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A Great Pioneer's Ideas on Intellectual Freedom

It seems safe to say that no reasonably intelligent and unfettered person who has ever actually read J. Thomas Looney's "*Shakespeare Identified*—the Rosetta Stone of Shakespearean biography—can have failed to be impressed first of all by the breadth of vision and intellectual integrity of the great pioneer advocate of the Oxford-Shakespeare cause. Far from being a man of a single dominating idea, Mr. Looney had thought deeply on many subjects relating to human welfare and progress. We are reminded of this fact again by the receipt of the following letter, originally written to Mr. Flodden W. Heron of San Francisco by Mr. Looney and dated from his residence in England, July 5th, 1941, during one of the most discouraging periods of the European phase of the war.

The letter, it will be seen, contains ideas of fundamental weight regarding the rehabilitation of human civilization and the future role of the English-speaking nations in guaranteeing freedom to the mind of man, which it would be well for our peacemakers, at present representing the interests of the free citizens of the United Nations, not to ignore.

We consider it a great privilege to be able to reprint Mr. Looney's letter at this time.

* * *

... I like to think of our relationship not only as an expression of interest in a common literary purpose but also as a symbol of the close bonds that now unite our respective nations in the most critical fight for the preservation of civilization that the human race has yet known. The two links that thus unite us personally are in fact but two aspects of a single aim. It is in literature that the finest fruits of man's advance in civilization have been preserved, and it is the spiritual wealth deposited in books that is especially threatened in the Nazi challenge to civilization. Even were Hitler to suc-

ceed in his political purposes a healthy interest in the great things of literature would be a permanent condemnation of and menace to his system. The two things could not permanently survive side by side. Nazism would have to destroy all the great poets or be ultimately destroyed by them; and in the end I do not doubt on which side victory would lie.

I often regret therefore that the war is represented as a struggle between dictatorship and democracy. At the bottom it is one between the human soul and elemental brute force; it just happens that the present dictatorships stand for brutal domination and spiritual tyranny, and that to the democracies has fallen the defence of the soul's freedom. The opposite is, however, quite conceivable. "Majority rule" might be as tyrannically repressive of spiritual liberty as any other form of government. Progressive truth always makes its first appearance in some small *minority* and has to wage a long uphill fight against the majority. Intellectual and moral freedom are therefore of infinitely greater importance than "majority rule." I prefer to think of our two nations as being united in a struggle for the preservation of spiritual liberty rather than the maintenance of what is called "democratic government."

I quite realise that the bedrock of spiritual liberty is freedom of "speech" (whether oral, written, or printed) and that freedom of speech is a natural element of parliamentary government. This is probably why what is at the bottom a struggle for spiritual liberty has come to be represented as a fight between dictatorship and democracy. All the same, I think it of first importance that the true inward nature of the struggle should be more exactly defined.

So represented it should be realized that what is aimed at is but a means to a greater end and not an

ultimate end in itself. Spiritual liberty is only of real use as a necessary means of reaching a true philosophy of life for mankind; a spiritual freedom which resulted in a mass of confused and conflicting ideas would be of very doubtful value, and this I think carries us to the heart of the whole problem of modern life. The entire human race is today floundering, and apparently plunging towards anarchy, for want of a philosophy of life sufficiently real, certain and definite, as to be able to command a general assent; and intellectual and moral freedom is necessary for working out and propagating such a philosophy.

The main task itself is therefore not one for the statesmen and politicians: it belongs primarily to the thinkers and teachers; the task of the statesmen is to furnish the conditions of liberty and security under which these thinkers can carry on their work.

The success of the democracies in the present conflict, for which we all so ardently hope, should be regarded as but the beginning of a vaster and more difficult enterprise of laying the spiritual bases of a new world order. Here the cooperation of America and Britain is bound to assume a controlling if not a dominating position. The present cooperation of the two nations in practical affairs

Gelett Burgess' Tribute to "Shakespeare" Identified

One of the first of well-known American writers to read and appreciate J. T. Looney's famous volume was Gelett Burgess, who wrote the following letter, dated May 19, 1920, to an interested correspondent. Mr. Burgess still retains his firm belief in the Oxford-Shakespeare case and is one of the active members of The Shakespeare Fellowship. His letter is worthy of permanent record.

I have been fascinated beyond measure by "*Shakespeare*" Identified. It has all the charm, all the excitement of the most thrilling detective story. Indeed, it is a detective story; and, if the author's conclusions are accepted by posterity, it chronicles the most important literary pursuit and discovery ever given to the world.

Whether or not, however, it is ever conceded by critics that Edward de Vere was the true author of "Shakespeare's" works, no one with any claim to culture or literary inclination can call himself well-informed upon the subject of the greatest of English writers without having read this contribution to an age-old question. And no one, whatever his conventional prejudices

is therefore, I trust, but the introduction to a deeper and more vital cooperation on the intellectual plane, the combined mind of Britain and America moving towards a new spiritual order as the basis of that peaceful progress of which mankind has dreamed since the dawn of civilization. For this the politicians and statesmen are but preparing the way whilst its actual achievement will have to pass into other hands. It may indeed be urged that it has been the failure of leaders of thought to rise to the demands that the present age makes upon them, and the assumption of their functions by the temporal or state forces, that is largely responsible for the world welter in which we find ourselves.

Be that as it may, it seems fairly clear now that the world leadership which was formerly exercised by Europe as a whole is passing to the combined democracies of Britain and America. It is a great responsibility and we can only hope that our leaders of thought will prove equal to its demands.

We may therefore look upon our Shakespeare Fellowship, with its sister movements in the two countries, as a type of the intellectual and moral cooperation which is probably destined to exercise a determining influence over the entire future of the human race.

in favor of the Man of Stratford, can read it without being impressed by the fairness of view, the logical pursuance of the inquiry, and the elegance and clarity of Mr. Looney's style.

The sense of the inevitability of his choice of a candidate for Shakespearean honors grows steadily throughout the book, and as the author marshals his wide collection of coincidences the cumulative evidence enforces conviction at least to the layman. And this inquiry, being direct and scientific in method—having nothing of the forced artificiality of the elaborate cryptogram formulae heretofore exploited—gives the whole work an irresistibly human and emotional appeal equalling the glamour of fiction. One cannot help being moved and inspired by this extraordinary and sincere attempt to solve the greatest literary mystery of modern times. Once having read the book, I doubt if anyone, friend or foe, will ever forget it.

The storm of criticism may rage; but Mr. Looney has changed the complexion of the Shakespearean controversy for all time.

President Benezet Lectures in Philadelphia

As an aftermath of the luncheon of the officials of the Philadelphia Public Schools attended by Dr. Bénézet last March, our President was invited to return to the city for a series of Shakespeare lectures on June 5th and 6th.

There are two of the twenty-two high schools in the city which specialize in preparation for those colleges that admit chiefly through the C.E.E.B., the well-known "boards." These are the Girls' High School and the Central High School (for boys). Both are noted for their high scholarship. Both admit only students of keen intelligence and scholastic promise. The Central High, particularly, is famous as the second oldest public high school in the United States. Among its graduates are Congressmen, Justices, college presidents, and a host of celebrities. Of particular interest to Shakespeare students is the name, among one of the early classes, of Ignatius Donnelly, Congressman, Governor of Minnesota, candidate for Vice-President and author of the anti-Stratford, pro-Bacon volume that was so widely discussed in the past generation, *The Great Cryptogram*.

Tuesday morning, June 5th, Dr. Adams, the Associate Superintendent, and Mr. Obermayer, President of the Board of Education, took Dr. Bénézet to the Girls' High. Here the principal had arranged a Shakespeare assembly. Eighteen hundred girls sang, with wonderful effect, a Shakespeare lyric set to music from Tchaikowsky's *Fifth Symphony*. Then a soprano with a charmingly sweet voice sang "Hark, hark, the lark." Our President's address followed. For fifty minutes the girls listened with keen interest, to the life story of the Earl of Oxford, as related to the plays and poems of "Shakespeare." At the close the applause was spontaneous and prolonged. There was time for only a question or two, and the hour was over.

Then in succession the speaker visited three senior Shakespeare classes, where he answered questions and amplified the assembly talk. At luncheon in the faculty room the discussion was continued with Dr. Adams, the principal, and two of the English teachers who were particularly intrigued by the new doctrine.

That afternoon there was a meeting at the William Penn High School, of high school principals and teachers of English. It was purely an invitation affair, and this was a very busy time of the school year, so that it was not surprising that only sixty-

odd were present. A welcome visitor at the meeting was Dr. Wm. T. Ellis of Swarthmore, noted writer, lecturer and authority on China, who having heard Dr. Bénézet's lecture at Winter Park in March, like Oliver Twist, was hungry for more.

The speaker talked for ninety minutes, yet no one left the hall, and at the close the audience kept up a fire of questions for another half hour. At 5:30 Dr. Adams intervened and forcibly carried the speaker away, reminding him that he had another speech to give that evening.

This was at the home of a valued member of The Fellowship, Mr. Leon J. Obermayer, President of the Philadelphia Board of Education, where gathered an audience representing the bench, the bar and the pulpit, to say nothing of English scholars, including two who have written books about Shakespeare and Elizabethan literature.

Dr. Bénézet faced this group for seventy-five minutes, when the hostess called the company into the dining room, where, while refreshments were served, the discussion continued for another hour.

Next morning Dr. Bénézet addressed an assembly of some eight hundred boys at the Central High School, students who take English in either junior or senior year. At the suggestion of Dr. Carnog, the head of the school, who had heard the lecture the evening before, the speaker confined his talk largely to the story of the Sonnets as illustrated in the life of the Earl of Oxford, for there was only a forty-five minute period available. At the close there was a groan as Dr. Carnog announced that there would be no time for questions. Some twenty boys swarmed up around the speaker, their leader waving a paper on which questions had been written during the lecture. Dr. Carnog finally gave permission to the young enthusiasts to stay for half the next period, whereupon an excited colloquy ensued.

Finally Dr. Adams had to remind the speaker that he was due at a *Macbeth* class, so the boys were left, only half through with their queries.

The *Macbeth* class was unusual, in that the teacher had recently had three boys present papers on the question of the Shakespeare authorship, one upholding Bacon, one Oxford and a third the Stratford man. Questioning brought out the fact that the Oxford proponent had gotten his material solely from Mr. Barrell's article in the Scientific American of January, 1940. Dr. Bénézet added to

the information about the infra-red and X-ray discoveries made by Mr. Barrell and as yet unpublished. He then devoted his remaining time to the answering of questions.

It is safe to say that many of Philadelphia's keenest adolescents who listened to President Bénézet's

Oxford's Birthday Signalized In Rod Hendrickson Broadcast

Rod Hendrickson, whose program, "This Business of Living," is one of the morning high-spots of WEAJ and other radio stations, devoted his entire time on April 21st last to the presentation of certain lines of evidence in the case for Lord Oxford as "Shakespeare." The broadcast was really a prelude to the more conventionalized observance of "Shakespeare's Birthday" on April 23rd when Shakspeare of Stratford is generally estimated to have been born.

Material utilized by Mr. Hendrickson was provided by Mr. Flodden W. Heron of San Francisco, Vice-President of The Fellowship, and an early friend of the popular radio *raconteur*, who made his start on the air in the Pacific Coast metropolis. This material appears in a pamphlet entitled *April 23—Birthday of a Genius*, compiled by Mr. Heron and published by The Literary Anniversary Club of San Francisco in a limited edition, already out of print.

Among the interesting arguments advanced in the Hendrickson broadcast was the highly significant one, first offered on behalf of Edward de Vere, the poet Earl of Oxford, by Mrs. Eva Turner Clark in the NEWS-LETTER for April, 1940, to this effect:

Edward de Vere was really born on the day that is now generally accepted as "Shakespeare's Birthday."

This is true despite the fact that the literary Earl's entry into the world is recorded as having occurred at Castle Hedingham, Essex, on April 12th, 1550.

The explanation is that the ancient and inaccurate Julian calendar was in official use in England in 1550 and for generations afterward, although Pope Gregory XIII promulgated the reformed calendar in 1582. When Parliament finally got around to acceptance of the more correct method of time-reckoning in the 18th century, eleven days were arbitrarily omitted from the calendar, making April 12th (Old Style) fall on April 23rd.

lectures are going to keep their English teachers busy defending the Stratford story for a long while to come, while some ten or twelve teachers, keenly interested in the evidence for Lord Oxford, will find new meanings in what they teach from the works of the greatest of the heretofore unknown great.

As a matter of fact, many Catholic families in England had adopted the new calendar in the 16th century, after it was proclaimed by the Pope. Lord Oxford had become reconciled to the Roman faith in the 1570's, and although he later recanted to dissociate himself from the dangerous group that plotted the overthrow of Elizabeth on religious grounds, he was long suspected of "Catholic leanings," much as the author of *Hamlet* has been. We cannot be sure whether the Earl himself reckoned time by the more accurate Gregorian method. But it can be definitely shown that his illegitimate son, Sir Edward Vere—although associated throughout his career with the forces of militant Protestantism—used the Gregorian calendar in his private correspondence. Moreover, both Sir Edward Vere and his half-brother, Henry de Vere, 18th Earl of Oxford, can be documented as personal friends of Ben Jonson, the press agent of "Shakespeare's" posthumous reputation. Jonson is the source of several statements about the "Sweet Swan of Avon" which modern research workers brand as deliberately designed to mislead and confuse.

The tradition that the alleged genius of Stratford-on-Avon was born on April 23rd may or may not be one of these. In any event, it can be clearly proved that according to the reformed calendar, Lord Oxford *actually* was ushered into life on that now internationally celebrated day.

This fact provides another troublesome coincidence for professional Stratfordians studiously to ignore or explain as best they may.

Mr. Hendrickson emphasized this important circumstance in his entertaining and illuminating radio talk. He received many requests from his listeners for additional information on the Oxford-Shakespeare case—requests that Mr. Hendrickson, Mr. Heron and The Fellowship are still endeavoring to meet.

The Wayward Water-Bearer Who Wrote "Shake-speare's" Sonnet 109

By CHARLES WISNER BARRELL

In a previous chapter* I have given reasons for believing that Sonnet 109 was written by the poet Earl of Oxford in the spring of 1581 to his unfortunate mistress Anne Vavasor when this dark-haired, dark-eyed young Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Elizabeth was sent to the Tower for unexpectedly giving birth to a son by Oxford in the Maidens' Chamber at Greenwich Palace.

It will be recalled that Oxford himself was not among those present on this dramatic occasion, and was thought by Sir Francis Walsingham, Principal Secretary of State, and others "to have withdrawn himself with intent to pass the seas."

Be that as it may, the Earl was either quickly apprehended or gave himself up to the Virgin Monarch's authority and was also sentenced to enjoy the grim hospitality of the state prison for having, like the leading male character of *Measure for Measure*, "got his friend with child."

Thus, both the poet and his Dark Lady appear to have been inmates of the commodious Tower at the same time. But we can take it for granted that the jealous Queen—who had herself long displayed a marked personal interest in Oxford—saw to it that her erring favorite was given no opportunity to console his unhappy mistress or offer first-hand excuses for his absence during the torturing midnight hours of Anne Vavasor's disgrace and banishment. If Oxford communicated with her at this time, it would have been by means of a written message. And as a versifier whose technical skill is categorically attested by his contemporaries, what more natural than his use of the highly personalized poetical form, of which Sonnet 109 is a striking example, to express remorse and beg forgiveness for his apparent "false of heart . . . absence" when the great reckoning took place in the Maiden's Chamber?

O. never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart

As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love: if I have rang'd,
Like him that travels, I return again:
Just to the time, not with the time exchange'd,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my Rose; in it thou art my all.

The whole spirit of this poem most assuredly echoes the tragic circumstances in which the titled poet and his mistress were enmeshed to their scandalous undoing in the March of 1581.

The unhallored man child—later to become the handsome and heroic Lt.-Col. Sir Edward Vere, M. P., of the Lowland Wars—although illegitimate, was nevertheless Oxford's true creation. The fact that the Earl never publicly acknowledged him does not prove that Oxford did not view the boy with paternal affection. Much documentary evidence will be presented at another time to show how, on the contrary, Edward de Vere the poet-dramatist went to great pains to keep this fair and courageous namesake who, even as an adolescent subaltern in the service of Sir Francis Vere, shed lustre on the family name, from being branded as a "bastard" by the busy tongues of London. All of these circumstances are referred to many times in the heart-stirring measures of the Sonnets. So when "Gentle Master William" here avows,

*As easy might I from myself depart
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:*

it may well be that he is personifying the infant as his "soul." Years later, when addressing the more mature youth in Sonnet 74, he uses a similar figure of speech:

Thy spirit is mine, the better part of me.

It seems almost needless to point out again that

*NEWS-LETTER, Vol. III, No. 3.

no reference that the author of Sonnet 109 makes to himself has ever been applied with any realistic force whatever to the known personal career of the Stratford native. A wayward aristocrat certainly speaks in such lines as:

*Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good.*

For, everything else aside, no true artist would make such a personal allusion unless "blood" and high social position were genuinely susceptible of being "stain'd" by the delinquencies charged. It would be not only ridiculous but an unpardonable breach of creative taste for William of Stratford—an authentic son of the yeomanry who is said to have been forced into a "shot-gun" marriage with a farmer's daughter, eight years his senior—suddenly to begin lamenting that he was subject to the "frailties" of the lower orders. No. Here again the Stratford identification is untenable. The author of the *Sonnets* is too great an artist to indulge in so obviously cheap a solecism. He continually expresses himself as a genius of truly aristocratic background naturally would, incidentally admitting many personal faults. But rank insincerity and snobbish pretence are not among them. In asking us to assume such breaches of taste and common sense the accepted authorities demand the impossible. We must look for the writer of these revealing lines among the Elizabethan poets of outstanding contemporary reputation who actually had jeopardized "blood" and high social position by certain well-defined patterns of emotional irregularity and creative activity. In doing this, let us ignore conjectural possibilities and stick as closely as possible to personal documentation. This immediately narrows the field to one man—the same poet-playwright Earl of Oxford whose documentation can always be shown to fit the Bard's most searching self-commentaries. In fact, it is not too much to say that *all* references which "Shakespeare" makes to himself, and which are admittedly blank enigmas as applied to the Stratford native, immediately assume clarity and heightened artistic meaning when read in the light of Oxford's personal record.

One very interesting self-description that has, I believe, escaped previous notice, appears in the eighth line of Sonnet 109:

So that myself bring water for my stain.

To the casual reader this may appear as a mere figure of speech, rather on the commonplace side; the kind of thing that almost any poet who has broken the Seventh Commandment might say in expressing remorse. But we are not dealing here with "almost any poet." We are dealing with the outstanding master of English literature, a Lord of Language who uses commonplace words so effectively (as he himself reminds us in Sonnet 76) "that every word doth almost tell my name."

So when we examine more closely "Shakespeare's" reference to himself as a *water-bearer*, we suddenly discover that it fits the poet Earl with almost breath-taking realism. And this for the simple reason that *Lord Oxford was the official water-bearer at Elizabeth's Court*.

This fact is amply certified by Dr. J. Horace Round, foremost authority on the law and precedent relating to British peerage and pedigree, who was retained by both the House of Lords and the Crown to settle many important questions in this field. Dr. Round tells us that in addition to the office of Lord Great Chamberlain of England, the 17th Earl of Oxford also held an office known as "the Ewrie" which is described as distinct from the Great Chamberlainship.¹

The most important duty of the Officer of the Ewrie during the Shakespearean Age was "to serve the monarch with water before and after eating on the day of the Coronation." It must be noted that this service of water was primarily for cleansing purposes, and that the "ewer, basins and towels" were among the essential furniture of the office, as well as "tasting cups."

As Lord Great Chamberlain and also Officer of the Ewrie, Oxford is known to have personally served James I upon the day of his Coronation in 1603.²

But the record of *Queen Elizabeth's Annual Expence: Civil and Military*, published by the Society of Antiquarians of London (1790), shows that "the Ewrie" was a continuously active Court office employing a "Sergeant," three "Yeomen," two "Groomes," two "Pages" and two "Clarks." This quite evidently means that while Oxford held the honor of the office of providing water for the Queen's use in freshing up at table and wiping away the "stains" of her repast, he himself only func-

¹Round: *Report on the Lord Great Chamberlainship*; MS. in the Library of the House of Lords, London.

²Ward: *Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, p. 346.

tioned in this capacity upon great state occasions, such as a Coronation.

So that myself bring water for my stain

is not, therefore, merely a commonplace figure of speech, but a direct, colorful self-identification of Edward de Vere as the author of Sonnet 109.

And although it may be demonstrated that these verses are addressed to some woman other than Oxford's unhappy Dark Lady—even to the Queen herself—the unmistakable voice of the wayward Officer of the Elizabethan Ewrie still rings just as clearly on the informed ear.

The emblem of "the Ewrie" (also seemingly unnoted by the many keen scholars who have discussed Lord Oxford's strange career) was a silver water-bottle laced with Oxford Blue cord. An ancient drawing of this badge, from the *Retrospective*

BOTTLE.—One of the badges used by the Veres Earls of Oxford was a long-necked Bottle of silver, with a blue lace or cord. This badge was borne by them in right of their hereditary office of Lords High Chamberlain. Over the west window of the church at Castle Hedingham, Essex, this badge is represented as in the margin.



Misquotation Corrected

In the report of President Bénézet's lecture at Charleston, South Carolina, on February 27th last, as reported in the April *QUARTERLY*, a direct statement of personal reaction was attributed to Col. A. G. D. Wiles, head of the English Department of The Citadel Military College of Charleston, through an unfortunate scrambling of notes. We are glad to correct this blunder and to set the record right by publishing the following letter from Col. Wiles, dated June 2, 1945:

The Editors

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

Gentlemen:

In your article "President Benezet's Lecture Tour" (*The Shakespeare Fellowship QUARTERLY*, April 1945) I find statements attributed to me that I never made. On page 19 it is said: "At the end (of the lecture in Charleston, South Carolina), Col. Wiles admitted that the Oxford Sonnet argument is unanswerable. 'The Earl must be the author of these poems; otherwise they have no personal

Review (1828) is reproduced herewith. The writer of the accompanying description has mistakenly attributed the device to the office of "Lord High Chamberlain."

"Shake-speare" makes another pointed reference to Oxford's long-forgotten office of water-bearer when in that stark and cynical autobiographical drama of a spendthrift nobleman (*Timon of Athens*, III.1) he has one of Lord Timon's followers remark:

I dreamt of a silver basin and ever tonight.

Coincidences — COINCIDENCES! What a plague they have become to accepted Shakespearean authority! Always *negative* in reaction to the furtive Stratford citizen. But invariably *positive* in respect to the poet-peer who bore the nickname of "*Gentle Master William!*"

meaning,' he said."

I admitted no such thing; I said no such thing, as people who overheard the conversation between the lecturer and me can bear out. When the lecturer asked me what I thought of the Oxford argument, I said in effect this: "Your sonnet argument is to me your strongest one. I am surprised at the large number of parallels that you can draw between Oxford's life and the incidents of the sonnets. Certainly I cannot undertake to refute this argument because I am not fresh on the sonnets or the sonnet problem." That, it should be obvious, is a far cry from the statements attributed to me in the article: "... that the Oxford Sonnet argument is unanswerable"; and, secondly, that bit of extraordinary reasoning, "The Earl must be the author of these poems; otherwise they have no personal meaning."

Eager to believe that all this was done without the intention to misrepresent, I await the publication of this letter in the next issue of your *QUARTERLY*.

A. G. D. Wiles
Charleston, South Carolina

The Stratford Defendant Compromised By His Own Advocates

By LOUIS P. BÉNÉZET, A.M., Ph.D.

The concluding paper in a stimulating series.

Let us turn now to another witness, a man of the keenest perception and insight. This is Frank Harris, who comes closer to painting a true picture of the real Shakespeare than any other of the Stratfordian writers.

To begin with, he says that it is nonsense to say, as most critics do, that Shakespeare never put himself into any play. He has done so twenty times. Other critics have thought that perhaps *Hamlet* alone might be autobiographical. But Harris says, "Suppose that Shakespeare, in painting another character, did nothing but paint Hamlet over again, trait by trait, virtue by virtue, fault by fault, our assurance would be almost complete, for a dramatist only makes this mistake when he is speaking unconsciously in his own person." He quotes Coleridge:

"In Hamlet we see a great, almost enormously intellectual activity and a proportionate aversion to real action consequent upon it."

Harris asks what other personage we find in Shakespeare who is "bookish and irresolute, a lover of thought and not of action, of melancholy temper, too, and prone to unpack his heart with words." "Romeo," is his answer. Hazlitt says, "Romeo is Hamlet in love. Both are absent and self involved; both live, out of themselves, in a world of imagination."

The melancholy Jaques is Shakespeare again, according to Harris. It is significant that this character is original with Shakespeare, not being found in Lodge's *Rosalynde*. "His humorous sadness, the child of contemplation, was indeed Shakespeare's most constant mood. Intellectual curiosity shows in Jaques as in Hamlet." This is all intensely interesting to Oxfordians, for these three characters have been felt from the first to be the most evident of the numerous autobiographical sketches of the Earl. Professor Slater has said that David Copperfield is no more autobiographical of Dickens than Hamlet is of Oxford. *Romeo and Juliet* is felt to be the story of his love affair with Anne Vavasor, whose kinsmen were his hated enemies. And Jaques,

like Oxford, has sold his lands to see others, and in general reflects his whimsical melancholy.

Harris sees Hamlet qualities also in *Macbeth*,—in the first act a meditative nature "full of the milk of human kindness," . . . "an irresolute dreamer, courteous and gentle hearted, of perfect intellectual fairness and bookish phrase; and in especial his love of thought and dislike of action are insisted upon again and again." But having made Macbeth somewhat in his own image, gentle, bookish and irresolute, he is forced, by the historical fact that Macbeth murdered Banquo and the rest, to make a killer of him. "Ambition was foreign to the Hamlet-Shakespeare nature," says Harris. "I am inclined to think that Shakespeare was even more irresolute and indisposed to action than Hamlet himself."

Orsino in *Twelfth Night*, Biron in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Posthumus in *Cymbeline* are other personifications of the author, according to Harris. He makes an excellent case for each. In speaking of Posthumus' fight with Cloten, he is "depicted as a rare swordsman of wonderful magnanimity." Pisanio says,

My master rather played than fought,

And had no help of anger.

"I call this gentle kindness," says Harris, "the birth mark of Shakespeare." And after drawing a very keen parallel between Hamlet and Posthumus, he says of the author: "He shows himself very nimble-witted, credulous and impulsive, quick to anger and quicker still to forgive, with thoughts all turned to sadness and to musing."

He has drawn unconsciously a perfect picture of the Earl of Oxford in his youth, the man who in a quick burst of anger, ran his sword through the spying servant of Lord Burghley; who was persuaded by his crafty cousins that his wife, Anne, was untrue to him, who later forgave and forgot, but who retired to his castle to shun the court and devote himself for the last fourteen years of his life to his own reflections, his writings and his music.

All the way through Mr. Harris' work we keep running across phrases and paragraphs that are descriptive of Oxford, and totally foreign to the character of the Stratford man. For example; "Both these, the love of country life and contempt of gold are, as we shall see later, abiding peculiarities of Shakespeare." Also: "Even as a young man Shakespeare hated the cruelty of ambition and the savagery of war as much as he loved the ceremonies of chivalry and observances of gentle courtesy." Again we see the noble, who was born with lands and wealth, amid the life of the country aristocracy. Mr. Harris, like Percy Allen and other Oxfordians, has picked out Valentine, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, as another autobiographical sketch. He says (p. 183), "Valentine displays the gentle forgiveness of disposition which we have already had reason to regard as one of Shakespeare's most marked characteristics." Recall Richard Grant White's comment on the Stratford man's pursuit of his debtor, that it "is an incident in Shakespeare's life which it requires the utmost allowance and consideration for the practice of the time and country to enable us to contemplate with equanimity—satisfaction is impossible."

Turning to *The Merchant of Venice*, Mr. Harris, again agreeing with the Oxfordians, selects Antonio as another representation of the author. He ridicules those commentators who have represented the merchant "as a master of affairs, a prudent, thrifty soul." He points out that Antonio is quite the reverse: an improvident, affectionate friend who lends lavishly to the spendthrift Bassanio, and, far from seeing through the real motive of Shylock, thinks that the usurer has become humane. This is no hard-headed, penny-pincher (like the Stratford man), but a generous aristocrat who will lend his last cent to a friend and put his own life in jeopardy to give him more rope for his marital gamble. Mr. Harris goes on: "The same prodigality and contempt of money are to be found in nearly all of Shakespeare's plays and *curiously enough* [italics mine] the persons to show this disdain are usually the masks of Shakespeare himself. A philosophic soliloquy is hardly more characteristic of Shakespeare than a sneer at money. This peculiarity is not a trait of his youth chiefly, as it is with most men who are free handed. It seems to be a reasoned attitude toward life and it undoubtedly becomes more and more marked as Shakespeare grows older." (p. 190.)

A little later Mr. Harris writes: "It is astonishing to find this sadness, this courtesy, this lavish

generosity and contempt of money, this love of love and friendship in any man in early manhood; but these qualities were Shakespeare's from youth to old age." He goes on to say that Antonio's "heedless trust of other men and impatience are qualities most foreign to the merchant," but they are shown again and again by Shakespeare's impersonations (among whom Mr. Harris includes Benedick, Biron and Orsino, again following Oxfordian writers).

Mr. Harris now indulges in a wild goose chase, pursuing the Dark Lady of the *Sonnets*. He enthusiastically embraces the theory of Thomas Tyler that Mary Fitton was the "dark lady" and that the "fair youth" was William Herbert, soon to be Earl of Pembroke. He dates the *Sonnets* from 1598 to 1601, being compelled to do so by the fact that William Herbert did not come to court until 1598. Mr. Harris lives so thoroughly in the poems that he cannot see the absurdity of saying that the ex-butcher boy, horse-holding groom and fortune-hunting actor sent the young nobleman, twenty years old, to make love, as a proxy for him, to the Queen's maid of honour, and was astonished and cut to the quick when the lady preferred the future earl!

Here we must recall Sir Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*. Remember how the Stratford man "in 1597 began the business connected with the purchase of New Place. Complications ensued, and the purchase was not completed till 1602." . . . "Between 1597 and 1599 (he was) rebuilding the house, stocking the barns with grain, and conducting various legal proceedings." And managing a theatre, and acting, and writing two plays a year, and pouring out his bitter disappointment in his sonnets, and making love to the Queen's maid of honour.

Mr. Harris now finds himself in a curious dilemma. Throughout his book he has painted the picture of an aristocrat, careless and contemptuous of money, scornful of the common people and of their work-a-day life. But the Stratford man came from the people. Therefore he was a rank snob, a little brother of the rich, a parasite and a sycophant! What a remarkable about-face from the independent, courageous, outspoken Shakespeare that both Miss Spurgeon and Mr. Harris, so far, have created, and how utterly inconsistent with the spirit of Hamlet, Romeo, Posthumus, Bertram, Biron, Benedick and all the other impersonations of the author which Harris has found in the plays!

"Shakespeare was an aristocrat born, as we have

seen," says Mr. Harris. "The lower orders are all food for comedy or farce: he will not treat them seriously. He tells of Agincourt without even mentioning the fact that the English bowmen won the battle. He had the truth before him, for the chroniclers from whom he took the story vouched for the fact; but Shakespeare preferred to ascribe the victory to Henry and his lords." Again he says: "Shakespeare loved a lord with a passionate admiration and when he paints himself it is usually as a duke or a prince."

He then explains Shakespeare's supposed devotion to "Mr. W. H." Adopting the rumor of the thousand pounds (of which Mrs. Stopes could find no trace in the records of the Southampton family and which Sir E. K. Chambers dismisses as impossible*), he says, "Shakespeare may well have argued 'If Southampton gave me a thousand pounds, perhaps Lord Herbert will get me made Master of the Revels or even give me a higher place.'" Having proved to his satisfaction that "Shakespeare was an aristocrat born," he paints him as a snob, toadying to young noblemen who will hand him money and position at court. On page 243 he says, "It is a pose, flunkeyism and hope of benefits to come and not passion that inspired the first series of sonnets," which, he says, were written to the young William Herbert, all because the First Folio was dedicated to him and to his brother.

Mr. Harris pictures Shakespeare as broken in spirit after this episode of Mary Fitton. He says that for the latter part of his life "all his heroes are failures." . . . "Brutus, Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Troilus, Antony and Timon all fail as he himself had failed." This list, as we know, does not represent the last plays composed by our author; nevertheless it is a fact that the number of "failures" who are Shakespeare heroes increases toward the end of the period. Again, this fits the disappointed Oxford, rather than the prosperous burgher of Stratford.

Other Harris quotations, showing his appreciation of Shakespeare's aristocracy, are:

p. 272. "We have already noticed Shakespeare's love of good blood and belief in its wondrous efficacy. It is one of his permanent and most characteristic traits."

p. 316. "Shakespeare's neuropathic loathing for

mechanic slaves with 'greasy aprons' and 'thick breaths rank of gross diet.'" p. 335. "Shakespeare probably exaggerated his own generosity out of aristocratic pose; but that he was careless of money and free handed to a fault is, I think, certain from his writings."

Having declared that Shakespeare, like Antonio, was not a business man, but a generous, prodigal lender and spender, Mr. Harris is hard pressed to account for the Stratford man's acquisition of wealth. He ignores the two shilling suit against Rogers, Thomas Whittington's forty shillings and the other usurious actions at law. He settles it by accepting Rowe's legend that the Earl of Southampton gave Shakspeare a thousand pounds, although this dates from 1709, and he has refused to believe Aubrey (1681) because his writing was too "remote in time" from Shakspeare's life.

Then he is bothered by Shakspeare's return to the bookless house and the illiterate family in the provincial village. He finally accounts for it, as J. Q. Adams accounts for the falling off of the production of plays after 1605, by saying that his health must have broken. On page 403 we read, "It is incredible to me that Shakespeare should leave London at forty-seven or forty-eight years of age in good health and retire to Stratford to live as a prosperous country gentleman. What had Stratford to offer Shakespeare, village Stratford, with a midden in the chief street and the charms of the village usurer's companionship tempered by the ministrations of a wandering tub-thumper?" Note the use of the word "incredible," which is not too strong a term to employ.

Mr. Harris is right. It is incredible, just as it is incredible that the Stratford man should know so much Latin and law, and be such a natural aristocrat, or be so generous and so contemptuous of money.

* * *

This paper is already too long. Many books could be compiled out of the passages in works on Shakespeare which bear evidence on the side of the Oxford authorship. However, before closing, let us call one more witness. This is Professor J. Dover Wilson, in *The Essential Shakespeare*.

Wilson takes violent issue with Sir Sidney Lee, whose *Life of Shakespeare* has for its theme "the story of the butcher boy of Stratford who made a fortune in London." He says that the image in Lee's heart was that of a typical English manufacturer who happened to deal in *Twelfth Nights* and *Lears* instead of brass tacks.

*Southampton's entire income was only 1,145 pounds per year. (Mrs. C. C. Stopes: *The Third Earl of Southampton*, p. 101.)

He then says that our greatest obstacle to the true understanding of Shakespeare is the conception we have of him as portrayed in the Stratford bust and the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio. Dr. Wilson, in describing the bust, speaks of its wooden appearance, vapid expression, coarsely shaped half-moon eyebrows, staring eyes set too close together, nose too small for the face, and the "general air of stupid and self-complacent prosperity. All this might suit well enough with an affluent and retired butcher, but does gross wrong to the dead poet." . . . "It is time an end was put to the scandal of three centuries. For Janssen's self-satisfied pork butcher and the Folio engraving taken from it, which J. C. Squire has called 'the pudding-faced effigy of Droeshout,' stand between us and the true Shakespeare, and are so obviously false images of the greatest poet of all time that the world turns from them in disgust and thinks it is turning from Shakespeare himself."

This is just what the Oxfordians have been claiming from the outset. Neither the engraving nor the bust is genuine. They are parts of the hoax, of the plan to give the plays to the world while veiling the identity of their noble author. Professor Wilson does not know the story of the change in the bust, but, judging from Sir William Dugdale's drawing, the original was just as great a libel on the author as is the second copy, installed by John Ward. Wilson fails to see that he has declared that there was hocus-pocus connected with the whole Stratford myth. But there was, and he has put his finger unerringly on the proof: these two portraits which for centuries were palmed off on the world.

Mr. Barrell's revelations (see *Scientific American* for January, 1940) proving that the Ashbourne "Shakespeare" is a portrait of Lord Oxford, have, no doubt, answered Professor Wilson's desire to know what "Shakespeare" really looked like.

Dr. Wilson believes with the Oxfordians that the plays are full of topical allusions, not to the author's "tragic life story of which we know nothing," but to men and events of the reign of Elizabeth. He goes to some length in attempting to prove that Hamlet is Essex. He agrees with Cairncross that "*Hamlet* the play goes a long way back and was, in some form or other, being acted by Shakespeare's company as early as 1594." He admits that Polonius is a caricature of the Queen's minister, Lord Burghley, who died in 1598. It doesn't seem to strike him as strange that an actor from Stratford would dare caricature the Lord Treasurer of England, the most powerful man in the kingdom.

He thinks that *Troilus and Cressida* was written in 1598 to goad Essex into action (and then never played nor published!) Professor Wilson, like the Countess de Chambrun, is sure that John Shakspeare was a Catholic, so he refuses to believe the legend that William attended a school in Stratford taught by "Protestant schoolmaster who was also a clergyman."

He comes forward with a new explanation of William's wonderful erudition. "If the boy received his education as a singing boy in the service of some great Catholic nobleman, it would help to explain how he became an actor, since the transition from singing boy to stage player was almost as inevitable at that period as the breaking of the male voice at adolescence. However that may be, it is certain that Shakespeare had *picked up* [*italics mine*] as good an education in life and the world's concerns as any man before or since, and had acquired it but 'small Latin and less Greek,' enough to enable him to read and brood over his beloved Ovid in the original. It is also clear that, if the author of *Merry Wives* knew his middle classes, the author of *Love's Labour's Lost* had made himself equally familiar with the life, manner, and conversation of ladies and gentlemen of the land. *To credit that amazing piece of virtuosity to a butcher boy who left school at thirteen or even to one whose education was nothing more than what a grammar school and residence in a little provincial borough could provide is to invite one either to believe in miracles or to disbelieve in the man of Stratford.*"

Well said, Professor Wilson. You take your stand with Sir George Greenwood, Fripp, J. Q. Adams, and the Oxfordians. It is incredible.

Wilson next points out that, as Shakespeare was at the top of his profession as an actor in 1594 at the age of thirty, he must have done some climbing. Hence he must have been acting for a long time. His solution is that Shakspeare began acting in London in 1581 (aged seventeen). But there are the twins and Susanna to be accounted for, so Wilson, remembering that during the summer plays were usually suspended, has Shakspeare return to Stratford over week ends to beget the children. But there was the marriage in November, 1582. Somebody must have gone to London during that month and haled the unwilling bridegroom to his home.

The plague closed the theatres in 1592-94. Professor Wilson feels sure that Shakspeare "accepted personal service as a member of the Earl's [Southampton's] household and remained with him for most of 1593 and part of 1594." He speaks of the

"well-authenticated tradition" that Shakspeare was once a schoolmaster in the country. This, he is sure, refers to the two years at Titchfield, Southampton's seat. Shakspeare is a country schoolmaster with one rustic boy as a pupil: Henry Wriothlesley, Earl of Southampton! We know of John Florio, Southampton's gifted Italian tutor, but Wilson is sure that his work was supplemented by teaching given by the ex-prompter's assistant.

Wilson confesses that Shakespeare's "intimate knowledge," shown in two plays, of Venice and other Italian cities, "suggests more than hearsay." In this he agrees with Professor Elze and the Oxfordians. Therefore, says Wilson, he must have spent the greater part of 1593 in Italy, traveling with the Earl and Florio. But here it is necessary to remind the reader of the work of Dr. Cairncross, who has proved that *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Othello* and other Italian plays were written before August, 1593.

Dr. Wilson is puzzled to explain the falling off in Shakespeare's production of plays toward the end of his life. Why, after 1601, does his output drop from three per year to less than one? Why was *Timon of Athens* not finished by the great genius? Why is *Coriolanus* so empty, in parts? The answer is a nervous breakdown, as *Timon* plainly shows. Next comes a sentence which is typical of many a Shakespeare biography, with its laughable combination of dogmatic finality on the one hand, and confession on the other: "Prostration follows and the cure of good Dr. Hall, who married Susanna the very year of the illness (*if it happened at all*) [*italics mine*], gradually restores him to health" (p. 130). He then asks the question which has troubled so many commentators from Bismarck on. Why should Shakspeare give up a lucrative profession, leave London at the height of his fame and retire to "an obscure provincial town like Stratford"?

On page 33 Dr. Wilson has said, "From the beginning he brought from Stratford a delicate nose which found the effluvia of London, human or otherwise, highly distasteful." But Garrick called Stratford "the dirtiest village in England," and we recall Harris's wonder that Shakspeare could endure it after living in London. To picture Stratford, with its midden in the center of the main street, its lack of sewerage, and its smells, as a haven of refuge from the stench of London is not too realistic.

* * *

To sum up: Miss Spurgeon, Harris and Wilson have pictured a dainty nobleman, a man of gener-

osity, delicacy, aristocratic outlook, refinement and culture, who scorns money and loves honor. Neilson, Fripp and Churton Collins have pictured an erudite scholar, whose knowledge of Greek, Latin and French is surprising. Collins and Fripp have proved that "Shakespeare" had been trained in law. Elze and Wilson know that he had travelled in Italy. Masson points out that it is very mysterious that he should have left no books and utterly ignored his plays in the will. Several of them join Bismarck in saying that it is almost unbelievable that such a man could have been content to spend his years after forty-one (or forty-five, or forty-eight—no one knows the exact date) in such a place as Stratford.

A noted Shakespearean authority, one of our witnesses in fact, pointed out in a letter to the writer that "the Oxford and Derby theories mutually destroy each other, that if Oxford was Shakespeare then Derby could not have been, and vice versa." My answer to this was that Derby was De Vere's son-in-law, and that the two earls were intimately associated during the last ten years of Oxford's life, so that it was well within the bounds of probability that Derby aided his father-in-law in the composition of some of the plays, that his was the hand that completed the works left unfinished by the great master, that revised others, and wrote *The Tempest*. But what shall we say of the extent to which the various versions of the Stratford man's life destroy each other? Let us examine what is left of Shakspeare's "biography" after we have let the "recognized Shakespearean authorities" pick holes in the story as taught by the average orthodox teacher. We will let them speak under three different heads:

1.) *What do we know about Shakspeare's early schooling?* Actually, we cannot prove that he ever went to school, but Adams is sure that he must have attended Stratford Grammar School. Fripp shows, by giving the entrance requirements of such schools, how next to impossible it would have been for the son of illiterate parents to be admitted to the Stratford institution. Wilson is sure that Shakspeare never was sent to the Stratford Grammar School, but that he was educated "as a singing boy in the service of some great Catholic nobleman."

Meanwhile, there is Ben Jonson. He says distinctly that Shakspeare had "small Latin and less Greek." Some critics have explained this by saying that the charge was only relative, for Ben's knowledge of the classics was extraordinary. But Jonson was not a university man, and his use of words does

not begin to indicate the familiarity with classical origins that the author of the Shakespeare works so plainly had. Jonson went through a good Grammar School, and so, according to legend, did the Stratford man. Why should Ben, from the lofty eminence of his own academic training, patronize the graduate of Stratford for his lack of Latin and Greek?

Again our Stratfordian friends cannot have it both ways. Either Jonson tells the truth and William Shakspeare did not even have the advantage of a grammar school training such as Ben had, so could not possibly be the scholar to whose knowledge of the classics Collins devotes eighty odd pages; or else, Ben Jonson does not tell the truth and the Stratfordian cause loses its chief and, almost, its only prop.

Also there is the testimony of Neilson and Thorn-dike as to Shakespeare's unusual knowledge of English, French and Latin literature, to say nothing of the startling "coincidences" of thought between so many of his plays and the ten Greek tragedies. When doctors disagree as widely as do Jonson on the one hand, and Collins and Neilson on the other, there is something wrong with the story.

2.) *What was Shakspeare doing between 1582 and 1597?* Sir E. K. Chambers says that the only attitude for a self-respecting scholarship is that of nescience; in other words, that we know absolutely nothing. According to the records, he married in November, 1582, had a daughter born in May, 1583, and twins in February, 1585. That is the full extent of our knowledge. (Greene's "Shake-scene" is a hit at someone who can "bombast out blank verse," but no one has any way of proving whom was meant.) However, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1894 edition) is sure that Shakspeare must have spent much time in the "forest of Arden," "picking up" his remarkable knowledge of forest law. Wilson is sure that he must have been acting from 1581 to 1599, except for his tutoring Southampton ("in a country school"!) and taking a trip to Italy with the Earl and Florio. Adams is sure that he was teaching a country school. Elze is positive that he was travelling in Italy. Garnett and Gosse are sure that he must have been travelling and fighting in the Low Countries. Fripp is sure that he must have been studying law till 1587. Miss Spurgeon is sure that he must have spent a great deal of time in hunting the deer, horseback riding, hawking, bowling, playing tennis, dancing and indulging in other forms of vigorous exercise. Collins is sure that he must have been working in an attorney's office.

Adams is sure that he must have been hunting to hounds and practicing falconry. Neilson is sure that he was reading hundreds of books before 1593. But Cairncross has proved that *Hamlet* appeared in 1588! As for Aubrey, the man who wrote his biography sixty-five years after the death of William of Stratford, in one and the same paragraph, he has the young man apprenticed to a butcher, which would account for all his time up to 1585, also teaching school in the country, also obtaining employment in a theatre in London—"I guess at eighteen"! *Faites en vos choix.*

3.) *What were the true relations between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson?* We have the record of Jonson's bitter, carping criticism of Shakespeare's plays prior to 1623, and the significant omission of Shakespeare's name from the list, written in 1619, of the notable people whom Jonson had known personally. On the other hand, we have Jonson's reference to "gentle Shakespeare" in the verses written for the First Folio, and his subsequent reference to loving the man "this side idolatry." Neilson says that Fuller (aged three, or thereabouts) beheld wit-combats between Jonson and Shakspeare. Fripp and Sir E. K. Chambers point out that these combats existed only in Fuller's imagination. Adams is sure that Jonson was Shakspeare's warm friend. Fripp insists that there could have been no real affection between Jonson and Shakespeare. Ben Jonson urges the reader not to look at the Droeshout portrait but at "his book." Wilson is sure that the contemporary portraits of Shakespeare (the Stratford bust and the Droeshout engraving) are faked, representing some retired butcher rather than the author of the immortal plays and poems.

What a jumble of contradictions it all is! What remains of the Stratford story when the "recognized Shakespearean authorities" have finished with it?

On the other hand, how simple the seeming inconsistencies become when one grants that the real author was the high-minded, sensitive, generous and improvident aristocrat whom Harris and Miss Spurgeon have pictured, the law student and university graduate that Fripp and Collins and Neilson have painted, the Italian and Dutch traveller that Elze, Wilson, and Garnett and Gosse have seen, and the master of forest law so emphasized by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Then, finally, a family insistence on anonymity, a generous honorarium slipped to Ben Jonson, a few gentlemanly misstatements inserted in the First Folio, the temporary overpainting of the portraits that Dr. Wilson has so unerringly denounced, and the thing is done.

London News-Letter

The May issue of The Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter of London contains some interesting commentaries by the Hon. Editor, Mr. Percy Allen, on the unorthodox opinions regarding the Shakespeare authorship that have recently been expressed by such well-known British writers as H. G. Wells, Ivor Brown and James Agate, dramatic critic of the *Sunday Times*. None of these men appears, however, to express any real knowledge or understanding of the strength of the case that has been built up for Edward de Vere as the Poet. The war can be blamed for this, undoubtedly, but now that the clouds are lifting, it is to be sincerely hoped that practical and determined efforts will be made to bring the highlights of the Oxford cause to the attention of all prominent disbelievers in the Stratford Miracle Man. A new edition of "*Shakespeare Identified*" is urgently needed to further such an educational program.

In the same number of the London News-Letter there is a fine tribute to the late Canon Rendall by Lieut.-Col. Montagu M. Douglas, C.S.I., C.I.E., President of The Shakespeare Fellowship of Great Britain. In another column we quote a paragraph from Col. Douglas' article, embodying his critical appreciation of Canon Rendall's pamphlet on *Ben Jonson and the First Folio*.

Whenever we think of Col. Douglas he calls to mind the early Sherlock Holmes story, *The Sign of the Four*. This is because much of the atmosphere of that masterpiece derives from the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal; and Col. Douglas was once Governor of the Andamans. He is also descendant of the Great Douglas who figures in the *Ballad of Chevy Chase*. Some years ago Col. Douglas published an excellent exposition of the Oxford evidence extant up to that time, entitled *Lord Oxford is Shakespeare*. It should be better known to the American reading public and we trust that copies will soon be made available again on this side of the Atlantic.

Altogether, the President of the British Fellowship is a gentleman of wide experience and versatile talents. He is not only a fine speaker and a clear and cogent writer, but a graphic artist of spirit and charm. Not long ago we received from him three etchings he had made of Castle Hedingham, Oxford's birthplace; the Church at Lavenham, built by the Earl's ancestors; and the Church of St.

Augustine's, Hackney, where the Man Who Was Shakespeare was buried in 1604 before his body was finally removed to Westminster Abbey.

In transmitting the etchings, Col. Douglas referred to them as the works of "an amateur." We replied in the words of the Elizabethan composer, John Farmer, addressing Lord Oxford in respect to the Earl's talents as a musician, that although he considered himself an amateur, he had in fact "overgone most of them that make it a profession."

* * *

The May issue of the News-Letter also contains Mr. James J. Dwyer's review of Dr. E. M. W. Tillyard's new book on *Shakespeare's History Plays*. It will be remembered that Mr. Dwyer reviewed Tillyard's previous work, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, for the QUARTERLY last year.

In the present instance Mr. Dwyer points out the fact that Tillyard, himself a great scholar, has the highest respect for Shakespeare's intellectual grasp of his materials. The historical dramas, as Mr. Dwyer reports the Tillyard reactions to them, "embody not only all that was implicit in Elizabethan cosmology, but also a complete political philosophy." The author then goes on to show that Shakespeare—directly contrary to the views of Sir Sidney Lee and Prof. E. E. Stoll—was not so much concerned with the appeal these plays might make to popular audiences as he was with the status of History among the educated. Tillyard places the dramatist among the "select few" who considered History a more vital thing than the mere compilation of official data.

In summing up Shakespeare's proficiencies, Tillyard finally states that "his prose was founded on the normal speech cadence of the most intelligent and highly educated of the aristocracy."

All of these claims for erudition, transcendent artistic facility which could only be the result of years of preparation and experimentation, and complete mastery of speech patterns that only the fortunate few were ever in position to acquire are amply documented in the Tillyard volume. Every well-read Oxfordian will vouch for their reality. But, as Mr. Dwyer suggests—though he does not state his objection in so many words—Dr. Tillyard stultifies his own case by trying to square his analysis of the creative personality responsible for the history plays with the unsatisfying records of the Stratford native. This naturally results in a puzzling let-down. We are asked to believe that the mouse labored and brought forth a mountain.

Rendall Pamphlets Available

Recently received from London—a new consignment of two of the late Canon Rendall's most distinguished Oxford-Shakespeare essays:

Ben Jonson and the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare's Plays and *Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare*.

Trenchantly written and keenly argued, and also excellent examples of the printing art, both of these pamphlets are on the way to becoming collectors' items.

Copies may be had from the Secretary of The Shakespeare Fellowship at Twenty-five Cents each, post-paid.

Of the first of these booklets, Lieut.-Col. M. W. Douglas, President of The Shakespeare Fellowship of Great Britain has recently said:

"The pamphlet on *Ben Jonson and the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare's Plays* is a masterly review of the measures taken to produce the Folio, showing that the substitution of Shakspeare was a fiction agreed upon. (Canon Rendall) stresses the close relationship between Oxford and the Pembroke, who were responsible for the Folio, and the intimacy between them and Jonson. 'It was neither a commercial nor literary venture, for which the times were not ripe,' and the motive must be looked for in Oxford. 'A drastic omission was made in excluding the *Sonnets*, which were too personal and too authentic.' This contribution to the solution of the Shakespeare mystery is of inestimable value, on the merits, and owing to the accredited reputation of the author."

Whitman on the Authorship

A great creative artist's considered opinion of Shakespeare always seems to us of greater value in gauging the Bard's true personality than almost any of the labored, contradictory and finicking *ex cathedra* verdicts that have been handed down by Stratfordian specialists.

This is due to the fact that the person of authentic creative ability is more naturally *en rapport* with Shakespeare the artist. And in sizing him up, judgment is not so frequently warped by the conflicting *obiter dicta* of the professional jurists in the field, each of whom has his own pet conjecture to emphasize.

After all, the common law entitles a man to be tried by a jury of his peers.

In the case of Shakespeare, actual creative peers would be difficult to empanel. At the same time, enough good men and true have given their impressions of the man and his works to offset many of the illogical, hidebound conclusions of his accepted biographers.

The impact of the Bard's personality upon Lord Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, Browning, Swinburne, Alexander Dumas, Guizot, Emerson, Whittier, Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Henry James and Walt Whitman is, needless to say, quite different from that produced from the same source upon Halliwell-Phillips, Sir Sidney Lee and Sir Edmund Chambers. By the same token, several of the famous writers mentioned above are outright skeptics when it comes to identifying the colossal achievement of the plays and poems with the meagre outlines of the Stratford native's life. We were reminded of this significant circumstance the other day when Mrs. Frank J. Sprague—a charter member of The Shakespeare Fellowship and owner until recently of the most comprehensive collection of Whitman manuscripts, first editions and personalia ever assembled—called our attention to a few of Whitman's statements on the Shakespeare authorship problem.

In his *Life of Walt Whitman*, H. B. Binns says of the Good Gray Poet: "... he had read and re-read Shakespeare's plays before seeing them, until he could recite extended passages; and he had come to very definite conclusions about their feudal and aristocratic atmosphere and influence."

Again, in *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (1906) Horace Traubel reports the following verbatim remarks by Whitman:

"I am firm against Shaksper—I mean the Avon man, the actor: but as to Bacon, well, I don't know . . . the author Shakespeare, whoever he was, was a great man: much was summed up in him—much, yes, a whole age and more: he gave reflection to a certain social estate quite important enough to be studied . . . taking him for all in all he is one of the fixed figures—will always have to be reckoned with. It is remarkable how little is known of Shaksper the actor as a person and how much less is known of the person Shakespeare of the plays. The record is almost a blank—it has no substance whatever: scarcely anything that is said of him is authorized."

A little farther on Whitman's friend, Thomas Harned, asks: "Are you then prepared to say the plays were written by Bacon?"

"Not at all—I should not be prepared to go as

far as that—I can only say they were not written by William Shaksper the actor."

So much for the honest and mature opinion of the great American poet of democracy who unfortunately did not live to read the evidence for Lord Oxford as the Bard. At another time we shall give some of the equally trenchant anti-Stratfordian remarks of other men of genius in the creative field.

John Payne Collier's Ghost

The following letter appeared in the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* some months ago:

Editor, the *Weekly*

Sir:

There is an Eli in the regiment who came forth with some information on Shakespeare last night which, if true, is thought-provoking.

The Yale library, he says, has some twelve letters, acquired within the last six years, written by Shakespeare. The grammar is allegedly crude and the writings are said to be those of an uneducated man.

The question which follows is how a man with so little education could have written "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Hamlet," the sonnets, etc.

It is true that in Shakespeare's day a man had to be wealthy to get a cultural education and the Swan of Avon was poor. And did not Ben Jonson refer to Will Shakespeare as a man who had had "little Latin and less Greek"?

However, except for those alleged letters in the Yale library, I could readily believe that Shakespeare went up to London as a youth, studied hard and became culturally a self-made man within a few years.

But if those letters are in fact in New Haven under glass, lock and key, what is a man to think—more especially a man who spent a year writing a thesis on the "world's greatest author—Will Shakespeare"? It comes as a jolt to be told that Shakespeare could not even write a finished letter at the age of forty.

If there is an alumnus living near the Yale library, will he please have a look at the letters and pass on the word as to what they are like and what is in them?

RICHARD R. P. GOHEEN '36
2nd Lt., USMC

South Pacific Theatre

After reading this remarkable communication two or three times to make sure we were not dream-

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Official organ of The Shakespeare Fellowship in the U.S.A., the QUARTERLY is the only publication now printed which is devoted chiefly to the perpetuation of documentary evidence that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) was the real creative personality behind the plays and poems of "Mr. William Shakespeare."

Meetings of The Shakespeare Fellowship for educational and allied purposes will occasionally be held, in which members will be asked to cooperate. Membership dues are \$2.50 per year—U.S.A. money—which sum includes one year's subscription to the QUARTERLY. Special rates of subscription to the publication which do not include membership in The Fellowship may be arranged for student groups and libraries.

The Shakespeare Fellowship executives will act as an editorial board for the publication of the QUARTERLY, which will appear four times a year, i.e., in January, April, July and October.

News items, comments by readers and articles of interest to all students of Shakespeare and of the acknowledged mystery that surrounds the authorship of his works, will be welcomed. 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 that of The Shakespeare Fellowship as a literary and educational corporation.

The Editors

The Shakespeare Fellowship

Quarterly

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ing, we forwarded it to our distinguished New Haven correspondent, Dr. H. M. Marvin, who is a member of the Yale Medical Faculty as well as a member of The Fellowship. In due course, Dr. Marvin replied:

"At the first opportunity I visited the Yale Library and inquired about the accuracy of this presumably false report. The reference librarian was certain that there could be no truth in the statement, but carefully searched the manuscript index, which lists no such letters. She assured me quite positively that there is no basis for the report."

The explanation may be that the "Eli in the regiment" mentioned by Lieut. Goheen either had a touch of tropical fever or was pulling his officer's leg just to avoid guard duty. Or could it be that the marine was a medium and had somehow gotten into communication with the ghost of John Payne Collier?

Yarns just as wild and irresponsible as this were solemnly printed by gullible biographers of William of Stratford in the last century.