THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

Quarterly

STACKS

The Shakespeare Fellowship was founded in London in 1922 under the presidency of Sir George Greenwood.

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Progress During the Passing Year

Abstracts and Brief Chronicles of the Time

DURING the past twelve months THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP has added nearly one hundred and fifty members to its rolls. Within the same period, more than a thousand new readers of Oxford-Shakespeare literature, and auditors at lectures or gatherings featuring the evidence for Edward de Vere as the long-sought "Gentle Master William" of real life, have expressed keen interest in the authorship solution which THE FELLOWSHIP sponsors.

Spokesmen for our cause have not only broken new ground. In every openly conducted argument Oxfordian speakers and writers have won popular approval—to the surprise and sometimes discomfiture of their orthodox Shakespearean opponents. The latter are finding that it will not suffice any more to discount the playwright Earl's documentation with cheap ridicule, to silence skepticism with some labored wisecrack, nor to wave aside *recorded fact* with stuffed shirt complacency. As our reading circles in schools, colleges and universities widen, more and more embarrassing questions are being asked by undergraduates of Shakespearean teachers and professors regarding the flimsy biographical data upon which the greatest literary reputation of historical times has been arbitrarily assigned to a person so significantly lacking in contemporary certification as William of Stratford.

Priscian a Little Scratched

In certain instances which have come to our attention, the professors thus annoyed by their heckling students have been men of some reputation as Stratfordian authorities. One of these blandly retorted that doubts regarding the accepted authorship of the plays and poems must reflect seriously upon the intelligence of all those expressing such distrust. As for the 17th Earl of Oxford, this Elizabethan "authority" solemnly averred that he himself had "never even heard of him as a poet or playwright" of the Shakespearean Age!

Convincing Brief by Charlton Ogburn

A statement of the Oxford case which has already won the ardent endorsement of a blue ribbon jury of readers in its original privately circulated edition is *The Renaissance Man of England* by Mr. Charlton Ogburn. A new edition of this handsome brochure, now made available for general sale, should prove even more popular. As an introductory handbook to the study of Edward de Vere's many-sided personality and a brief but illuminating discussion of his leading role in the authorship mystery, the Ogburn monograph is of unusual value.

As most American Oxfordians know, Mr. Ogburn is THE FELLOWSHIP'S counsel, and an attorney of international reputation. His review of the Oxford-Shakespeare case bears witness to a sound and cosmopolitan legal training, while to a succinct and convincing style, he adds a sense of dramatic values in the handling of his materials which is most effective. Thus, the first half of his presentation is a biographical sketch of the 17th Earl of Oxford, the gifted intellectual, Queen's favorite courtier-soldier-scholar and acknowledged archetype of High Renaissance arts and manners. The second chapter develops this literary Lord

Chamberlain's intimate relationship to the Shakespearean creative arcana, with recurring flashbacks to the decidedly *un*literary activities of William Shakspere of Stratford—in so far as the records of that significantly unexpressive individual can be traced.

Throughout, Mr. Ogburn's treatment of his subject matter reflects the personal reactions of a cultivated mind, well stocked with general knowledge of English history and biography, and displaying special appreciation of the Shakespeare plays and poems.

The Renaissance Man of England is printed in unusually clear type, illustrated with a fine cut of the St. Albans painting of Oxford, and bound in heavy blue paper covers, the title being done in silver. Copies may be had at Fifty Cents each, postpaid, from the office of The Shakespeare Fellowship. All members should secure a supply.

Constructive Newspaper Publicity

The symposium of correspondence launched in the *New York Herald-Tribune* of June 8, 1947 by the publication of the Gelett Burgess letter headed "Modern Research Sheds New Light on Bard of Avon," ran through seven Sunday issues of that well known newspaper. Altogether twelve letters were printed. Of these, including Mr. Burgess' vigorously phrased arguments, eight were almost equally emphatic in their endorsement of the Oxford-Shakespeare research. General interest in the work being carried on by THE FELLOWSHIP was thus stimulated effectively by Mr. Charlton Ogburn, Mrs. Dorothy Ogburn, Mr. Glendon Allvine, Mrs. Harriet C. Sprague, Miss Sydney Thompson and Mrs. Florence W. Sears. A reprint of the Burgess letter has been well circulated. Copies are still available for the cost of posting.

A highlight of the *Herald-Tribune* debate was the publication in the issue of Sunday, July 20th, of a 2,500-word article by Joseph Carter, a staff feature writer, entitled "The Shakespeare Controversy: Now it is a Case for the 17th Earl of Oxford." It was illustrated with photographic reproductions of the painting of Oxford owned by the Duke of St. Albans, and of the Elizabethan Earl as he was later converted into the Hampton Court "Shakespeare" owned by the British royal family. Both photographs were loaned from Mr. Barrell's collection. In covering the development of the Oxford authorship evidence, Mr. Carter seemed to spend too much time in discussing the shortcomings of the Baconian theory. Other writers have displayed the same tendency, losing sight of the fact that advocates of Oxford approach the whole question on an entirely different plane. Fundamentally, Sir Francis Bacon never did and never can have any substantial appeal for discriminating lovers of poetry and the highly technical art of the drama. His constitutional lack of emotional fire would alone debar him from consideration as a dramatic poet. Several other basic considerations weigh as heavily against him as a realistic "Shakespeare." One of these is his age, which fails to match with the requirements of the new and scientifically sound creative chronology of the plays. Bacon's proponents (in America, at least) grow fewer year by year, having lost themselves in a maze of tiresome ciphers, "secret allegories," and claims for superhuman creative fecundity embracing not only the forty Shakespearean works, the twenty volumes signed by the Lord Chancellor in his own person, but practically everything worth while which was published under the names of John Lyly, Thomas Watson, Robert Greene, George Peele, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, William Webbe, etc., etc. Needless to say, Oxfordians do not care to be classed with purveyors of such nonsense. Like the *Herald-Tribune* writer, we have digressed a bit, we fear. But after disposing of Bacon, Mr. Carter gave the Oxford evidence an eminently fair briefing, ending with these words:

"The Stratfordian theory may still be the accepted one in the twenty-first century; but it will have to defeat the strongest contender in almost 100 years."

Oxford in Grolier Encyclopaedia

Constructive publicity of a more permanent nature was achieved on behalf of THE FELLOWSHIP during 1947 by Dr. Benezet. Our President was commissioned by the editors of the new *Grolier Encyclopaedia* of 2 West Forty-fifth Street, New York, to do a 2,400 word article featuring the Oxford authorship evidence. The article appears in Volume Nine of the *Grolier Encyclopaedia*, recently published. Under the heading, "Shakespeare Authorship Theories," it covers most of pages 326-28. In the space allotted, considerable compression had to be given the material with the result that several important lines of the evidence are only suggested. Nevertheless, Dr. Benezet's success in securing representation through the

foresight of S. Edgar Farquhar, *Grolier* editorial chief, gives the Oxford case the position it has long warranted in a standard work of general reference, and represents a landmark in our progress. The good work would not have been accomplished, however, if Dr. Benezet had not been fortunate enough to find in *Grolier* Editor Farquhar an open-minded coadjutator, fearless enough to approve the Oxford-Shakespeare documentation on its intrinsic merits. This he did in opposition to the vigorously expressed advice of various professional Stratfordians. One of these, to whom Mr. Farquhar, in private conversation, mentioned his desire to give recognition to the Oxford-Shakespeare case, ranks among the foremost living Shakespearean bibliographers. But unlike the late and truly great Dr. W. W. Greg of Cambridge who had become all but an out-and-out Oxfordian before his death—according to the testimony of B. M. Ward, one of his greatest admirers—Mr. Farquhar's acquaintance is the type of Stratfordian zealot who believes implicitly in all the synthetic miracles. This gentleman, while admitting that he had not followed the new authorship evidence very closely, launched into a tirade against all "crackpots" who busied themselves with doubts respecting the authenticity of the Stratford man's claims to superlative genius. At first, Mr. Farquhar told us, he was inclined to lend ear to the bibliographer's arguments. But when the latter gratuitously added direful predictions of Farquhar's own loss of reputation in scholarly circles if he ventured to open the *Grolier's* pages to a serious treatment of Oxford-Shakespeare claims, the editor's patience became a bit overstrained. This seemed to smack too much of the high-pressure intimidation that representatives of special interests always exert wherever they dare. Mr. Farquhar thereupon made up his mind to go ahead with his plan to commission Dr. Benezet to prepare the Oxford authorship article. Several less fearless editors, we may add, have knuckled under when subjected to a barrage of similar warnings on the part of the orthodox "experts." That these spokesmen for an historically questionable cause do not hesitate to adopt the undercover methods of the political lobbyist and the racketeering "agent" to enforce their monopoly of fabulous conjecture in the field of Shakespearean biography, we have long known. It is therefore a pleasure to pay tribute to the courage and independent fairness of our late friend, S. Edgar Farquhar. For as these words were being written we were distressed to learn of his death from a heart condition on March 31st in his office at the *Grolier* headquarters. A native of Evansville, Indiana, Mr. Farquhar came of pioneer Scottish-American stock. He was a trained scientist, holding a degree of Master of Science from the University of Illinois. He had taught chemistry at Purdue University and also at Illinois. Prior to his engagement as Editor of the *Grolier Encyclopaedia*, he had held similar positions with four other concerns devoted to the publication of multiple-volume works of reference. He became keenly interested in the realistic value of the Oxford-Shakespeare documentation the more closely he studied it. Representatives of THE FELLOWSHIP will greatly miss his excellent counsel and generous co-operation.

In addition to publishing Dr. Benezet's authorship article, Mr. Farquhar engaged Mr. Barrell to prepare an up-to-date account of the Veres, Earls of Oxford, which is included in Volume Ten of the *Grolier Encyclopaedia*, page 301. More than half of this article is devoted to facts about the 17th Earl. These are in contrast to, and may help offset, some of the grotesquely misleading "information" *in re* Edward de Vere and his place in the Elizabethan social and literary worlds which the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* still persists in publishing to the discredit of its editorial board's reputation for accurate research. Mr. Barrell also contributed documentation for a revision of the *Grolier's* article on Sir Francis Bacon, proving that the Bacon-Shakespeare theory was evolved in the 18th century by Dr. James Wilmot, vicar of a Warwickshire church near Stratford, and that it was first enunciated by Wilmot's friend, James Corton Cowell, at Ipswch in February, 1803. This was done merely to keep the record straight. And here, also, the *Grolier* will be more accurate in a matter of historical detail than the *Britannica*. For latest editions of the latter now credit the inception of the Baconian hypothesis to suggestions made by Herbert Lawrence in his allegorical satire, *The Life and Adventures of Common Sense*, published 1769. As a matter of fact, Dr. Lawrence never once refers to Bacon in his book. Nor is he known to have mentioned the Elizabethan philosopher in any Shakespearean connection in private letters or conversation. Just why the editors of the *Britannica* should assume that *Common Sense* is the first piece of Baconian propaganda is another mystery awaiting editorial elucidation.

The First Anti-Stratfordian

Mention of Herbert Lawrence recalls the fact that this literary surgeon, wit and companion of David Garrick, the 4th Earl of Sandwich (for whom the ever-popular picnic accessory is named), and other London notables of the 18th century, actually does occupy a unique place in English literary history. Although not a Baconian, he is *the first of all British writers openly to express the doubts then beginning to take form regarding the authorship of the Shakespeare plays.*

No biographical sketch of Dr. Lawrence seems to have been published in any detail, and it is at present impossible to learn whether he was a descendant of the "H. Lawrence," scrivener, whose initials appear on the seal of the deed mortgaging the Blackfriars house which "Wm Shakspe" signed on March 11, 1613. Be that as it may, the 18th century Lawrence seems to have had very little faith in the Stratford claimant's *bona fides.* In fact, he describes him as a thieving fraud. Lawrence family tradition might well account for this break with hallowed British custom.

In the allegory of *Common Sense,* Dr. Lawrence tells how certain personages representing Wit, Genius and Humour happened to make the acquaintance in London, sometime after the Armada year of 1588, of "a person belonging to the playhouse, a profligate in his youth, and, as some say, a deer-stealer. Certainly," Lawrence continues, "he was a thief, from the time he was first capable of distinguishing anything. My father (Wit) and his friends suddenly formed an intimate liaison with this man—a connection *vraiment du coeur.*

"The theatre-man seeing that he had to deal with somewhat careless people who were never on their guard, seized the first opportunity to steal from them all that he could . . . The knave discovered a common-place book containing an infinite variety of modes and forms to express all the different sentiments of the human mind, with rules, etc., for every occasion or subject that might occur in dramatic writing. He discovered also the magic glass of Genius, which would not only show the external surfaces of any object, but would penetrate even into the deep recesses of the soul of man. He also found the mask of Humour, which made every sentence that came from it's wearer's mouth a pleasant thing to hear . . . The mask of Humour was an old acquaintance of ours, but although my mother (Truth) was very reluctant to consent, we agreed to maintain profound silence concerning this theft, being persuaded that my father and his friends would easily recover their loss. We feared, on the other hand, to put this man (Shakspere) in the fetters of justice, which we could not have done without depriving the country of its greatest ornament . . . With these (stolen) materials, and a backing of genius which one steals from nobody, he began to write dramatic pieces. I will say nothing of his success—sufficient to name him Shakespeare."

The satirical intent of this allegory is obviously to puncture the pretentions of the Stratford-on-Avon merchants who were just beginning at this time to sense the possibilities of the tourist business since agriculture was in a decline. One John Jordan, a dissatisfied wheelwright, was a leading spirit in the effort to put Stratford on the map again. He helped "find" and assemble the various doubtful "relics of Genius" which later failed to impress Washington Irving and aroused the scorn of Hawthorne. Jordan was the first of the native forgers, his cupidity having been aroused by George Steevens' success in hoodwinking the literary set of London with manufactured "correspondence" in which Alleyne, Marlowe and the Bard figured. Jordan's *chef-d'oeuvre* was the forgery of John Shakspere's will. He also made and sold at increasingly high prices many "genuine" examples of the poet's "own chair," and other "personal" knicknacks. In describing the miracle-worker of the Avonside as a congenital thief, Dr. Lawrence undoubtedly was influenced by the contemporary evidences of fraud thus burgeoning forth again. His characterization is repeated in the ballad of *The Warwickshire Thief* which Garrick composed and is credited with singing at Stratford the same year that *Common Sense* was published. Garrick had undertaken to direct and appear in a series of "Jubilee" performances in 1769 at Stratford as part of the effort to raise money for the rehabilitation of the place. He describes it as "the most dirty, unseemly, ill-paved, wretched-looking town in all Britain." Stratford had made almost exactly the same impression upon Horace Walpole twenty years earlier. In fact, if any atmosphere conducive to the cultivation of creative art had ever existed there, it had long become extinct. Garrick's valiant efforts to arouse the yokelry to the responsibilities of its alleged artistic heritage ended in dismal failure. The tale of his misadventure can be read in a quaint rarity entitled *Garrick's Vagary, or England Run Mad;*

with Particulars of the Stratford Jubilee (1769). Meanwhile, the actor's rowdy and irreverent ballad of *The Warwickshire Thief* quite patently represents his reactions to the general air of meretricious ballyhoo to which he had made himself a party. The refrain of this "Song by Mr. G.," as published in *The London Magazine* for 1769 (Vol. 38, p. 456) runs:

For the thief of all thieves was a Warwickshire thief.

For understandable reasons it is excluded from all polite anthologies of Stratfordian Bardolatry.

A Valuable Digest of Evidence

Early in 1947 *The Shakespeare Fellowship of Great Britain* published a 40-page pamphlet containing a digest of Oxford-Shakespeare facts and deductions which has proved of value in stimulating the interest of British readers previously denied knowledge of the Elizabethan Earl's career.

The title of this excellent compendium is *Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, the Real Shakespeare.* It consists of two chapters, written by William Kent and a third paper, credited to "Another." Mr. Kent covers the outstanding points in the negative case against Shakspere of Stratford, and then by way of contrast briefly states a dozen or more of the constructive arguments for Oxford as a thoroughly documented poet and playwright. The fact that, despite his great reputation as a creative artist, the Earl published no important poetry or dramatic work under his own name or title is touched upon. Mr. Kent also shows that Oxford's personality and known tastes and activities are significantly reflected in passages and characterizations in the Shakespeare plays and poems. It is a pity that due to lack of space, Mr. Kent does not include any of the new and unanswerable evidence for Oxford as the Bard which has been documented in detail by American researchers during the past five or six years. Such matters as his ownership of a favorite manor on the Warwickshire Avon; proof that his literary nickname was "Gentle Master William;" that Oxford was commonly called the "Lord Chamberlain" and was the only permanent official of that era who is definitely known to have written, produced and enacted plays (thereby being the one patron-producer of the age realistically identifiable as the "Lord Chamberlain" capable of directing the affairs of "Shakespeare's company of players"); such documented facts, we repeat, represent discoveries of revolutionary import in Elizabethan literary history. They go very far indeed to corroborate J. Thomas Looney's original identification of Edward de Vere as the man behind the immortal pen-name. In any digest of Oxford evidence these arguments should be given place over certain of the anti-Stratford, anti-Bacon items which have already been thoroughly aired. Moreover, the constructive Oxford evidence is the only type of evidence which attracts highly trained, discriminating minds to our cause. And while it is certainly necessary to know who didn't write the masterly plays and poems, it is even more vitally relevant to be able to prove who *did.*

The third and unsigned section of this booklet contains the weightier arguments. It is also more compelling in its logic and displays a more careful study of source materials. We gather from "Another's" style that he must be Mr. James J. Dwyer, former Editor of the British *News-Letter* and a valued contributor to the QUARTERLY. The same scholarly understanding of Renaissance art and literary influences in the great works which made Mr. Dwyer's 1946 brochure on *Italian Art in the Poems and Plays of Shakespeare* so well worth while is also apparent here. Only in one important particular, it appears, can Mr. Dwyer's conclusions regarding evidence that has been introduced for Edward de Vere as the real poet be seriously questioned. This is his endorsement of Looney's suggestion that the so-called "portrait of Shakespeare" which was discovered at Grafton Regis is an early picture of Lord Oxford. While the painting has not as yet been properly analyzed with X-rays and other modern media, the physical coloring of the subject is quite different from that found in Oxford's surviving portraits, and there is too marked a dissimilarity in the shape and placement of the features. On the other hand, both in features and dress the painting does match the portrait of a younger contemporary of Oxford who became prominent at the Court of James I. If Mr. Dwyer had mentioned the "Janssen" picture instead of the Grafton as a recovered original of the playwright Earl, we should be more inclined to agree with him. Except for this detail, the Dwyer brief is firmly knit, well documented and decidedly readable.

All in all, *Edward de Vere . . . the Real Shakespeare* fills a long-felt want and cannot fail to interest a very wide variety of readers from the man in the street to the cloistered scholar. Copies

may be obtained at One Shilling each or four for $1.00 by writing Mr. William Kent, 71 Union Road, Clapham, London, S.W. 4, England. We suggest that FELLOWSHIP members avail themselves of the $1.00 rate, as the extra copies can be put to good use in this country, while U.S.A. currency is particularly desirable just now in England. Simply slip a crisp greenback in your order.

Tufts College Then—and Now

Late in May and early in June, 1947, Dr. Benezet lectured at Tufts College, Medford, Mass., and before the Wedgwood Club of Boston. Arrangements for both appearances were made by Mr. Frank C. Doble, the well known physicist who is a member of THE FELLOWSHIP's Board of Trustees.

For several generations Tufts has been noted for the high standards maintained in its science courses. A well remembered faculty celebrity whose researches attracted international interest during the 1880's and '90's is the late Professor A. E. Dolbear. His experiments in the electrical transmission of sound by telephone and wireless have a place in the history of the development of both these great inventions. Professor Dolbear's interest in the works of Shakespeare was also acute and so well grounded that he could hold his own with the foremost Shakespearean specialists of his day.

During 1893, *The Arena*, a periodical of current opinion, reflecting the interest which had been aroused by the Baconian assault upon the authenticity of the Stratford authorship claims, published an extensive symposium on the controversy. Dr. Dolbear was among the judges of the contest, and one of the four whose opinion was that neither Shakspere of Stratford nor Bacon had been proved to be the real author. His statement to this effect, which has been commented upon by Dr. Benezet elsewhere,[1] closes as follows:

" . . . commentators have found in the (Shakespeare) works evidence of great and varied accomplishments: knowledge of ancient and modern languages, of history, of law, of science and philosophy. Attainments in these fields imply much more than genius: they imply improved opportunities. Genius can dispense with learning in music, in mathematics, in mechanism; but there is no such thing as an innate knowledge of language or law or history or science. It is a necessary presumption that whoever possesses any of them in any degree has acquired so much, and eminence implies great and persistent efforts. There is no evidence that Shakspere had either opportunity or inclination to concern himself with such matters. On the contrary, his known tastes were a long remove from them. . . As the (Stratfordian) defence seems to acquiesce in the statements of the Baconians concerning what is really known of Wm. Shakspere and draws its inferences from a hypothetical Shakespeare rather than one we know something about, it appears from the evidence presented that it is highly improbable that Wm. Shakspere either did or could have written what has been attributed to him. That Bacon wrote it does not seem so certain."

Professor Dolbear would thus appear to have been a judge of the authorship evidence potentially open to full and unprejudiced consideration of the Oxford-Shakespeare documentation if it had been available at that time. It would also seem likely that his influence favoring the realistic discussion of such problems would persist at Tufts. But Dr. Benezet soon found that the Tufts English Department had not kept pace with the spirit of free inquiry which Dolbear once inculcated into his science classes. For following the Benezet presentation of a 40-minute outline of the Oxford case, Professor Myrick, a Tufts Shakespeare specialist, took the floor for a requested "10-minute" rebuttal. Instead, he filibustered the discussion to a dead-end with a solid hour of fanciful claims for the Stratford native's aristocratic and intellectual affiliations as a grandson (no less!) of "Sir Robert Arden of the noble Arden family" of Warwickshire; and going on to repeat many of the scandalous half-truths and inspired libels featured in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to "prove" Oxford a rattle-brained spendthrift, a murderous plotter against the life of Sir Philip Sidney, the deliberate wrecker of his own fortunes in order to spite his wife and his father-in-law; a man of impure life and disorderly associations whose surviving writings are so "purile" as to be unworthy the attention of sensible people—not to mention Shakespearean commentators. In other words, without bothering to consider any of the constructive evidence relating to Oxford's contemporary reputation as poet, playwright and leader in literary and theatrical projects, he dismissed him outright as quite the most objectionable type of human wreckage that the Elizabethan Age justly sought to bury in oblivion! Professor Myrick

1. See S. F. News-Letter, Vol. II, Nos. 5, 6.

eloquently rambled in this strain until 6:20 p.m. Then, having accomplished his purpose of preventing other members of the audience (which had dwindled appreciably by this time) from asking any intelligent questions of the invited speaker, he generously yielded the floor.

These facts are stated, not to criticize any individual Shakespearean professor's manners in debate, but to indicate the intolerance, misrepresentation and medieval thinking which still characterizes the reactions of certain collegiate representatives of the orthodox persuasion when confronted with perfectly legitimate Oxfordian arguments. Facts which they cannot answer, they seek to drown out with distortion, prevarication and vocal vehemence. Is it any wonder, then, that educational surveys now stress the sad estate into which the teaching of English has fallen in this country?

Reviving Interest in Boston

Our President's talk before the Wedgwood Club of Boston in June was received in quite a different spirit by the members of that famous society of antiquarians and collectors. An extensive report of the lecture, which we do not have space to include here, was printed some weeks later in *The New York Sun*.

Boston was once a center of dissatisfaction with the Stratford authorship interpretation, the outspoken skepticism of such writers as Emerson, Hawthorne, Lowell, Dr. Holmes and Whittier being echoed in many quarters. Later, considerable Baconian discussion activated the Hub. But as the Bacon cult bogged down under the ciphers and other extravagances, Bostonians generally failed to keep abreast of new developments in the authorship mystery. The late Professor Kittridge of Harvard not only helped discredit the Baconians, but preached the "back to Stratford" doctrine with such assurance that he literally shamed all independent thought from the field. A man of considerable ability and force of character—not unlike Dr. Samuel Johnson in certain aspects—he was a good example of the scholar who can make his own opinion appear more important than fact itself. To "thunder in the index," ridicule and browbeat dissentients into line with his own interpretations of moot Elizabethan literary and biographical questions were part of his procedure. He was stimulating, but became too egocentric as a law-giver. Toward the end, despite his great reputation and valuable work done on the Shakespeare texts and in reference to the identity of the author or compiler of the *Morte d'Arthur*, his influence became decidedly reactionary where the Shakespearean authorship was concerned. Thoroughly satisfied to ignore all new light on the career of "Gentle Master William" Oxford, Kittridge refused to meet or hold converse with any advocate of the playwright Earl's credentials.

Since the Harvard lion's death, however, centers of Oxfordian interest have developed in the Boston territory through the personal influences of Professor Allen Burt of Brookline, Mr. Thomas O'Connor, Mr. David Eddy of Newtonville, Mr. Richard Foster and Mr. Frank C. Doble of Cambridge. Dr. Benezet's cordial reception by the members and guests of the Wedgwood Club also proves (despite the Tufts *contre-temps*) that a fertile field for the extension of Oxford-Shakespeare intelligence awaits cultivation in the old Bay Colony.

Famous Naval Historian Aids Cause

The QUARTERLY's editorial library was presented with a useful file of booklets, book reviews and cuttings bearing on the Shakespeare authorship a few months ago. The donor, one of our earliest and most distinguished readers, is Commander Carlyon Bellairs, R.N., M.P., author of *The Battle of Jutland*, now retired and living at St. James, Barbados, in the West Indies. Commander Bellairs is the type of combined man of action, scholar, poet and statesman we read of in the Shakespearean Age, and who reappears from time to time in British public life, but rarely elsewhere. When his career on the sea was brought to a close by failing eyesight, he became a lecturer at the Royal Naval College, also serving as a Member of Parliament for almost a quarter-century. In addition to his naval and political writings, Commander Bellairs has published poetry of distinctive merit. His *Battle of Jutland* is considered the authoritative account of that historic engagement. The Commander is one of the few British notables ever to refuse the honor of a baronetcy on grounds of personal principle. He is a medallist of the Society of Arts and was for some time President of the Poetry Society of London. He was a friend and colleague of Sir George Greenwood during the period of the great authorship debate in the early years of the present century. Like the late Sir Geoffrey Callender,

Professor of English and History at the Royal Naval College, Commander Bellairs has become an Oxfordian after long study of the various authorship claims. He advocates stepping up of activities on behalf of the poet Earl on all fronts. We are proud to have the Commander on our side in the Shakespeare authorship argument, and shall make the best possible use of his informational file. Incidentally, several of the papers in it have a slightly mottled appearance as though they may have been read by an open porthole where salty sea-winds blew.

Dr. Joseph Shipley's Good Word

In his radio discussion of word origins which was one of the edifying informational features broadcast by the New York Station WOR last year, Dr. Joseph T. Shipley gave the Oxford case brief but intelligent mention on August 31st. This occurred during his analysis of the word "anti-Stratfordian." Dr. Shipley left little doubt in the minds of his listeners as to his own stand on the widespread repudiation of William of Stratford, and the validity of the new evidence for the poet-dramatist nobleman. As a teacher of English, platform and radio lecturer, encyclopaedist, philologist and Broadway dramatic critic, Dr. Shipley is a man of versatile and outstanding talent. He has been keenly interested in the research work of THE FELLOWSHIP for some time. We hope to publish some of his views on certain aspects of the Oxford-Shakespeare case before long.

Mr. James McKee on the Sonnets

The New Shakespeare Society of Philadelphia presented for its first event of the autumn-winter season a lecture on "Shake-speare's Sonnets" by the Society's Secretary, Mr. James McKee.

Well attended by members and friends of the Philadelphia group, the lecture was held at the Art Alliance, off Rittenhouse Square, which is the headquarters of The New Society. Mr. McKee's main premise, that the love affair reflected in the Sonnets was not a mere irregularity in the nether world of Elizabethan literary bohemia, but involved persons and families of "great worth," was well received by the audience. Mr. McKee closed with a plea for realistic, objective reading of the poems without regard to the strata of confusing opinion with which the commentators have all but succeeded in burying them. He assured his hearers that if they ignore in particular the Stratfordian chronology, the true sonnet story, as well as the figure of the author, would emerge.

During February and March, a series of week-end meetings of The New Shakespeare Society were held at which plans for concentrating the Society's work upon the Oxford authorship evidence were perfected. Mr. Abraham Feldman's paper on "The Making of Shakespeare the Man" was the highlight of the mid-March gathering. A very large proportion of the membership of The New Shakespeare Society have become convinced Oxfordians since the association was founded early in 1947. We can, therefore, look for a substantial increase in the active membership of THE FELLOWSHIP from this source in the immediate future.

Dr. Benezet's "Shakespeare Hoax"

While filling a summer engagement as visiting Professor of Education at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, Dr. Benezet found time to prepare a paper entitled "The Shakespeare Hoax" which was featured in the November, 1947 issue of the *Dartmouth Quarterly*. It is a bold and breezy attack on the Stratford claims and presents the Benezet view of the new Shakespeare evidence with characteristic enthusiasm. Quite a sensation was caused in both undergraduate and faculty circles at Dartmouth by its appearance. Some of the English professors who have long resented Dr. Benezet's Shakespearean activities, took it as another example of the deplorably disruptive influence he exerts in the field they regard as closed to iconoclastic profanation. The student body, however, greeted "The Shakespeare Hoax" with much the same joy that the undergraduates in "The Propagation of Knowledge" welcomed the anti-Stratfordian arguments to which they were introduced in Rudyard Kipling's diverting tale.[1]

As the regular edition of the *Dartmouth Quarterly* soon became exhausted, the author of "The Shakespeare Hoax" was obliged to secure a reprint of his article in pamphlet form to fill the many requests for copies he is still receiving. These can be had at 15 cents each, two for 25 cents or eight for $1.00, postpaid, either from Dr. L. P. Benezet, 3 Occom Ridge, Hanover, New Hampshire, or through the Secretary of THE FELLOWSHIP. For a variety of reasons which we cannot enumerate at this time, "The Shakespeare Hoax" will arouse the interest of almost anyone who has ever given the least thought to the age-old question, "Who was Shakespeare?"

1. See Kipling's Volume, *Debits and Credits*.

The Bolton-Benezet Debate

As a direct result of his *Dartmouth Quarterly* paper, Dr. Benezet received an invitation from Professor Joseph Bolton, Chairman of the English Department at Skidmore College, Saratoga, N. Y., to engage in a public debate on Oxford *versus* William of Stratford. The discussion took place on the evening of Monday, January 5th, 1948, at Skidmore, and was broadcast over Radio Station WGY of Schenectady.

The college was not in session, but an audience of some 225 persons, largely Skidmore faculty and administrative officers, besides invited members of two local literary clubs, were present, and remained after the broadcast period to hear the debate continued for an additional hour and a quarter.

Members of the audience were impartial in directing their questions and kept the speakers busy replying. Mr. Frank Singiser acted as moderator until forced to leave, when Miss Kathryn Starbuck, Secretary of Skidmore, took his place. When the meeting was finally adjourned, several members of the audience, including President and Mrs. Moore, came to the platform to express their keen enjoyment of the program. After another more informal discussion at Professor Benezet's hotel, which lasted until midnight, Professor Bolton invited our President to return to Skidmore during the spring to address the Shakespeare students and allow them to quiz him. The WGY broadcast of the debate—upon which no decision was rendered—was heard very clearly throughout upstate New York and central and northern New England. Under a three-column heading the following evening, the daily *Saratogian* published a complete and well-written account of the discussion, which was voted the most interesting of the local season. A report of Dr. Benezet's return engagement at Skidmore will appear in our next issue.

Our Secretary at Pennsylvania

Through the good offices of The New Shakespeare Society of Philadelphia, Mr. Charles Wisner Barrell lectured before The Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania on the afternoon of Friday, January 9th, 1948.

Founded in 1813, The Philomathean is one of the oldest university societies of record. Its rolls are embellished by the names of many eminent graduates and faculty members of Pennsylvania and other seats of learning of the past one hundred and thirty-five years. In Mr. Barrell's audience of January 9th were professors and instructors from the University's English Department, together with members and guests of both The Philomathean and The New Shakespeare Society. Our Secretary's address was concerned chiefly with the X-ray and infra-red revelations of the disguised paintings of Lord Oxford—the two commonly known as the Ashbourne and Hampton Court "portraits of Shakespeare"—stereoptican slides of the analytical plates being screened. The pictures were preceded, however, by a fifteen-minute resumé of the key discoveries of Oxford-Shakespeare documentation during the past twenty-eight years. In covering these, Mr. Barrell took occasion to emphasize the scientifically sound methods pursued by the incomparable J. Thomas Looney and the foremost of his followers in the fields of Elizabethan-Jacobean source material. The pains, expense and thought which have been given to the task of uncovering and verifying this contemporary testimony was dwelt upon, and its legal competence made plain. At the same time, Mr. Barrell declared, the work has been accompanied by much-ill-conceived ridicule and misrepresentation on the part of entrenched obscurantists who seem to feel that their monopoly of Shakespearean biographical interpretation is endangered by any new facts proving Oxford a serious candidate for high creative honors. In citing specific instances of such practices, the speaker warned those addicted to them that they cannot continue to ignore and misrepresent honest documentation indefinitely without stultifying their own reputations. This for the reason that younger, more alert and less prejudiced minds demand the truth and refuse to be intimidated by such "authority." These remarks elicited hearty applause. Meanwhile, some of the English instructors present were observed making notes of all the Oxford documentation specified.

Mr. Barrell had arranged to show only twenty-four of the portrait plates. But upon the request of the audience, continued with his visualized detective story until a total of forty-two slides were screened. Enthusiastic appreciation of the shadowgraph evidence for Oxford as apparent in his overpainted features and personal insignia in the "Shakespeare portraits" was expressed throughout the lecture; and upon its conclusion, Mr. Barrell was asked by Mr. John Patton, Moderator of The Philomathean Society to return to Pennsylvania later in the season and repeat the talk.

Dr. John Dover Wilson's "New" Macbeth Is a Masterpiece Without a Master

But Oxford-Shakespeare Research Again Fills the Void

A Review by CHARLES WISNER BARRELL

LATEST OF THE PLAYS to be issued in "The New Shakespeare" series by the Cambridge University Press under the editorial supervision of John Dover Wilson, *Macbeth* contains comments and notes of particular interest to students of the Oxford-Shakespeare case.

Until recently Regius Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at the University of Edinburgh; co-editor with Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch of this "definitive" series upon its inauguration about a quarter-century ago; and editor-in-chief for the past twelve years, Dr. Wilson is generally considered the most readable of all living Shakespearean commentators by book reviewers here and in Great Britain. He has a smooth style and enough individuality to distract attention from a weakness which would otherwise be all too apparent; namely, *inability to draw logical conclusions from the materials he takes in hand.* But the flashes of enthusiasm which lighten his pages have added to his popularity, where the pedestrian "stuffiness" of more skeptical scholars, such as Sir Edmund Chambers, usually fails to charm. In earlier works, notably *The Essential Shakespeare* (1932), Dr. Wilson has even been known to drop the role of critical historian to soar off into realms of biographical romance. His *Essential* Bard is not the generally accepted son of the illiterate John and Mary Shakspere of Stratford-on-Avon, growing up to be the real-life replica of the "affluent and retired butcher" whose "air of stupid and self-complacent prosperity" dominates the celebrated bust in the Stratford church. Instead, Wilson plumps outright for a starry-eyed lad, synthetically conceived from the Shakespearean plays, who "*received his education as a singing boy in the service of some great Catholic nobleman.*" 'Tis indeed a pretty gift of make-believe this fellow countryman of Robert Louis Stevenson possesses! But is it honest history or biography, or anything more than the type of wishful thinking that led to the outright frauds of Ireland and John Payne Collier? However the talent may be defined, Wilson frequently resorts to it whenever it becomes necessary to bridge difficulties that develop between the biographical blanks and hopeless incongruities of the Stratford person's documentation and the undeniably *real* evidences of cosmopolitan learning, vast and varied life-experience, and artistic judgment, based upon leisured concentration, which are inescapably apparent in the Shakespeare writings. In fact, romantic speculation still dominates the Doctor's approach to all problems involving the historical identity of the dramatist he undertakes to explain. Reversing Whittier's dictum, he never fails to draw comfort from the phrase "*might have been.*"

Thus, while Dr. Wilson has collected many potentially illuminating facts on the creative background of *Macbeth*, he notably neglects to bring home the assembled evidence of wide-ranging scholarship and technical magic to any one definitely certified personality of the age.

Certainly the scantily documented William of Stratford—"singing boy," butcher's apprentice, or what-have-you?—cannot be lured into focus for the task. Instead, our editor is content to leave *Macbeth* as another masterpiece without a master, although he credits the third-rate Thomas Middleton who paraphrased *The Rape of Lucrece* liberally in his *Ghost of Lucrece* (1600) and otherwise borrowed from the Bard as occasion warranted, with some "restoring" of the *Macbeth* text as we know it.

Playwright Consulted Rare Source Script

It is a pity that the matter of credible authorship is so slighted, for whoever planned and executed the classic murder drama of our language had access to much Scottish antiquarian lore and several expensive historical treatises, including Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland.* And this in a day when there was no such thing as a public reference library. More remarkably still, the author of *Macbeth* found it possible to consult an exceedingly rare manuscript, written in verse at the command of Queen Margaret of Scotland (great-grandmother of James VI) and obviously unavailable to any English

Macbeth: The New Shakespeare Edition. Edited by John Dover Wilson. Cambridge University Press, Macmillan & Co., New York, 1947. $2.50.

dramatist not on "book borrowing" terms with some member of the royal Scots entourage.

As well he should, Dr. Wilson devotes particular attention to Shakespeare's debt to this manuscript. His remarks can be read in full on pages XVII-XIX of his introductory chapter. They are based on the discovery of Mrs. C. C. Stopes who first discussed the matter in her *Shakespeare's Industry* (1916) pp. 93, 102-3.

Students of *Macbeth* have long known that the actual regicide staged by the dramatist does not represent the killing of the real King Duncan by the Macbeth of history—the latter being an affair consummated under guise of an open revolt—but is taken from the records of the earlier murder of King Duff by the thane Donwald and his lady wife. The Duff regicide was in fact a crime against hospitality, in plan and execution much as Shakespeare attributes Duncan's slaughter to Macbeth and his "fiend-like" spouse. The characterization of Lady Macbeth, as the poet works it out, is only hinted at by Holinshed in a few words. Echoing the account in Hector Boece's *Scotorum Historiae* (1527-1540), Holinshed refers to Macbeth's wife as "verie ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene," whose advice to her thane "lay sore upon him to attempt the thing" which led to Duncan's elimination. Of course a great poetic genius would not need more than a hint to build upon. And Holinshed, printed in plain Elizabethian English, was always held to be "Shakespeare's only source" for the tragedy. But now develops the circumstance which Oxfordians will find corroborative of their stand on the authorship question:

The rare metrical manuscript called the *Buik of the Croniclis* of Scotland which Shakespeare studied in addition to Holinshed is in general a much more detailed and dramatically effective handling of the particular events and personalities which the Bard transmutes into the immortal measures of *Macbeth*. For one thing, the *Buik* contains considerable dialogue. The psychology of its characterizations is also realistic. In four outstanding particulars Shakespeare's debt to the manuscript is clear-cut and undeniable.

1) The *Buik's* dialogue between Donwald and his wife is strikingly paraphrased in several Shakespearean passages between Lady Macbeth and her unwilling lord. So are 2) descriptions of Donwald's actions following his crime, which the play attributes to Lady Macbeth. 3) The metaphorical treatment of the prophecy addressed to Banquo, promising endless life to the line of Scottish sovereigns he has begotten, proves more acceptable to the dramatist than Holinshed's remarks in kind. And 4) herein appears a seven-line characterization of Macbeth as the bemused tool of his wife's wicked counsels which no other chronicler matches—but upon which the author of *Macbeth* dwells with tremendous effect!

A Royal Scottish Literary Circle

The author of this unique Shakespearean source manuscript was the Scottish poet, William Stewart, an illegitimate relative of the James Stewart who as King James IV married Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, and sister of Henry VIII. A Master of Arts of St. Andrew's, Stewart undertook at Queen Margaret's request to translate Boece's Latin history into idiomatic metres. The work was designed for the education of the young King James V. It was commenced in April, 1531 and completed in September, 1535. The widowed Queen who had commissioned the *Buik*, lived until 1540 and was unquestionably presented with a copy of the finished manuscript by the author. In 1514 she had re-married with Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, and the following year gave birth—in England—to a daughter who was christened Margaret by the great Cardinal Wolsey. This Lady Margaret Douglas soon became the favorite niece of her uncle, Henry VIII, was brought up at his Court, a "beautiful and highly esteemed" young woman of unusual charm and intelligence. Henry took considerable pains with her education, and always recognized her rights as a joint heiress in both the English and Scottish sovereignties. Following two romantic love affairs which he refused to countenance, Henry married the Lady Margaret to a third choice, Matthew Stewart, Earl of Lennox, in 1544. Of this Earl and Countess of Lennox and some of the strange and significant events which grew out of their marriage, more anon.

Regarding Shakespeare's use of the royally commissioned *Buik of the Croniclis of Scotland*, a point to emphasize is that no copy can be shown to have been read or referred to by any English author or scholar other than "Shakespeare" during the 16th century. The inventory of the personal library of James VI, who succeeded Elizabeth as James I of England, lists *"the Scottis Chronicle, wrettin in hand,"* together with Boece's Latin *Historiae;* and what may be the same royal copy of the *Croniclis* was once in the possession of the Scottish scholar, Hew Craufurd, finally coming to

rest among the books of George I. But the Stewart manuscript remained unprinted until 1858. On what grounds, then, do Mrs. Stopes and Dr. Wilson account for the author of *Macbeth* having had access to this choice item, especially prepared to edify kingly understanding?

The answer is: none. Both have left the question hanging in the air like the phanton dagger which plagues the vision of the Thane of Cawdor.

As a matter of fact, this creative riddle cannot be realistically solved by any documented consideration of the Shakespeare authorship question except the one which leads us back to the playwright Earl of Oxford. Neither the orthodox Will 'o the Wisp of Stratford nor Wilson's imaginary "singing boy" can at any recorded time or place be put in contact with a logically believable possessor of the Stewart manuscript prior to the writing of *Macbeth;* which, incidentally, Dr. Wilson now "guesses" was written "about 1599."

But the Earl of Oxford very definitely can be so placed.

"I Do See the Very Book Indeed"

In the Cecil family papers, among a series of notes in the handwriting of Oxford's father-in-law, Lord Burghley, detailing the Earl's whereabouts during parts of 1574-5, it is stated that Oxford visited the Cecil country-seat of Theobalds when the Countess of Lennox and her eldest daughter were both there.[1] As previously mentioned, the Countess was the daughter of the Queen of Scotland who commissioned Stewart's metrical *Croniclis.* Being the mother of Lord Darnley—Mary Queen of Scots' murdered consort—Lady Lennox was also the grandmother of King James of Scotland and Great Britain who later listed the Stewart manuscript among his personal books. Because of her known interest in the history of the Scottish monarchy and her intimate relationship both to Stewart's patroness and King James, it is obvious that there was no one living in England at any time during the reign of Elizabeth who can more logically be believed to have owned a copy of the Stewart manuscript than the Dowager Lady Lennox. Burghley's notations, which evidently recall guests at Theobalds who attended dinner or supper parties in company, refer to the late summer of 1574:

19th Sept. Sunday. Lady Lennox, Earl of Oxford, Lord Northumberland, Lady Northumberland.

"20th Sept. Monday. Lady Margaret Lennox (i.e., daughter of the Countess) Earl of Oxford. Lady Lennox, Lady Hunsdon."

This puts our playwright at the impressionable age of twenty-four on the familiar footing of a house guest with the Countess of historic charm and notable mentality whose own life had been tragically conditioned by a series of events which have frequently been compared by historians and biographers to key developments in *Macbeth.* Less than a year previously Oxford had published Bedingfield's translation of Cardan's *Comforte*—now generally known as "Hamlet's Book." His introduction to this work of philosophy, and to Clerke's Latin version of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (source of the characterizations of Benedick and Beatrice in *Much Ado*) had already established his reputation as a writer of great promise; his verses were being collected by anthologists; and his enthusiasm for theatricals is especially commented upon by the Elizabethan historian of the town of Warwick. At the age of twenty, as a subaltern on the staff of his great friend, the Earl of Sussex, Oxford had also taken a hand in crushing the Rebellion of the Northern Earls (the revolt which many commentators say is adumbrated in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays).[2] The Sussex punitive expedition of 1570 had penetrated some miles north of the Scottish border to cripple the strongholds and supply lines of the adherents of the imprisoned Mary, Queen of Scots, in whose political interests the rebellion had been organized. The Earl of Lennox, grandfather of the infant King James, was then co-operating with the English to the best of his ability. And inasmuch as his widowed Countess, at the time of her recorded meetings with Oxford in 1574, was a vehement personal enemy of her daughter-in-law, the displaced Queen of Scots, openly accusing Mary of having instigated the murder of Darnley, it is not unreasonable to believe that the aging noblewoman of tragic memories and the budding poet-dramatist who had helped scotch the revolt of the Marian Earls found topics of mutual interest to discuss at Lord Burghley's board. With her eldest son and her husband both slaughtered as a result of the royal Scottish intrigues, there can be no doubt whatever of the predominating influence which the murderous central theme of *Macbeth* exerted upon the personality of the Countess of Lennox—although as a devout and forgiving Catholic she later "made her peace" with Mary, Queen of Scots. And as for

1. Calendar MSS. Marquis of Salisbury, XIII, 144; Ward, p .117.

2. Ward, pp. 40-48.

young Oxford, his interest in the dramatic highlights of history, past and current, is specifically noted by his Shakespearean uncle and mentor, Arthur Golding, in the dedication of a translation of *The Histories of Trogus Pompeius* to the fourteen year old Lord Chamberlain of England in 1564.[3] Golding says:

"*. . it is not unknown to others, and I have had experience thereof myself, how earnest a desire your honour has naturally graffed in you to read, peruse and communicate with others as well the histories of ancient times, and things done long ago, as also of the present estate of things in our days, and that not without a certain pregnancy of wit and ripeness of understanding.*"

So we see that Oxford is not only temperamentally the best documented candidate for the authorship of *Macbeth* that research has yet produced, but the only one it is possible to put in position to learn of Stewart's manuscript from a probable owner.

Oxford and the Forerunner of Macbeth

Let us now consider a few other circumstances relating to the sources of the great Scottish tragedy which Dr. Wilson does not take into account.

A contemporary reference to Oxford as an actor in Court theatricals can be found in a letter by Gilbert Talbot, later Earl of Shrewsbury, and first reproduced in Nichols' *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth.* This states that the poetical peer, together with three other young noblemen, appeared in a "device" before the Queen during the Shrovetide holidays of March, 1578 (New Style, 1579). Surviving documents of the Revels Office, covering the same period, report that on Shrove Tuesday, March 3rd, a play called "*The history of murderous mychaell*" was "shewen at Whitehall . . by the Lord Chamberleynes servauntes." It is now believed by many experts that this entry records the first Court performance of the anonymous drama, *Arden of Feversham,* which was published in 1592 by Edward White, the notorious Shakespearean play pirate.[4] The reason for this belief, fully stated by Mrs. Eva Turner Clark in her *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays,* pp. 116-161, is that "murderous" Michael is a leading character in *Arden.* The homicide which he helped carry out on his master, a prosperous citizen of Kent, had been described in the first edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles,* published in 1578; and a lurid chapbook account of the crime was printed later the same year by the aforesaid White who issued the play.

Now it happens that Algernon Charles Swinburne and other specialists in Elizabethan literature have identified *Arden* ("*murderous mychaell*") as an "early work of Shakespeare's." And anyone who studies the drama should recognize it as a worthy forerunner of *Macbeth,* inevitably suggesting the royal murder classic in structural essentials, Shakespearean versification, thought patterns and word imagery. In particular, the appeals to the servant Michael's cupidity or material ambition which his master's wife uses to gain his consent to Arden's slaying is reminiscent of Lady Macbeth's cajolery of her husband to the deed of violence upon the sleeping Duncan. Moreover, the reactions of conscience-smitten pity which both Michael and Macbeth experience for their victims are identical and differ so little in verbal expression as to suggest either a common authorship or bold plagiarism.

Macbeth Moralizes Contemporary History

Regarding the general impression which the tragedy of *Macbeth* could not have helped but leave upon Elizabethan audiences, any royal Scottish murder drama staged after 1568 would *ipso facto* recall the murder of Darnley, titular King of Scotland. Dr. Wilson ignores this fact entirely. Also the interesting circumstance that Darnley's assassination was directly compared by contemporary writers to the same historic Duff-Donwald crime which both the poet-chronicler Stewart and Shakespeare utilize so effectively.

Belleforest's *Histoire de Marie Royne d' Escosse* (1572) is one early account emphasizing these parallels. And the point is repeated in another French publication entitled *Martyre de Marie Stuart, Royne d' Escosse et Douariere de France,* which was translated in 1587 by Adam Blackwood, following the execution of the unfortunate Queen.

Lilian Winstanley, a brilliant but strangely unappreciated modern student of Shakespeare's allusions to contemporary personalities and events in the plays,[5] also states that certain details of the Darnley murder which reappear in *Macbeth* are taken from the depositions presented at the trials of those accused of the crime.

Who would be more likely to have access to

3. Ward, pp. 23-4.

4. *Quarterly,* Vol. VII, p. 24.

5. Winstanley, *Macbeth, King Lear and Contemporary History* (1922).

such material: William of Stratford, entirely untraceable in connection thereunto, or the playwright Earl of Oxford who was reading law at Gray's Inn when the trials of Darnley's alleged slayers took place, who had actually been on a military expedition into Scotland in 1570, who may be assumed to have met Darnley himself at Elizabeth's Court, who certainly knew the young man's mother and father, and who finally sat on the jury of peers that convicted Mary, Queen of Scots of high crimes and misdemeanors in 1586?

As a matter of fact, if *Macbeth* is read with some comprehensive understanding of the sensational events which rocked Scotland to its foundations during the early decades of "Shakespeare's Age," it will be recognized—not as a possible "compliment" to King James of Scotland and Great Britain, as so many Stratfordians, as well as Dr. Wilson, view it—but as a stupendous morality piece, forcefully invoking ethical reflections upon the blood-stained panorama of passion, misdirected ambition, jealousy and murderous misgovernment which culminated in the untimely elimination of both of James VI's parents. Far from being "complimentary" to this King, the overwhelming effect of the play would be to recall vividly to his mind affairs which he was only too anxious to forget. The fact that *Macbeth* was first printed in the 1623-4 Folio about a year before the death of James, bears out this conclusion. And all fine-spun speculation to the contrary notwithstanding, there is absolutely no direct evidence that James ever saw *Macbeth* enacted at any time.

A Celebrated Biographer's Opinion

Specific identification of the tragedy as a commentary upon contemporary Scottish history, with Lady Macbeth reproducing upon the stage psychological reactions which Elizabethan intelligence agents had attributed to the distraught Queen Mary, has been made by the late Stefan Sweig. On pages 209-11 of his *Mary Queen of Scotland and the Isles* (1935), he says:

"Whether wittingly or unwittingly, *Macbeth* was created in the atmosphere of the Mary Stuart drama; the happenings staged by Shakespeare's imagination in Dunsinane Castle had previously been staged in fact at Holyrood Palace. In both cases, after the murder had taken place, there was the same isolation, the same oppressive spiritual gloom, the same ghastly festivals in which none dared to take pleasure and from which one after another slipped away because the ravens of black disaster were already circling round the house. Often we find it hard to distinguish whether it is Mary Stuart we are watching as she wanders by night through the apartments, sleepless, confused, tormented by pangs of conscience, or whether it is Lady Macbeth wailing: 'All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.' Is it Bothwell, or is it *Macbeth*, who becomes harsher and more resolute after he has committed his crime; who more and more boldly challenges the enmity of Scotland—though he knows well enough that his courage is futile, and that ghosts are stronger than a living man? In both cases alike, a woman's passion is the motive power, but the man is appointed to do the deed; as extraordinarily similar are the atmospheres, the oppression that lours over the tormented spirits, husband and wife chained together by the crime, each dragging the other down into the same dark abyss. Never in history or literature have the psychology of assassination and the mysterious power exerted after death by a victim upon a murderer been more magnificently depicted than in these two Scottish tragedies, one in the realm of fable and the other in that of real life.

"Are such remarkable similarities the product of chance? Have we not good ground for assuming that, in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare was dramatizing and sublimating the tragedy of Mary Stuart? . . . This much is certain, however, that only those who have studied and understood the psychology of Lady Macbeth after the murder of Duncan will be able fully to understand the moods and the actions of Mary Stuart during those dark days at Holyrood—to understand the torments of a woman strong of soul, who was yet not strong enough to face up to the darkest of her deeds."

Supporting Characters in the Play

Perhaps no one has observed before this that Shakespeare assigns roles to certain titled characters in *Macbeth* with whose Elizabethan counterparts Oxford was personally acquainted. There was, for instance, actually no Scottish Lord Lennox at the historical Court of Macbeth. Yet Lennox has a part in the tragedy which carries him from opening scene to final curtain. In naming this character it seems certain that the playwright was thinking of the Scotland of his own day, and of the Lord Lennox, father of Darnley, who had been Regent of Scotland for his infant grandson James at the time of his murder at the hands of a malcontent bearing the suggestive cognomen

of "Cawdor." It is also not without interest that "Lady Lenox" is mentioned in the First Folio version of *Macbeth* at the opening of Act III, Scene 1. Her speeches are now given to Lady Macbeth. Such a slip indicates either that the author of the play had a Lady Lennox too much in mind when he wrote, or that such a character was actually given a part in the original handling of the play.

Oxford would be the playwright who would also come most naturally by another piece of information which rather stumps Dr. Wilson when he remarks that "Shakespeare . . somehow or other learned that the Setons were the royal armour-bearers" of the northern realm.

Shakespeare's Seton is one of the few adherents of Macbeth to remain loyal to the end. He helps the harried monarch to his armour for the final bout with Macduff; and it is also Seton, as Chamberlain of Macbeth's household, who brings the latter word of his Queen's death—thereby calling forth the famous "To-morrow and to-morrow" reflections upon mortality.

No Seton has been documented as holding the joint offices of royal Armour-bearer and Household Chamberlain in medieval Scotland. But the 5th Lord Seton of Mary's reign did so. He is particularly noted by historians because of his unshakeable loyalty to that unhappy sovereign. It was at his house that Mary found protection when both the Catholic and Protestant forces combined against her; and Seton and his half-sister (the "Mary Seytoun" of the old ballad) helped the Queen in her final escape across the English border. This Lord Seton died in 1585. There can be little doubt that he was the prototype of *Macbeth's* Seton. Sir Walter Scott also features him as a character in *The Abbot.*

When Was Macbeth Written?

As all realistic evidence indicates that *Macbeth* is a stern indictment of Scottish misgovernment, and one which would help justify Elizabeth's heavy hand of correction, it is quite impossible to agree with Dr. Wilson that the play could have been written as late as 1599; for at that period the English government was taking pains to placate the Scots. As for the so-called "complimentary" references to James as the alleged descendant of Banquo who would rule the combined kingdoms of Great Britain, it was Queen Mary herself who, in presenting her new-born son at Court, said to Sir William Standen: *"This is the Prince who I hope shall first unite the two kingdoms of England and Scotland."* Moreover, the orthodox claims that the composition of the play took place in 1605-6 because the Porter mentions an "equivocator" in his speech during the knocking at the gate of Dunsinane, were exploded long since. The theory that this "equivocator" must refer to Father Garnet, superior of the order of Jesuits in England, who was tried and condemned for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and who admitted his adherence to the ancient practice of "equivocating" or quibbling upon words in answering his accusers, is by no means conclusive. Cairncross in *The Problem of Hamlet* (1936) repeats the findings of Knight and others that "The Jesuits and their doctrine of equivocation . . were familiar in London at least since the arrival of Campion and his friends in 1580; and were particularly associated with treason in the Babington Plot in 1586."

Therefore, Dr. Wilson's "very daring guesses" which bring the play's creation back to 1599—while a move in the right direction—cannot he maintained in the face of *Macbeth's* marked unsuitability as an olive branch to James of Scotland.

A bit of earlier documentation, much worthier of Wilson's attention, is the entry in the *Stationers' Register* (Arber Transcript) under date of 27 August, 1596 which shows that an effort had been made some time previous by a prominent member of the same band of literary pirates who were then issuing stolen and paraphrased versions of the genuine Shakespeare plays, to cash in on *Macbeth.* This entry states that *"Thomas Millyngton was . . . fined ii/s. vi/d. for printing a ballad contrarye to order, which he also presently paid. Md.—the ballad entituled the 'Taminge of a shrewe'; also one other ballad of 'Macdobeth'."*

On February 6th of the same year, Thomas Millington, with Edward White and John Danter, had managed to wangle a license to issue the anonymous First Quarto of *Titus Andronicus.* Again on March 12th, we find him associated with another enterprising play-pirate named Thomas Creede in putting forth the corrupt memory version of *2 Henry VI* under the title of *The First Part of the Contention, &c.* By 1600 he had also secured control of the *True Tragedy* steal of *3 Henry VI* which had been published by other "injurious imposters" in 1594-5. Altogether, Thomas Millington ranks well to the fore among the school of sharks who specialized in making off with any scraps of the real Shakespearean product which could be converted to their nefarious needs.

No copy of Millington's ballad versions of the *Taminge of a Shrew* or "*Macdobeth*" has survived. and the conclusion must be that all of the copies printed "contrarye to order" were destroyed by the Stationers' Court. But in 1600 the famous Shakespearean dancer-comedian, William Kemp, makes a significant reference to the latter ballad. This occurs in *Kemps Nine Daies Wonder*, an account of his overland dance from London to Norwich, wherein he warns "the impudent generation of Ballad-makers . . not to fill the country with lyes of his neuer done actes." One of these quill-driving parasites he describes as "a penny Poet whose first making was the miserable stolne story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Macsomewhat."

These references indicate Shakespeare's play as the basis of the 1596 suppressed Millington ballad, or "miserable stolne story," for no other Elizabethan work is known by a title which comes anywhere near matching "*Macdobeth*" as closely as this does the great Scottish tragedy. The variation in orthography from the Bard's title is, in fact, not so marked as that which Stewart allows himself in the *Croniclis*, where he sometimes calls the Thane of Cawdor "Makobey." Also, it is entirely in character for Kemp, the veteran Shakespearean clown, to compare the dangers he himself faces in entering the field of authorship with those which the great playwright-patron of his acting company has experienced at the hands of literary thieves. In the opening paragraph of his warning to these rascals in the *Nine Daies Wonder*, Kemp addresses the plagiarists under the generic term of "Shakerags."

Exactly when *Macbeth* was written will, in the opinion of this reviewer, never be known, unless some unquestionable first-hand documentation comes to light in the future. But all basic circumstances and records now available being duly considered, we are justified in assigning the composition of the tragedy to the period of Queen Elizabeth's harshest dealings with Scotland—climaxed by the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots in February, 1587. The 1578-88 decade would seem most logical.

But from about 1590 onward to the end of Elizabeth's reign, her political policy was against stirring up the antagonism of her northern neighbors by publicizing the homicidal governmental anarchy previously rife there, which is the theme of *Macbeth*, and which the play's stage presentation or publication would have continued to emphasize. To avoid just such contingences, a strict censorship was maintained upon both the theatre and the printing-press. We have excellent evidence of the latter in the Stationers' Court action against the piratical Millington, and the suppression of his "disorderly" ballad of "*Macdobeth*."

Finally, the general circumstances and contemporary records whereby the early composition of the Shakespeare murder classic is so realistically indicated, also show the playwright Earl of Oxford to be the most credible author of *Macbeth*. Should Dr. Wilson be inclined to scoff at this conclusion, we respectfully refer him to the evidence which proves Oxford's literary nickname of the Shakespearean era to have been "Gentle Master William"[6] —and to much other ammunition of equally revotionary caliber in the Oxfordian arsenal.

6. *Quarterly*, Vol. V. No. 4 (October, 1944) $1, postpaid.

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