wrote many dramas to be produced at Court, at the little Blackfriars playhouse, at the public theatres and at the inn-yards, like the Boar's Head; that late in his life he adopted "Shakespeare" as a pen name after a few of his plays, badly garbled, had been published anonymously by pirate publishers; and that, from 1598 onward, several of his plays, apparently authorized, appeared in print under that pseudonym.

Evidence must be collected and it must be interpreted, but interpretation must accord due regard to facts and sane reasoning.

Letters from England

Our recent correspondence includes letters from the following members of the English Shakespeare Fellowship: Colonel M. W. Douglas, Mr. J. J. Dwyer (remembered for his tracing of Shakespeare sources in Dante), Miss Elsie Greenwood (daughter of Sir George Greenwood, first President of the Fellowship), and Mr. T. L. Adamson, all being officers of the Fellowship, with the exception of Miss Greenwood.

Our members would enjoy reading all of these letters, but space does not permit their publication. An excerpt from the one by Mr. Adamson will have to suffice:

> It's all to the good that we "heretics" continually come out into the open with our different ideas, argue stoutly about them, and so gradually widen the common ground of understanding of all that the word "Oxford" implies. What must

*Reprint (1926), with Introduction by B. M. Ward.

the poor orthodox professors think about it all? Do they honestly weigh the wealth of material we of the united Fellowship have for years been digging up to the damnation of their orthodoxy? They are men of intelligence, and I cannot believe that they do not admit to themselves in their cloistered seclusion that there's something rotten in the State of Stratford. I imagine that the combined assault of England and America will never drive them to unconditional surrender: they would rather suffocate in the odour of their orthodoxy.

I once asked one of the most learned orthodox men I know to tell me what was in the mind of the dramatist when he wasted some 80 lines in Act II, sc. i, of his finest play describing in meticulous detail the unholy art of espionage. Do they increase our knowledge of the character of Polonius? His character needed no such emphasis. Does it matter dramatically to any one how Laertes behaved in Paris? and anyhow we are not told and are not interested. Do the lines carry on the dramatic action of the play? They tediously retard it, with the result that most of them are ruthlessly cut in production. Then, I asked, is not the only explanation that there was some bee in the dramatist's bonnet so powerful that he must send it aimlessly buzzing round the head of the scorned Polonius? Surely the dramatist had himself been stung to the quick by such loathed spying or his artistic soul would have resisted the temptation of 80 such lines. And then I told him of Oxford's wellknown bitter protest to Burghley. A tolerant shake of the head was his only comment, and he changed the subject. So few of the orthodox will shake a spear in their own defence.

Whatever the "orthodox" may be thinking about the Oxford evidence, we learn from Mr. Adamson and others that many young people are finding it most acceptable. With their youthful enthusiasm, they are the ones who will carry on until the theory is accepted as a fact. It will then be "orthodox."

English News-Letter

The Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter for May arrived in this country somewhat late, as must be expected in wartime. From it a few items of special interest are here noted.

On Feb. 23, 1943, died at Tunbridge Wells, Helen Mary Isabelle Douglas, O.B.E., wife of Lieut.-Colonel Montagu Douglas, C.S.I., C.I.E., Punjab Commission (retired). No flowers by request.

The American Fellowship extends for its members our deepest sympathy to Colonel Douglas in his sorrow. Colonel Douglas is President of the English Fellowship, having succeeded the late Sir George Greenwood.

Brooke House, Hackney, the Earl of Oxford's residence during the last decade of his life, was seriously damaged recently during a German raid, the Elizabethan portion of the mansion having been almost wholly destroyed. During Lord Oxford's occupancy and long before, the house was known as King's Place. Several years after his death, his widow sold the property to Lord Brooke, who changed its name to Brooke House. Hackney, some distance to the north of London in Elizabeth's time, is now a part of that great city.

New Shakespeare Books

The Times Literary Supplement (London), May 1, 1943, reviews two books on Shakespeare not yet available in this country. They are—

The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare: A Survey of the Foundations of the Text. By W. W. Greg. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 12s. 6d.

Stolne and Surreptitious Copies: A Comparative Study of Shakespeare's Bad Quartos. By Alfred Hart. Oxford University Press. London: Milford.

In his textual criticisms of Shakespeare's plays, Dr. Greg has done notable work. To clear up the many complex difficulties in trying to settle what is the correct text, the author takes this as his first rule: "The aim of a critical edition should be to present the text, so far as the available evidence permits, in the form which we may suppose that it would have stood in a fair copy, made by the author himself, of the work as he finally intended it."

Dr. Alfred Hart, of the University of Melbourne, says in regard to his new book: "All my work is directed to one end—to prove that the six bad quartos are derivative texts and take their origin from the corruption of the respective six plays written by Shakespeare." . . . "My thesis is to prove that each bad quarto is a garbled abridgment of an acting version made officially by the play adapter of the company from Shakespeare's manuscript." This work should prove to be complementary to Dr. Bénézet's articles on Henslowe's Diary. Dr. Hart will be remembered as the author of a work on the Elizabethan Homilies, showing them to be the source of numerous passages in the plays.