was throughout his adult life a distinguished member of the chief law-committee of Parliament.

However, although his anonymity had now been made official and complete, and though he undoubtedly chafed and stormed considerably before yielding, Lord Oxford was at last relieved of the pressure of financial worry. Now he need no longer remind the uneasy and scandalized Burghley, "I serve Her Majesty," for his work with his "lewd friends" had been sanctioned by Her Majesty herself. A heightened vitality, a lustier spirit, a renewed confidence, and a magnificent control of his medium appear in the plays to which he turned his attention in a rebound from the passionate subjectivity of *Hamlet*.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THERE

The Famous Victories of King Henry the Fifth bears the unmistakable stamp of the young Earl of Oxford. While its author is inexperienced, he is nevertheless skillful, and he imbues his play with life, as well as manifesting a thorough knowledge of court and official behavior, to say nothing of the ways of young gentlemen revellers. The play, in the form, not much longer than an "interlude," in which it survives, is spirited and readable. Obviously it is the matrix from which *1* and *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* were derived; equally obviously it was written by the same hand that they were.

Someone has observed that in only three out of all his historical dramas has Oxford "interwoven history and comedy in roughly alternating scenes" and that *The Famous Victories* covers the identical period of these three: the two parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*.

Another point of interest is that the Eleventh Earl of Oxford figures prominently in *The Famous Victories,* more so than in either Hall's or Holinshed's Chronicles, but he does not appear in the three later plays. And this may indicate, since the Earls of Oxford took so conspicuous a part in *3 Henry VI* and in *Richard III,* that the terms of the grant had stipulated stringent anonymity.

We have spoken of Oxford's early use of the Gad's Hill episode exactly as it had happened, in outward circumstance, even in the

matter of the date. He has dramatized himself as a young man in the person of Prince Hal throughout *Henry IV;* though he obviously returned to Part 2 in the year 1603, after the death of Queen Elizabeth, to express his feelings about certain events and premonitions of his own death in the person of the King. But of that in good time.

No attempt can be made here to go fully into these three great dramas, although they abound in significance personal to the Earl of Oxford, but certain internal evidence which dates them and shows their ineluctable derivation will be briefly noted. For instance, *1 Henry IV* is a dramatization, within the framework of its own historical period, of the Throgmorton plot.[1]

It has been demonstrated that in all his plays Lord Oxford was writing about his own times, about the Queen, and the personages at court. This was the fashion of the day. Spenser asserted that his fairyland was actually England, that *The Faerie Queene* stood for his own age and time. Dowden says that Queen Elizabeth "liked being called Gloriana, Belphoebe, and Britomart, and gave him fifty pounds a year." (He did not say that she had also liked being called Bel-Imperia, as Oxford called her, in *The Spanish Tragedy,* before Spenser ever began to write, and that Elizabeth had given *him* a thousand pounds a year.) Spenser's poem seems far less like contemporary history than Oxford's plays do, but the author stated clearly that it was.

The analogy of *1 Henry IV* with the Throgmorton plot is unusually clear-cut. Henry IV himself was a usurper; but so the Catholics felt Elizabeth was, believing Mary Stuart to be the rightful sovereign. Thus King Henry is Queen Elizabeth. The Prince stands for the youthful Earl of Oxford, who, as Hamlet, was also a Prince. Hotspur is historically Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, with whom Oxford had contended in the magnificent tournament of 1581 and again in 1584. In the play, Hotspur is killed by the Prince in battle: in real life, Philip Howard, after attempting to escape from England, was intercepted on a ship in the Channel, brought back, and imprisoned in the Tower, where he died in 1595. Oxford had defeated the young Earl of Arundel in the tournaments, and, although he had respect and admiration for him as a man and a knight—just as Prince Hal has for Hotspur—he was partially responsible for Philip Howard's imprisonment as a traitor. As Prince Hal vanquished Hotspur, leader of the conspiracy, in the interests of the King, his father, so Lord Oxford exposed the traitors of his time and helped to defeat them in the service of his Queen. He also wrote this play in her service, and in it he paid tribute to Philip Howard, a gallant antagonist who was his kinsman and friend. Oxford well understood the Catholic

[1] For the political parallels we follow Mrs. E.T.C.'s *Hidd. All.,* regarding the events of 1583–84; for the rest, we express our own findings.

point of view, but his loyalty was all for his sovereign, to whom he had sworn allegiance. The Elizabethan audience, ever alert for allegory and symbolism, would not have missed the implications, were not of course intended to.

The Catholic Howards had been inveterate conspirators against the Protestant monarchs, even before the question of Elizabeth's so-called illegitimate birth gave point to their aims. Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk, and his son Henry, Earl of Surrey, were both sent to the Tower by Henry VIII and subsequently executed; so also was the Fourth Duke of Norfolk executed by Elizabeth. One of his last requests was that she be kind to his "unfortunate brats," and this may have explained her leniency toward Philip, his son, as well as toward Henry Howard, his brother. It could justly be said of the Howards that

> . . . treason is but trusted like the fox,
> Who, ne'er so tame, so cherish'd, and lock'd up,
> Will have a wild trick of his ancestors. (*1.H IV:* V.2.9-11.)

In the play, Worcester represents Henry Howard, the arch conspirator of the 1580's, uncle of Philip, Earl of Arundel. Hotspur addresses Worcester several times as "uncle" (I.3.256;303 and III.1.5.) Northumberland is King Philip of Spain; Mortimer, the Duke of Guise; Glendower, Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador to the English court.

Although Guise had been assured of King Philip's aid for the 1583 conspiracy, both he and the King of Spain failed their English confederates when the time came, just as Northumberland and Glendower failed Hotspur and Worcester in Henry IV's time.

> Ay, by my faith, that bears a frosty sound,

says Worcester (IV.1.128) when news comes that the expected aid is not at hand.

The rebel Douglas in Henry IV's reign was matched by an Archibald Douglas who passed on to Walsingham all of Mary Stuart's secrets.

It should be stated here that the Hotspur of Henry IV's reign was a contemporary of the King, not of the Prince, but Oxford took liberties with history, in order to make the dashing rebel a prototype of the youthful Earl of Arundel. Had Philip Howard succeeded in escaping to the Continent, he would have been as dangerous an enemy to Elizabeth as Hotspur would have been to Henry, had he lived.

King Henry is simply a counterpart of Queen Elizabeth when he says (I.3.1-2):

> My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
> Unapt to stir at these indignities.

Lord Oxford had no intention of allowing her to forget her foolhardy policy of *laisser-faire*. He took this occasion to say to her, in the person of Prince Hal (III.2.130-1):

> And God forgive them that have so much sway'd
> Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me!

Mrs. Clark, in judging Falstaff to be a caricature of Sir Nicholas Dawtrey, seems to us correct only so far as externals go. G. H. Phillips makes the interesting point that, when the dramatist disclaims Falstaff's identity with Oldcastle, in the Epilogue of 2 *Henry IV*, he does not assert, as an author would nowadays do, that he is a fictitious character: he merely states that Falstaff "is not Oldcastle; for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man." [2] Our belief is that Oxford used the outward features of the massive Dawtrey as a blind; and we agree with Mr. Phillips that this is one of the most brilliant caricatures in all the plays, although we regard Falstaff as a far more complex composite than he does.

The realization first came to us when we noted that certain contemporary writers played upon the "apple-john" comparison applied to Falstaff; and this led us to the discovery that an *apple-john* has much in common with a *medlar:* the one being defined as "best when withered," the other as "a fruit like a small brown apple eaten when decayed."

Now, in 1 *Henry IV*, Falstaff says:

> I am withered like an old apple-john. (III.3.4.)

[2] Among the plays included in the *Shakespeare Apocrypha* is one called *The first part of the true and honorable historie of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle, the good Lord Cobham.* This play has a Prologue which bears a patent relationship to the Epilogue of 2 *H. IV*. It reads as follows:

> The doubtful title (Gentlemen) prefixt
> Upon the argument we have in hand,
> May breed suspense and wrongfully disturbe
> The peaceful quiet of your settled thoughts.
> To stop which scruple, let this briefe suffice:
> It is *no pamper'd glutton* we present,
> *Nor aged Counsellor to youthful sinne,*
> But one whose vertue shone above the rest,
> A valiant martyr and a vertuous peere;
> In whose true faith and loyalty exprest
> Unto his soveraigne, and his countries weale,
> We striue to pay that tribute of our Loue,
> Your favours merite. Let your fair truth be grac'te,
> Since *forg'd inuention former time defac'te.*

There are certain parallels between this pleasant, though not inspired, play with *Henry IV* and *Henry V*. For one thing, *Sir John,* the Parson of Wrotham has a concubine named *Doll;* and for another, Lord Cobham's man, Harpoole, makes the Sumner (process-server) eat his summons, as Flewellen makes Pistol eat his leek. It may be that this play was written by one of Oxford's men, capitalizing upon popular characters, and was supervised, with a phrase added here and there, by the Earl himself, in the manner of Touchstone, in *Eastward Hoe.*

And in 2 *Henry IV,* the Second Drawer in the Boar's Head Tavern remarks, apropos of Falstaff's reputed dislike of apple-johns:

> The prince once set a dish of apple-johns before him, and told him there were five more Sir Johns; and putting off his hat, said, "I will now take my leave of these six dry, round, old withered knights." (II.4.4-8.)

An *apple-john* is no more like a *medlar* than this description is like Burghley, who is of course a congenital *meddler:* witness Pandarus's "I'll not *meddle* nor make," etc. Moreover, Antonio has said of Shylock (*M. of V.:* I.3.97-9):

> An evil soul, producing holy witness,
> Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
> *A goodly apple rotten at the heart.*

For the rest, suffice it to say at this time that Falstaff, considered apart from his enormous bulk—an expedient disguise, psychologically if not physically apt, however—has attributes which readers who have followed our study to this point will recognize. He is the man whose alien qualities of shrewdness, greed, and craft, the mind of the dramatist could never digest but must turn over and over again in a kind of hypnotized absorption. He is a man of no principles but of infinite resource, a man who could not resist a good capon or a cup of sack and consequently suffered from gout, one who hid behind the arras and kept memoranda in his pockets, the grandson of an alderman, presumably, since he wore his grandfather's seal-ring of office (II.4.336 and III.3.106), a seeming friend who yet, as soon as he suspected the Prince (or Oxford) of having "a thousand pounds," claimed he owed it to him. This passage (III.3) may have been added after the secret service grant of the thousand pounds, or it may be that the sum had already been privately announced by 1585. It is striking that the exact amount is mentioned both here and in *Hamlet.* There are further analogies which those readers who share with the Elizabethans a fantastic type of mind may discover for themselves; others will already have had enough.

As Dawtrey furnished the outward semblance of Falstaff, so also three men who served with him in Ireland in putting down Desmond's rebellion stand in a general way for Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym—of *The Merry Wives,* as well as of the *Henry* plays. These men were Barkley, Pistor, and Mynne. But they too are composites, for in essence they were, as we have elsewhere said, Marlowe, Peele ("Peesel," as the Hostess calls Pistol), and Kyd. Only the characters are kept flexible, unindividualized, for it is Pistol who invariably speaks in the bombastic periods of Marlowe. (Marlowe is thought to have spent much of his time in London while registered at Cambridge, and it is supposed that he did espionage work for Burghley.) These

plays were written in the mid-1580's, soon after the Desmond rebellion had been crushed. "Know we not Galloway nags?" says Pistol (*2 H.IV:* II.4.194.) Captain Dawtrey had remained in Ireland to put down skirmishes which continued to break out after the defeat of the rebels in 1583.

While on this subject, we may add that the prototype of Shallow—again for external seeming—was evidently Sir Henry Wallop, who, a member of the English Parliament, held the offices of Vice Treasurer and Treasurer at Wars for Ireland, and was also Justice of the Peace in his county of Hampshire. (S.H., for Sir Henry, and Wallop spelled with the W in place of the p, makes Shallow.) Wallop was interested in agriculture. But Shallow is an elaborate composite belonging to two levels of time, as well as of significance.

As for Lord Oxford's identification of himself—or an idealization of himself—with Prince Hal we are left in no doubt. There must have been more to the original Gad's Hill episode of 1573 than has been recorded. Since it was Oxford's men intercepting the Lord Treasurer's they may have been after something other than money, or it may have been merely a lark. In the play, Prince Hal restores the booty. In the actual event, Oxford interceded for his men, but Burghley punished them.

The robbery scene furnishes the customary identity-clues (II.2.88-9; 95-8):

> *Travellers.* O! we are undone, both we and ours for *ever.*
> *Prince.* The thieves have bound the *true* men. Now could thou and I rob the thieves and go merrily to London, it would be argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for *ever.*

As it was indeed—was, is, and shall be.

In these chronicle plays we meet "the wolfish earls" of whom Whitman says the dramatist himself was surely one. He was; their blood was in his veins: it was from them he had that "certain recklessness" and impulse to revenge which characterized the sensitive and intellectual Hamlet.

The Throgmorton plot is referred to as "the book" in Mortimer's speech (*H. V.* III.1.223-4):

> With all my heart I'll sit and hear her sing:
> By that time will *our book,* I think, be *drawn.*

Glendower replies:

> Do so;
> And those *musicians* that shall play to you
> Hang in the air *a thousand leagues from hence,*
> And straight they shall be here.

The King of Spain had a fleet at Cadiz which, according to the plan, was to make a detour of Ireland to Lancashire, for the sake of safety, landing early in 1584. Such a roundabout journey accounted for the hyperbolical "thousand leagues." Another part of the plan was an attack on Sussex by Guise synchronously with a rising of the Catholics in the North.

Shrewsbury, where the rival camps are pitched (IV and V) is a town on the River Severn in Shropshire. But the Shrewsbury around which focused the 1583–84 plot was the castle of the Earl of Shrewsbury at Tutbury in Derbyshire, where Mary Stuart was held in custody. After the Throgmorton conspiracy, she was removed from the lenient custody of Shrewsbury to that of the austere Puritan, Sir Amyas Paulet.

It is obvious that Francis, the "drawer," who runs hither and yon at everyone's bidding, crying, "Anon, anon, sir," is young Francis Throgmorton, who was executed at Tyburn on July 10, 1584. "By that time will our book . . . be drawn." The drafts of the plans for the invasion of England had been found in his house.

Throughout the play we are reminded of Prince Hal's identity with Oxford. He had been called "the madcap Earl" at court, and this appellation is used for the Prince, who says (I.2.142):

> Well then, once in my days I'll be a *madcap.*

Later Hotspur inquires (IV.1.94-5):

> Where is his son,
> The *nimble-footed madcap* Prince of Wales,—

referring here also to the young Lord Oxford's proficiency in dancing. It is the Earl speaking to his Queen when the Prince confesses his misdeeds to his father:

> *Prince.* So please your majesty, I would I could
> Quit all offences with as clear excuse
> As well as I am doubtless I can purge
> Myself of many I am *charg'd* withal. (III.2.18-21.)

This is a reference to the outrageous "charges" made against Oxford by Howard and Arundel in 1581.

The King accuses the Prince of having kept vulgar company (39-41):

> Had I so lavish of my presence been,
> So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
> So stale and cheap to vulgar company. . . .

It may be the Queen had chided Oxford for acting upon the public stage. And one is reminded of Sonnet 110:

Alas! 'tis true I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view.

But presently it will be explained why the Prince has made himself "so common hackney'd in the eyes of men." In 2 *Henry IV*, Warwick will defend him to his father thus (IV.4.67-71):

My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite:
The prince but *studies* his companions
Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,
'Tis needful that the most immodest word
Be look'd upon and learn'd.

And as King Henry V, he himself will say, when the Dauphin has made light of him by sending him a present of tennis-balls (*H.V.*:I.-2.266 *et seq.*):

And we understand him well,
How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,
Not measuring what use we made of them. . . .

This is of course Oxford, the writer, learning about people, about common speech, and life: Oxford the traveller, learning about the world.

Now the Prince says, in beautiful courtly language,

I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,
Be more myself. (III.2.92.)

And when the King wonders if he will not prove degenerate, he disclaims unworthiness in one of the most eloquent expressions of filial devotion ever penned, beginning (129):

Do not think so; you shall not find it so.

No wonder this wild but magnanimous spirit had so endeared himself to Queen Elizabeth—this poet with the fierce pride, implacable resentment, and warm heart. She knew genius when she saw it and could assess true nobility.

Possibly we have as vivid a description as we shall ever be given of the young Earl of Oxford—the man who was to be known to all the world as William Shakespeare—in the speech of King Henry to the Prince's favorite brother, Thomas of Clarence—who may well stand for Thomas Cecil. The King's words, "A hoop of gold to bind thy brothers in" (43) is reminiscent of Polonius's to Laertes (here Thomas Cecil), "Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel." We cannot forbear to quote it:

Thou hast a better place in his affection
Than all thy brothers: cherish it, my boy,
And noble offices thou mayst effect
Of mediation, after I am dead,

Between his greatness and thy other brethren;
Therefore omit him not; blunt not his love,
Nor lose the good advantage of his grace
By seeming cold or careless of his will;
For he is gracious, if he be observ'd:
He hath a tear for pity and a hand
Open as day for melting charity;
Yet, notwithstanding, being incens'd, he's flint;
As humourous as winter, and as sudden
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.
His temper therefore must be well observ'd:
Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,
When you perceive his blood inclin'd to mirth;
But, being moody, give him line and scope,
Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,
Confound themselves with working. (2 *H.IV:* IV.4.22-41.)[3]

He admits—the Prince admits—that, although

. . . I may speak it to my shame,
I have a truant been to chivalry. (*1.H.IV:* V.1.93-4);

but he compensates for his lapses by behaving in the finest tradition of knighthood when he allows Falstaff to take credit for killing Hotspur (V.4.157-9):

Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back:
For my part, if a lie may do thee grace,
I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.

And he does so once more when he turns over the Douglas to his brother (V.5.25-6):

Then, brother John of Lancaster, to you
This honourable bounty shall belong.

Although Hotspur has insisted (V.2.71) that never did he "hear of any prince so wild a libertine," Vernon has defended Harry by saying (51-2):

I never in my life
Did hear a challenge urged more modestly,

and adds (67-8),

England did never owe so sweet a hope,
So much misconstru'd in his wantonness.

Thus, while not letting himself off—confessing as he does to having been a libertine, as it will be remembered Jaques was accused of having been—still, he sorrows for the misjudgment he had received.

[3] We make no doubt that this speech, signally line 34, gave Jonson his prototype of Puntarvolo, "the humorous knight," in *E.M.O.* Puntarvolo even says (V.4): "I shall be *sudden*, I tell you": just as the word is used here.

He knew that he would continue to be misjudged. And he has been, for nearly four hundred years.

Prince Hal's horsemanship seems to have equalled that of the young Earl of Oxford. It is Vernon again who praises him here (IV.1.104-10):

> I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
> His cushes on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
> Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
> And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
> As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds,
> To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
> And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

There is an amusing touch in Hotspur's admonition to his wife to cease swearing in such mincing terms (III.1.256-7):

> Swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art,
> A good mouth-filling oath.

This quip would have pleased Elizabeth, who swore magnificently. Oxford was never unmindful of her; and that too she liked: it pleased her well.

He added a teasing note to the momentary identification when he had Kate say (II.3.87-90):

> Come, come, you paraquito, answer me
> Directly unto the question that I ask.
> In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
> An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

The Queen, an adept at neat epithets, often spoke thus. Moreover, she had only recently, according to Lady Shrewsbury's tale to Mary Stuart, broken "her cousin Shedmur's little finger";[4] and this would have been the talk of the court.

Interesting for its topical value is the King's phrase, "But like a comet I was wonder'd at" (III.2.47). Comets were seen in England in the years 1578, '80, and '85; and a reference to a contemporary phenomenon would have given the audience a dramatic sense of immediacy.

Although Oxford identifies himself throughout the play with Prince Hal, he takes occasion to express his own dominant compulsion in the words of Hotspur (I.3.127-8):

> . . . for I will ease my heart,
> Albeit I make a hazard of my head.

This is the course he himself followed from the beginning of his career to the end.

[4] See Appendix, Note 1: Scandal Letter.