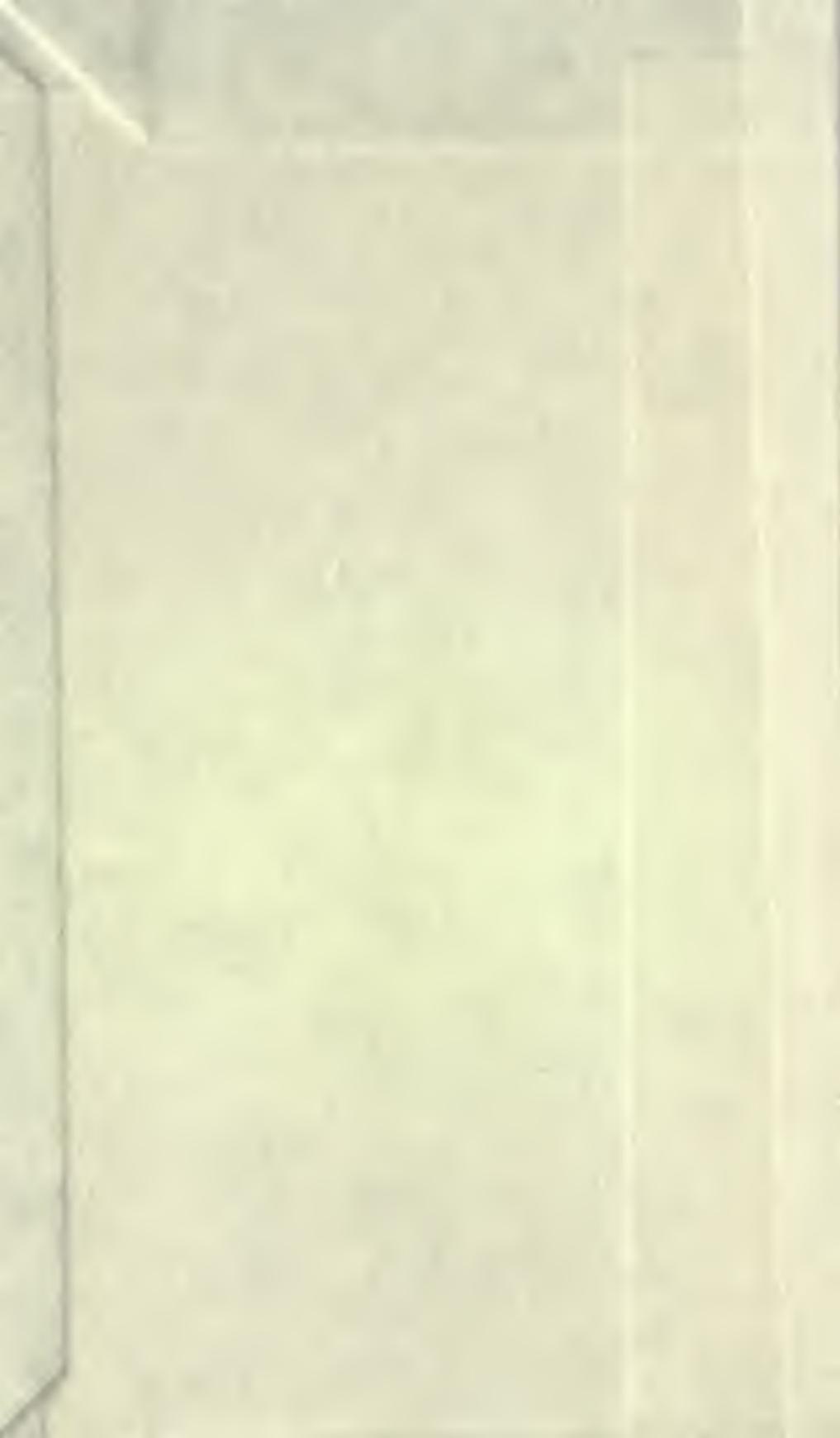
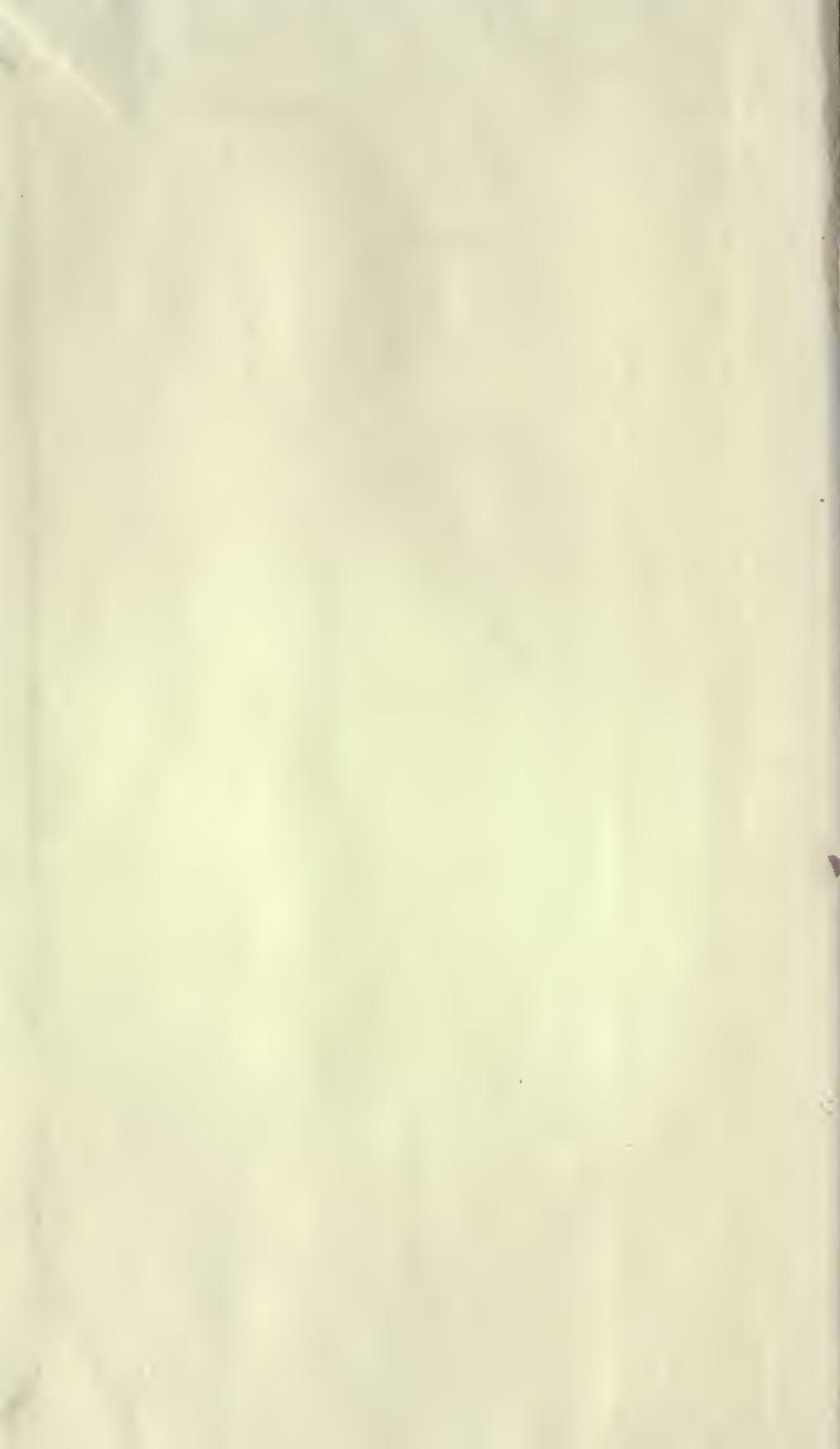


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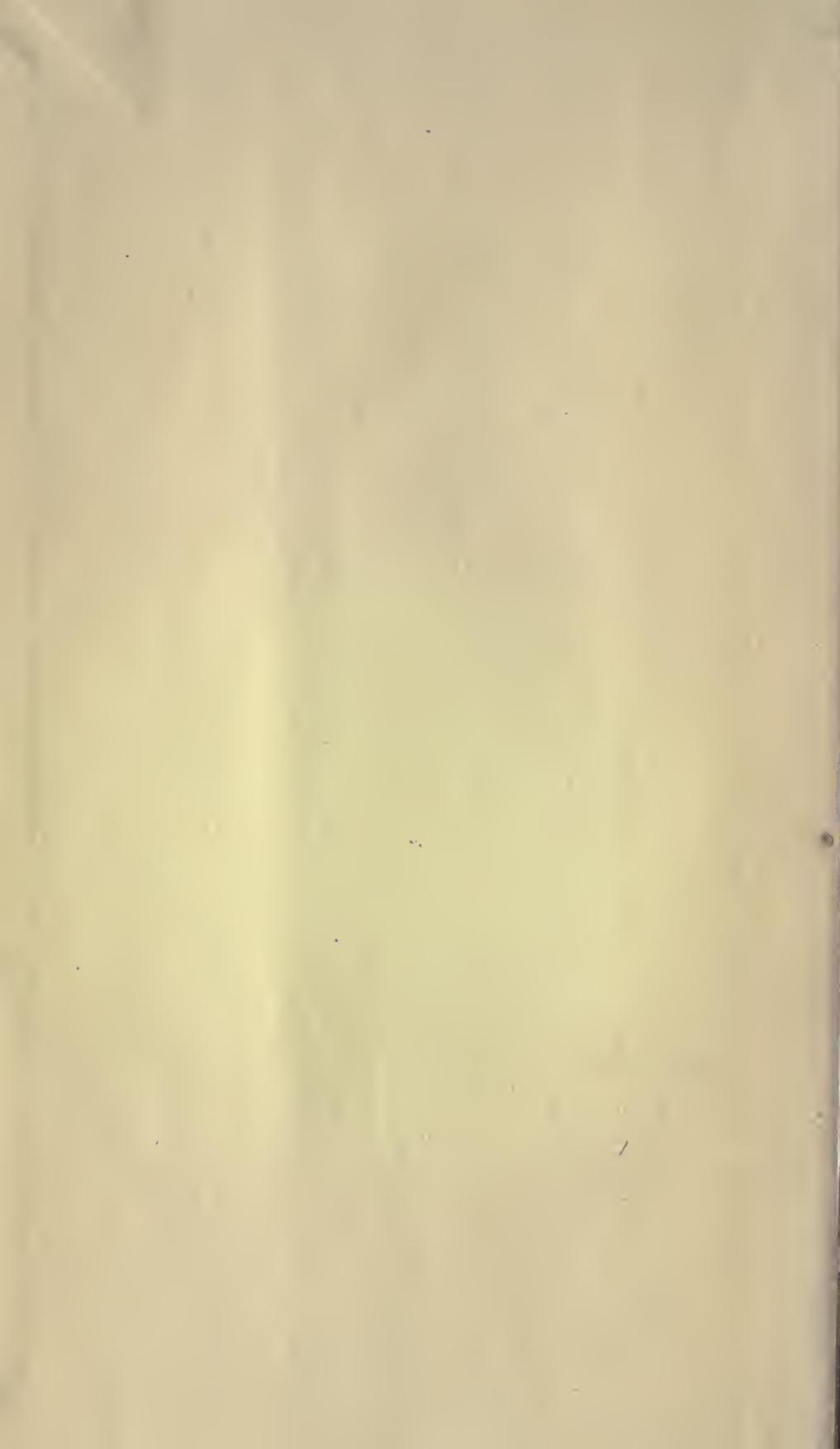
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THE
POEMS OF
EDWARD DE VERE



THE POEMS
OF
EDWARD DE VERE
SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD

(*Shakespeare Edition*)

With Biographical Notice, Introduction to the Poems
and Notes

BY

J. THOMAS LOONEY

Author of "Shakespeare Identified"

"I had rather than forty shillings I had my book of *Songs and Sonnets* here."
—*Merry Wives I. i.*

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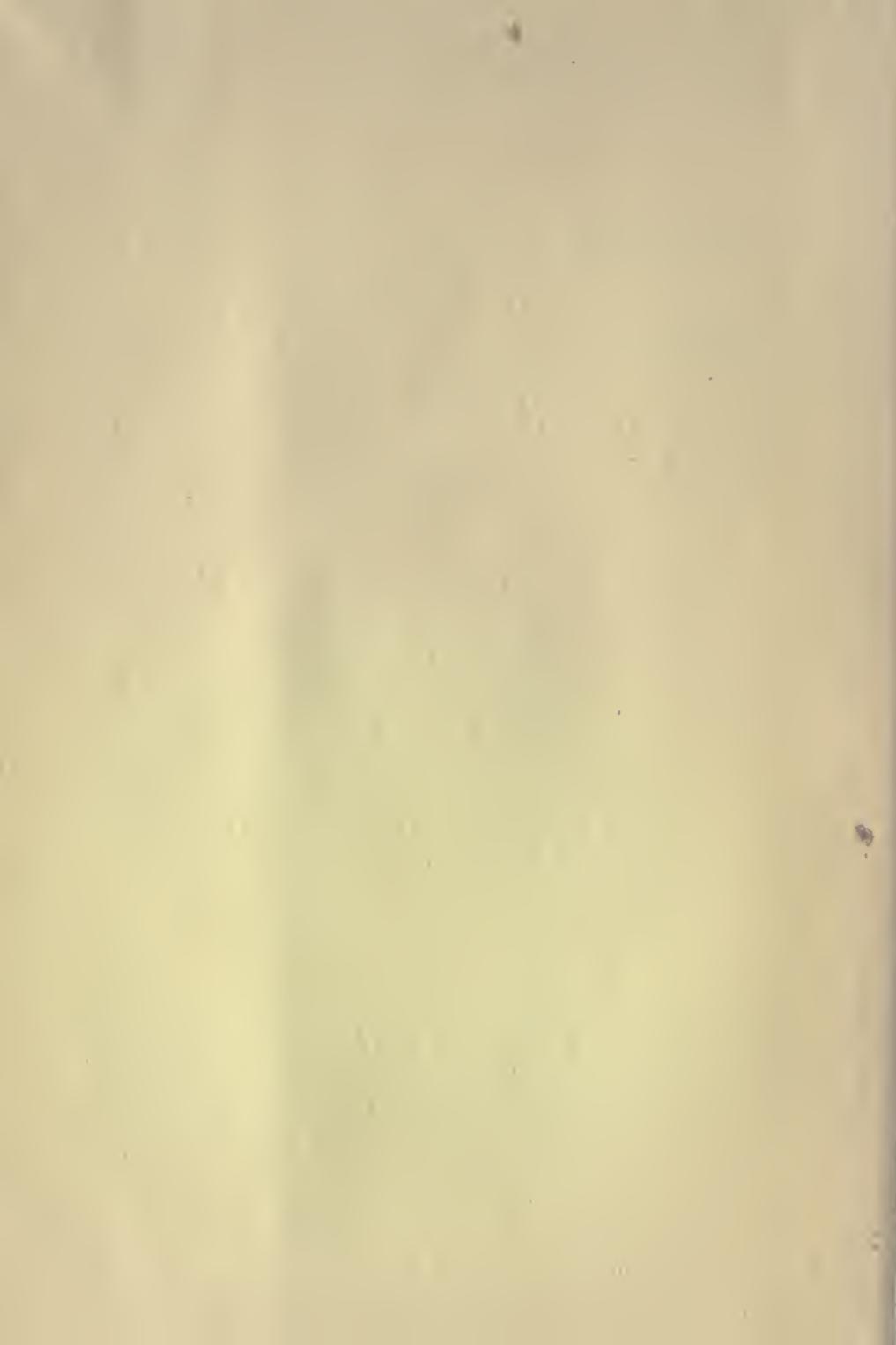
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Foreword

SEVERAL writers who have very strongly opposed the theory of Shakespearean authorship expounded in my work "Shakespeare Identified," have admitted ungrudgingly that a real service has been rendered to Elizabethan literature; that a personality and a career of absorbing interest have been investigated, and attention drawn to an admirable set of lyrics, such as * "Shakespeare" might have written, but which had been strangely overlooked. Quite apart then from the special claim made for Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, it is important that the public should be placed in possession of these poems: hence the present issue; my own contributions to which aim at suggesting rather than elaborating lines of enquiry.

* Note.—"Shakespeare" is here used as the pen-name of the poet. The Stratford man's name was Shakspere (Shaxper). The modified form is suggestive of Oxford's fame as a spearman. The hyphenated form "Shake-speare" appeared immediately (1594) and mysteriously in "*Willowbie his Avisa*." Oxford's sister Mary had married Lord Willoughby (Peregrine Bertie.)



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Poems of Edward de Vere, accepted as authentic by Dr. Alexander B. Grosart, and published in the *Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library*, Volume IV. (1872), along with a letter written by the poet.

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Earl of Oxford. These songs were not published
in Lyly’s own editions of the plays, but mysteri-

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ously re-appeared in an edition published in 1632 by the same firm which in that year published the Second Folio "Shakespeare." Their superiority to Lyly's other work first raised doubts respecting his authorship of them.

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Biographical Outline.

One of the chief lines of argument, by which we have sought to establish Edward de Vere's authorship of the Shakespeare plays, being biographical, it will be necessary before presenting an outline of its substance to indicate its basis and general character.

That "Shakespeare" made very free use of literary and historical material which lay ready to his hand has been abundantly proved by the researches of eminent scholars. It is, therefore, not only inconsistent, but almost absurdly contradictory, to suppose that he did not make a similar use of the human material immediately in front of him, and of the incidents and relationships of his own life. His literary method being to appropriate, adapt and transform what lay before him—so varying and illuminating by the force of own genius the industrious garnerings of inferior minds as quite to justify the title of "creations"—we should naturally expect him to have "created" his characters by the application of the same method to himself and to the men and women about him.

Just, then, as the erudite have interested themselves in endeavours to identify the original literary

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and historical sources of his work, so may we, once it has become possible, occupy ourselves with the more fascinating task of identifying his contemporary materials and the human models for his characters. The virtual impossibility of doing this in the past is very fair evidence that the real dramatist was someone vastly different from the supposed author; and the fact that the substitution of another writer throws a personality into the dramas which both adds to their vitality and interest, and renders possible the identification of prototypes, is important evidence in its favour.

What, then, is meant by an identification of this kind? We do not, for example, establish a literary identification upon a single word or an ordinary phrase; nor do we, on the other hand, demand an exact verbatim correspondence. Along with a fair proportion of differences we require a sufficient number of correspondences of an ordinary character, or one or two resemblances of an extraordinary type. This, too, is the simple common-sense method by which readers have always sought to identify fictitious characters with their originals. Photographic exactness is not to be looked for on the one hand, nor, on the other hand, can an identification be accepted on the strength of one or two insignificant or commonplace resemblances.

A reasonable identification cannot therefore be overthrown merely by pointing out differences.

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Nor would it be quite scrupulous to burlesque a well supported identification by representing it as resting solely on one or two of the minor points. This can easily be done; but the controversialist who does this kind of thing is consciously dishonest, for he must know that such identification can only be accurately judged when stated completely. Any-one, for example, who is acquainted with all the points which connect the Earl of Oxford with Hamlet, or with Bertram in "All's Well," will be able to detect the shallow debating trick of several controversialists, who have picked out a single point of correspondence in each case, and represented this as constituting the whole.

It is perfectly true, as more than one critic has urged, that any man's life could be *illustrated* from "Shakespeare's" work; but everything depends upon the nature and extent of the illustrations, as to whether or not they rise to the level of identifications. This can only be judged by weighing them in their entirety; and more than one critic, in an endeavour to do this, has admitted that "Shakespeare" must have been well acquainted with the Earl of Oxford, have been furnished by the Earl with biographical material for his plays, and made him his model for Hamlet. As no such connection has ever before been hinted, this is perhaps the most important concession that has as yet been made to the new theory, and holds within itself, we believe, the promise of its ultimate acceptance.

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A mere identification of a character in the dramas is not, however, the same thing as identifying the author himself. For example, it has recently been pointed out that Polonius has long been suspected of being a satire on Burleigh. This, of course, does not argue in favour of anything so absurd as Burleigh being the dramatist himself. There are, however, in most works of this kind, characters that are instinctively felt to be, and are generally admitted as being, outstanding examples of self-delineation. When, then, these are found to link themselves on, in an especial way, to some contemporary personage, they may become important instruments for identifying an unknown author. Hamlet again is an outstanding type. Whilst some critics are acknowledging that Oxford is probably Hamlet, others are just as freely admitting that Hamlet has long been suspected of being the author's work of special self-revelation. Let the two parties join forces and the new theory will have made notable progress. If, further, we have a number of prominent Shakespeare characters suggestive of self-dramatisation, like Romeo, Berowne and Othello, and these all correspond in distinctive ways with the Earl of Oxford, each one in itself involving unusual combinations, and, taken together, forming a mass of remotely possible coincidences, whilst to all this internal evidence of the plays, his biography furnishes an amount of external corroborative evidence, the whole may attain as

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nearly to absolute certainty as is possible in the practical affairs of life. Circumstantial evidence cannot accumulate for ever without at some point issuing in proof.

It is by working along lines of this kind, then, that we are able to use the material of Oxford's biography in order to establish his title to the authorship of the Shakespeare dramas. Everything depends upon the willingness of the reader to familiarise himself with all the particulars, and by a mental effort of his own, to bring them together, so as to judge of their total weight as evidence. This requires time and an open mind.

I.

In England the patronymic of the Earls of Oxford is almost synonymous with ancient lineage and pride of birth. The founder of the family was one, Aubrey de Vere, who came from Normandy with the Conqueror, and was rewarded for his support with extensive estates in the southern and eastern counties, the chief family seats for centuries being at Castle Hedingham and Earls Colne in Essex. A local historian has pointed out that, considering the extraordinary duration of the De Vere's, and the times through which they passed, their records are remarkably free from stain of dis-honour. It is not surprising, then, that contemporary addresses to Edward de Vere (like Spenser's sonnet) should emphasise his high birth, or that he should have been proud of his ancestry. This

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regard for high birth, it has been frequently pointed out, is one of Shakespeare's most pronounced traits, whilst an examination of the play "Henry VI." part 3, reveals an especial partiality to the Earls of Oxford themselves.

II.

Edward de Vere was born on April 2nd, 1550. Five very impressionable years of his childhood were therefore passed in the reign of Queen Mary, and during this time Roman Catholicism was the openly professed religion of his home. In pre-reformation days the Benedictine monks had been established in the immediate vicinity and were liberally supported by his family. Owing to the dissolution of the monasteries it is possible that, in Mary's reign, their religious needs may have been provided for by the friars. Oxford, at any rate, professed for a brief period, at a later time, to be reconciled to the old faith, and was registered at Rome as one favourable to the ancient church. "Shakespeare's" intimacy with Catholicism, and his partiality for the friars, have already provoked interested comment; whilst, on the general question, William Hepworth Dixon has the following striking remark :

" It was usual for a poet to select a patron of his own opinions. Spenser had chosen Grey, a protestant of protestants. Shakespeare, in

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that early time, had chosen Southampton, a catholic of catholics."

"Royal Windsor," iv., 33.

However unexpected these things might appear in William Shakspere, the Stratford actor, they were what one should naturally have looked for, in any writings from the pen of the Earl of Oxford.

His father, John de Vere, sixteenth Earl, was a man greatly respected in his county, a keen sportsman, an admirer and owner of valuable horses, which were marked out for particular mention in his will: matters which again link themselves on to outstanding Shakespearean interests.

In 1562 John de Vere died, and Edward succeeded to the family titles and estates. As a royal ward he passed into the charge of William Cecil, and was domiciled in Cecil's house in the Strand. During his early years he was a familiar figure about Elizabeth's court, and, besides accompanying her on her journeys, he would spend much of his time in the vicinity of the court at Greenwich and Windsor. It is not without significance, therefore, that the "Shakespeare" play which contains the fullest and most precise English topography is "The Merry Wives of Windsor": a play which certainly exhibits a much greater familiarity with Berkshire, Windsor and its environs, than any other shows respecting Warwickshire, Stratford and its neighbourhood. Indeed, we may say it is the only

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drama from the master pen in which precise local detail is made predominant: an intimacy embracing the Royal Park and its traditions, and extending even to the rooms of the Castle and the Royal Chapel. For all the particulars we would urge the reader to peruse the third and fourth volumes of the very entertaining book from which we have just quoted. The author is himself solidly Stratfordian in his views, but a reading of his work in conjunction with the drama will, we believe, establish in many minds a very strong conviction that the dramatist was one who was placed in respect to the Castle and its surroundings precisely as was Edward de Vere.

One or two illustrative sentences from this work will suffice:

“Once only was he (Shakespeare) fettered by a theme, a name, a site; and that was when he wrote his comedy of Sir John

That, in his studies for this picture, Shakespeare made his eye free of the King’s house and the royal chapel, needs no evidence beyond his play No less perfect were his sweep and glance through St. George’s choir No less happy were his notes on the Garter. . . . (He) made himself familiar with parts beyond. . . . Street and market place, inn yard and water-side, hedgerow and park-fence became to him as objects in his native town.”

(“Royal Windsor,” iii., 301-3).

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It is perhaps worth remarking, then, that the conventional hero of the play, Fenton, who, in a measure, stands apart from the other characters, is one who "dances, writes verses, kept company with the wild prince and Poins" (iii., 2), was "great of birth," (whose) "state was gall'd . . . with expense," and who speaks of "my riots past, my wild societies" (iii., 4). All this fits the Earl of Oxford exactly.

Minor details are the marriage of Fenton to Anne Page (Oxford married Anne Cecil); the projected marriage of Anne Page to Slender is suggestive of Anne Cecil's previous engagement to Sidney, and Slender's interests being pushed by his uncle Shallow is suggestive of Sidney's interests being similarly pushed by his uncle Dudley. Certainly the character of Justice Shallow is not inappropriate to Dudley, of whom Hepworth Dixon writes: "Wise word or witty never passed his lips. Cool counsel lay beyond him." The fact that he was Constable of Windsor, the identity of the christian name, Robert, and the proximity of Shallow's residence (Gloucestershire) to Kenilworth are all significant.

III.

After the death of Oxford's father his mother remarried, her second husband being Sir Charles (or Christopher) Tyrrel, a member of another prominent Essex family. His mother's brother, Arthur Golding, the translator of Ovid, became his private

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tutor and receiver of his property. During the years in which Arthur Golding acted in this capacity he was engaged also on his Ovid work and published editions of his translations. Tutor and pupil would, therefore, most certainly be working together upon the particular Latin poet that has left the deepest impression upon the work of Shakespeare. At the same time, "Shakespeare's" intimacy with Arthur Golding's translation is of such a nature as to have called for special remark from both of the leading modern biographers of Shakespeare—Sir Sidney Lee and Sir Walter Raleigh. Edward de Vere would therefore receive his first poetic impulse and training from the identical source from which it has been thought worth while to indicate that "Shakespeare" had received his.

Moreover, as only one royal ward occupies a foremost place in the great dramas—namely Bertram in "All's Well"—it has to be pointed out that the circumstances and incidents of his life present so amazing a parallel to the records of Oxford, even to the revolting crisis in the play, as to leave no room for doubt respecting a connection of some kind between the two. To represent the correspondence between them as consisting in the mere fact of both being royal wards, and that in consequence the argument would apply equally well to Southampton, is as shameless a travesty of the position as Stratfordians have ventured upon.

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During these early years Oxford showed a keen interest in literature, a superior taste in music, was well grounded in French and Latin, and learnt to dance, to ride, and to shoot. This is practically all we are told of his interests, every one of which is amply emphasised in the great Shakespearean dramas. Cecil had mapped out for him his course of studies, which would therefore embrace legal procedure; and as Arthur Golding was admitted to the Bar after Oxford came of age, it seems clear that the study of law had proceeded along with study of the classics. Oxford's letters of a later date show, moreover, an intimate acquaintance with a large range ("over one hundred examples" in one instance) of legal precedents. "Shakespeare's" knowledge of law has always been one of the chief weaknesses of the orthodox position and the main support of the Baconian. It is worth while remarking, therefore, that throughout his life Edward de Vere was involved in legal matters dealing with the tenure and disposal of lands, and that amongst the few outstanding particulars of his career is his participation in several important trials: that of Mary Queen of Scots in 1586, of Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, in 1589, and of the Earls of Essex and Southampton in 1601.

In April, 1571, he came of age, took his seat in the House of Lords, and afterwards distinguished himself at a tourney held in the Queen's presence. At this time, it would appear, arrangements for

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his marriage with Cecil's daughter Anne were in progress, Anne being then only fourteen years of age. In December Anne reached her fifteenth birthday, and the marriage immediately took place: all of which is strongly suggestive of Shakespeare's dictum that "men are April when they woo, December when they wed." ("As You Like It," iv., 1.)

Anne Cecil had been previously betrothed to Philip Sidney, and Oxford won his bride at the expense of the latter, who is represented not only by Slender in the "Merry Wives," but also by Paris in "Romeo and Juliet," and Demetrius in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Under a somewhat different aspect Sidney may even be traced in the character of Roderigo in "Othello."

In the following year (1572) there took place the imprisonment and execution of Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk; and Oxford's relationship to this matter has not only a biographical importance, but connects itself with literary matters. The Duke of Norfolk was a son of the poet Surrey, who had married Frances Vere, a sister of Oxford's father. Norfolk and Oxford were therefore full cousins, and his interest in his relative was such that, when he was unable to gain his liberation through personal influence, he made an unsuccessful attempt to liberate him by force.

The execution of Norfolk has been given out as the reason for Oxford's antagonism to Burleigh,

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and for the squandering of his patrimony as part of his scheme of revenge ; the refusal of matrimonial relationships with Burleigh's daughter being given as another part of the scheme. Whether or not this was actually the time and occasion of the refusal, the fact of the refusal appears in all the records and is indisputable. So far the parallel with Bertram in "All's Well" is hardly open to question. On the other hand, the time of it probably belongs to a later period (1576). In the matter of his Essex estates, too, we find that so early as February 1568, when he was but seventeen, he was already parting with these, and seems almost to have felt an aversion to them from the time of his father's death.

Although, therefore, Castle Hedingham and Earl's Colne are associated with his birth and childhood, he appears to have had as little as possible to do with them afterwards, and this would account for the very slight notice of Essex that appears in the Shakespeare dramas. Oxford's ardent attachment to Norfolk, the son of the poet Surrey, is, however, quite evident, and has its bearing upon these poetical matters which we have presently to consider.

IV.

In 1573 Oxford and his men were involved in some wild adventure on the road between Rochester

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and Gravesend. This is the precise spot where stands Gadshill, rendered famous for all time by the wild escapade of Prince Hal, Falstaff, and their crew. Other events of this time connect him with this road as far as Dover, where, on one occasion, he was accompanied by Burleigh's Son, Thomas. Here again we are in close touch with Shakespearean topography and local history : the neighbourhood, Cobham Park near Rochester, where Sir John Oldcastle, the original Falstaff, had been held in disrepute through the influence of the monks ; the scene of the traditional episode between William the Conqueror and the men of Kent, which furnished the Birnam wood idea in "Macbeth" ; and the cliff in "Lear," supposed to be what is now called "Shakespeare's Cliff," near Dover.

Briefly, it is with Berkshire and Kent, in addition to London, that we find him most actively associated, and these are the English places most distinctly in evidence in the Shakespeare dramas.

Having repeatedly failed to obtain permission to serve either in the army or the navy, or to go abroad, in 1574 he ran away to the continent, but was overtaken and brought back. This unauthorised travel has again its parallel in "All's Well." In the following year (the year in which Philip Sidney, though several years Oxford's junior, completed a lengthy and interesting continental tour) Oxford, as a result of entreaties, got permission to

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travel, and made his way to Italy. Again, not only the particular cities he visited, but even the few names of the Italians associated with his visit, are represented in the Shakespeare plays: Baptista Minola, a gentleman of Padua, whose "crowns" enter into the plot of "The Taming of the Shrew," being suggestive of Baptista Nigrone, from whom Oxford had borrowed "five hundred crowns." Oxford, we notice, wrote home from Padua itself.

From Italy he travelled back as far as Paris, and was contemplating an extended tour, when he was re-called to England by Burleigh. At the same time, an important servant, his receiver, had insinuated suspicions of some kind into his mind respecting Lady Oxford, suspicions which seem to have been quite groundless. There was, in consequence, a domestic rupture. The number and peculiar combination of points and personalities which bring this episode into line with the play of "Othello," some of the details of which could only be known to the principals, and which we learn now from private memoranda only published in recent years, show an intimacy on the part of the dramatist with the private life of Oxford which it is almost impossible to attribute to any outsider.

It is to this period (1576) that belongs an evident crisis in his life, associated with what would be to him an intensely bitter loss, the loss of his good name. If we are to believe the records, and especially if we may interpret them by his own poems,

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he would appear to have been the victim of a temptation and a trick, devised by his wife's father, with his wife herself as an accomplice, and was overwhelmed with shame and mortification in consequence. It is here that the records, true or false, are brought into line with the revolting crisis in "All's Well," and leave hardly any room for doubt respecting Oxford's identity with Bertram. It would be quite in accordance with the defiant realism of some of the early Shakespeare quartos, and the self-depreciation of the Sonnets and "Hamlet," that the dramatist should so represent himself.

V.

From this time forward his chief interests seem to have been centred in literature and drama. He made a name as a poet, circulating many of his poems probably in manuscript only (apparently a common practice in those days), but publishing nothing new. He had his company of play-actors, "Oxford's Boys," who were presenting dramas of his composing ; but he published none, and these plays are all supposed to have perished. Modern research has, however, furnished important clues connecting them with the Shakespeare work.

At different times he had in his service two of the lesser Elizabethan dramatists, Anthony Munday and John Lyly, the author of "Euphues," both of whom have left plays written by them for Oxford's company, whilst in Oxford's employ. In both cases

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there are traces of the intervention of a superior pen ; and again in both cases this superior work links itself on directly with the work of "Shakespeare."

The lyrics of Oxford, we are told, "are good lyrics," and such as "Shakespeare (whoever he was) might have written." In Anthony Munday's plays there are passages which we are told Munday "could not have written," containing phrases which "might have rested in the mind of Shakespeare" ; and in Lyly's dramas especially, there is work far above, and indeed differing fundamentally from his former work ; and this is so predominantly Shakespearean, that the highest authorities on the work of both Lyly and Shakespeare recognise a closer connection between these two than between "Shakespeare" and any other.

We shall have to refer later to Oxford's probable contributions to Lyly's plays, but may now give an illustration of the connection between his probable contribution to Anthony Munday's work and the Shakespeare dramas, taken again from the "Merry Wives of Windsor" :

Song in Munday's play of "Two Italian Gentlemen."

"Lo ! here the common fault of love to follow
her that flies,
And fly from her that makes pursuit with loud
lamenting cries."

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Merry Wives of Windsor (II., 2.)

“Love like a shadow flies when substance love
pursues ;
Pursuing that that flies, and flying what
pursues.”

VI.

Having spent his early manhood in dramatic activities, the record of the last sixteen years of his life, from 1588 to 1604, is almost a blank. He had retired from the court and was spending part of his time in apartments in London. Lady Oxford had died in 1588, just about the time of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, in which Oxford himself had taken part ; and in 1591 or 1592 Oxford married again, his second wife being Elizabeth Trentham, one of the Queen's maids of honour.

In 1590, Henry Wriothesley—to whom Shakespeare afterwards dedicated his great poems, and to whom the first of Shakespeare's sonnets are supposed to have been addressed urging him to marry—was being actually urged into a marriage with Oxford's daughter Elizabeth ; whilst the writer of these sonnets speaks of himself as one “by Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'er worn.” William Shakspere was only twenty-six years old at the time ; Oxford was forty.

In 1592 Oxford's heir was born and named Henry, and in the following year Shakespeare pub-

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lished his first great poem, which he called “the first heir of (his) invention,” and dedicated it to Henry Wriothesley, to whom he refers as godfather to this “first heir.” It would be more than interesting if it should turn out that Wriothesley was actually godfather to Oxford’s heir.

As “Venus” was published in 1593 and “Lucrece” in the following year, and as, moreover, the latter work is evidently the production of an older man than the former, it is clear that there was more than a year between the actual composition of the two poems. It has been assumed, therefore, that when the rustic William Shakspere came to London from Stratford he brought the former poem with him. Yet this work, which must have been composed some years before its publication, when therefore William Shakspere was a very young man, is written in as polished and courtly a style of English as the latest line from the same pen. It is recognised that there was development in Shakespeare’s dramatic conceptions, in his literary style and in his intellectual outlook; but no one has ever ventured to suggest that his English underwent a gradual development from the provincial to the courtly. In this he began as he finished: in itself, and quite unsupported by any other evidence, a clear proof that the Stratford actor was not the poet.

The period of Oxford’s retirement includes the chief period of Shakespearean publication during

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the lifetime of William Shakspere. This publication began in 1597, and stopped suddenly at the time of Oxford's death in 1604. During this period Oxford is only once seen in association with dramatic affairs. In 1602, the year in which publishers pirated an actors' draft of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," the play in which Falstaff reappears, the Earl of Oxford's servants were assisting in the production of some unknown play at the Boar's Head Tavern, Eastcheap, the identical inn that has been made "famous for all time by Falstaff and his crew."

In 1601 there took place in London the ill-fated insurrection headed by the Earl of Essex; and Southampton, to whom "Shakespeare" had dedicated great poems, and, it is supposed, addressed many of his sonnets, was implicated and brought to trial along with the leader. It was then that Oxford emerged from his retirement to take part in the trial.

In 1603 Oxford participated as Great Chamberlain at the coronation. In the Domestic State Papers (James I. 1603-10, p. 24) reference is made to Oxford's application "to dress the King on the morning of the Coronation; also to serve with basin and ewer at dinner." The latter claim was allowed. Mention is also made of the application of the "Barons of the Cinque Ports to *carry the canopy*." It is not stated whether this claim was allowed or not.

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According to the generally accepted dating of the sonnets, it was precisely at this time that "Shakespeare" wrote sonnet 125.

"Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring.

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

• • Take thou my oblation poor but free."

In "Shakespeare Identified," not having then noticed the reference in the State Papers to the bearing of the canopy, I suggested that if this sonnet could be shown to have anything to do with Oxford's functions as Great Chamberlain it would be a valuable proof of my theory. It has now been pointed out that Dean Beeching connects this passage with the coronation of James I. So that the search for "Shakespeare" is definitely narrowed down to the few people who officiated near the person of James I. at his coronation: and Oxford was one of these. As it is almost inconceivable that any other of that select group could fulfil the poetical conditions for composing the sonnet, to say nothing of meeting the dramatic and other conditions of the situation, this single poem alone brings us as near to a positive proof of the theory as anything short of a mathematical demonstration could do. The line, "take thou my oblation poor but free," is certainly suggestive of the part

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assigned to Oxford. Whether or not he was actually one of those who bore the canopy we have not yet been able to find out. The objection has been raised that this work would be relegated to men of humbler station ; we note, however, that it was the *Barons* of the Cinque Ports who made application for the position, and if they were refused it would hardly be in favour of less exalted personages.

In 1604 Edward de Vere died, the publication of "Shakespeare's" plays stopped, the series of sonnets which "Shakespeare" had been penning during many preceding years came to a sudden and complete close ; and some authorities say William Shakspere, the actor, retired to Stratford-on-Avon. Oxford was buried in the old parish church at Hackney.

VII.

In 1608-9 there was a slight revival of Shakespearean publication, each case showing that the author of the dramas, whoever he may have been, had no hand in the issue. The sonnets were published at the same time, the whole manner of the publication suggesting that the poet himself was dead, and that his manuscripts had passed into other hands. In 1616 William Shakspere died, and seven years later the famous First Folio Shakes-

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peare was published, a separate edition of "Othello" having been published in the preceding year. The 1623 publication was marked by several mysterious features :

1. No representative of the Stratford man's family appeared at all in connection with the work, which was, however, dedicated to Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, who had married Oxford's daughter Susan, and to his brother William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who had at one time been engaged to another of Oxford's daughters, Bridget, and had been spoken of highly by Oxford himself.
2. A pretension was made that the works had been gathered together by two actors, Heming and Condell, who signed certain of the prefatory pieces. Their claims are now recognised as false, making it clear that there was subterfuge in the publication, and to these false pretensions Ben Jonson was a party, thus destroying the value of his testimony on the question of authorship. Under these circumstances there is something humorous in the serious way in which Jonson's "camouflage" has been put forward in support of the traditional authorship.

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3. There was published in the volume the extraordinary print known as the Drosshout engraving, representing a totally different type of man from the bust set up at Stratford, as it appears in Dugdale's Warwickshire (1656) or in Rowe's Life of Shakespeare (1709). Notwithstanding the wretched character of the drawing it has characteristic resemblances to the early portrait of the Earl of Oxford; whilst in the Halliwell-Phillipps collection, now in the possession of Marsden J. Perry, Esq., Providence, Rhode Island, there is a first proof of the engraving showing that before being printed for the book the plate had been much altered, each alteration being a disfigurement, and of such a character that the original work must have had a still greater resemblance to Oxford than the First Folio engraving.

One naturally asks, why, if everything was perfectly straightforward, there should have been any disfigurement at all.

In presenting this brief outline of the life of Edward de Vere in its relationship to the Shakespeare problem, we have merely indicated matters that have been dealt with more fully elsewhere, whilst giving special emphasis to the new material. The

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sketch is therefore in a measure supplementary to that in "Shakespeare Identified." We are convinced that once the readers of "Shakespeare" have the career and personality of the Earl of Oxford in their minds, they will find our great masterpieces pulsating with a new and living interest. For actual verification of the theory, "the play's the thing."

Note.—A long standing enigma of "Shakespeare's" plays has been the anomalous character of those commonly assigned to the period immediately following Oxford's death. On this point Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has recently made a remarkable statement. "The longer we consider," he says, "these later plays, that fall to be dated between the great tragedies and *The Tempest*, the more we are forced to feel that *something had happened*. (my italics)... the sublime confusion of dates and places...the laxities of construction...the *tours de force* mixed up with other men's botch work...confused, in *The Winter's Tale*, with serious scamping of artistry." (*Shakespeare's Workmanship* p. 296.) Sir Walter Raleigh's view that others were "completing his unfinished work," I have used elsewhere.

Puttenham's Arte of Poesie (1589)

(Abridged extract: Arber's reprint, pp. 4 and 75.)

“In these days poets as well as poesie are become subjects to scorn and derision. Whoso is studious in the art, and shows himself excellent in it, they call him phantastical and light-headed (the identical terms in which, as critics have pointed out, Oxford was referred to by contemporaries.) Now of such among the Nobility or Gentry as be very well seen in the making of poesie, it is come to pass that they are loath to be known of their skill. So, many that have written commendably have suppressed it, or suffered it to be published without their names. And in her Majesty's time that now is are sprung up another crew of courtly makers (poets), Noblemen and Gentlemen, who have written excellently well, as it would appear *if their doings could be found out and made public* with the rest, of which number is first that noble gentleman Edward Earle of Oxford.” (Mr. Edwin Bjorkman first drew attention to this passage in the American “Bookman.”—August, 1920).

Introduction to the Poems

I.

The discovery of the most trifling detail respecting the man hitherto credited with the authorship of the "Shakespeare" plays has always been made the occasion for a literary flutter, notwithstanding the outstanding fact that no such discovery has ever brought him into closer relationship with literature, but has rather tended to bring into clearer light the gulf which separates the personal records of him from everything that has made his name famous. No musty mortgage deeds, property conveyances, dubious signatures, or malt and money dealings, not even the discovery of a new portrait can, however, have for those who really care for what is great in "Shakespeare," the same power of appeal, as the reading for the first time of new poems from his pen, particularly if these verses should happen to be the early preparatory efforts which have been so noticeably lacking from the "Shakespeare" poetry.

That the lengthy poem, "Venus and Adonis," with its highly polished workmanship, was really his first effort, is quite incredible; and if Edward de Vere is to be acclaimed as "Shakespeare," the poems we are now presenting will show to the

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world, for the first time, the greatest English poet in the making. We shall have to show presently that the greater part of what we here offer belongs to his early life, the "Shakespeare" work belonging to his maturity. A difference both in conception and poetic skill, corresponding to the difference in age, is therefore naturally to be looked for—emphasised possibly by the fact that, in the interval, English poetry and drama had undergone the most profound change that it has ever experienced in an equally short period, a change, therefore, which we may expect to find reflected in his work. For the writings of no man, not even of the greatest genius, are altogether independent of the literary movements of his time.

Until the claims we are advancing on behalf of Edward de Vere have received recognition, the chief interest in his poetry, or in any fact concerning him, must centre in its bearing upon this claim. Whatever the intrinsic value of these lyrics may be—and they have been pronounced by competent modern authorities, Sir Sidney Lee, Professor Courthope and Dr. Grosart, to be of a high order, and have been described in terms specially appropriate to Shakespeare—our immediate interest in them must be their value as evidence. What is the precise measure of the support they lend to the new Shakespeare theory? Is it strong, and almost convincing in itself; or does it merely suggest the possibility

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of his being the author of the "Shakespeare" dramas?

If the former, and if this is further supported by other and quite distinct lines of evidence, the whole may become so overwhelmingly convincing as to leave no room for dispute. Even if it has no more than the latter value, this will be by no means negligible, seeing that the work of the vast majority of the Elizabethan poets is of such a quality as to preclude entirely any such supposition. No one, for example, could imagine Philip Sidney, Edward Dyer, Fulke Greville or Walter Raleigh ever rising to the level of the best Shakespeare poetry. In dealing with the authorship of such exceptional work, to find a man living at the same time, of whom it might be said that his early work contained even a bare possibility of his rising in his maturity to the demands of the other, would constitute, by itself, a fair presumption in his favour, which, supplemented by other evidence, might become a practical certainty.

These are matters upon which each individual reader must judge for himself, and out of such judgments will arise ultimately, we believe, a social verdict in favour of the Earl of Oxford. What is wanted immediately is an intimate knowledge of this poetry, such as will facilitate a careful comparison with the "Shakespeare" mentality and workmanship. To memorise these verses and familiarise himself with the particulars of Oxford's

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life, and then to read the early and middle Shakespeare dramas, will, we believe, not only assist the reader in forming such a judgment, but will make for a more exact discrimination between the true and the spurious "Shakespeare" work.

Although it is here that the chief interest in these poems lies, the lover of English poetry, even if indifferent to the question of Shakespearean authorship, will find quite sufficient in this collection to justify its separate publication, and probably also to make him wonder why, with so many writers claiming to be specialists in Elizabethan literature, these verses, written for the most part on the very threshold of that great period, have been so generally overlooked. The serious student of literature, however, as he comes to realise their historic position, may be disposed to ask whether they do not carry him to the fountain head of English song; and, if so, what can be made of the expert scholarship which has failed to perceive the fact.

Song, of course, is of all time; but every authority would, we believe, agree that the Elizabethan period was the time of the great outburst of our national song literature; and Edward de Vere's work stands at the beginning of that period, the time of the early courtier poets, and before the movement had passed into the wider social area in which it gained the vigour and reality of the later Elizabethan poetry and drama. Of these early courtier poets he was one of the first; he was recog-

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nised as "the best"; he is the only one whose work foreshadowed the spirit of the later work; the only one of whom it could possibly be said that he wrote poetry which "Shakespeare" might have written; and he, too, was the only one whose life passed from the circle of the royal court to become immersed in that larger Bohemian society, in which the poetic and dramatic developments of Elizabeth's later years were elaborated. Personally, then, he represents the source of the movement, and a vital connecting link between its two periods. Under any conception of Shakespearean authorship, and under any unified theory of Elizabethan literature, his position is central and commanding, and the failure to perceive this means that the sixteenth century poetry has not yet been fully understood.

As far back as 1573 we find him renting tenements in the Savoy, then, evidently, a home and centre of literary men; and in 1576, the year in which he returned from his Italian tour, he published several of his poems in a collection called "A Paradise of Dainty Devices." As most of these refer to the special events of that year, and as several of his other poems belong clearly to a period prior to the crisis of that time, and have been recovered from ancient manuscripts, it is evident that these were circulating in manuscript before he went abroad; that is to say before Spenser, Sidney, Greville and Raleigh, all of whom were some years younger than Oxford, had assumed the role of poets. The

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“Paradise of Dainty Devices” was the first of a numerous series of collections of poetry in which Elizabethan verse has been preserved, and may indeed be said to have given the start to the practice of publishing such volumes. Oxford’s participation in this work is therefore important, and in view of the fact that contemporary authorities adjudged him “the best of the courtier poets of the early days of Queen Elizabeth,” a judgment ratified by modern authorities, it is no extravagant claim to make for him that he was the original and driving force of early Elizabethan song.

II.

We have now to carry the reader still further back, in order to deal with influences and agencies preparatory to the Elizabethan work, which have vital connections with our subject. In the last year of the preceding reign (1557) there was published a forerunner of the Elizabethan series of miscellaneous poems, namely: “Songs and Sonettes written by the ryght honorable Lorde Henry Haward, late Earle of Surrey and other, Apud Richardum Tottel, 1557.” Surrey had been executed ten years before this, so that the songs and sonnets had evidently been preserved in manuscript by his friends. The first point to fix is that for nearly twenty years (1557-1576) this work was the only one of its kind in the hands of readers and students

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of poetry ; whilst from 1576 onward there were very many others, all naturally tending to overshadow it.

It was, therefore, the work which would tend to be frequently in evidence at the particular time when Oxford, as a royal ward, and as a young courtier, was spending much of his time at Windsor ; and the influence of Surrey's poetry in the early work of Oxford is unmistakable. Again, he had himself a very close personal interest in the Earl of Surrey, who had married Frances de Vere, his father's sister, and was therefore his uncle by marriage. Evidence of this interest is to be seen in his relationship to Surrey's son, Thomas Howard, fourth of the Howard Dukes of Norfolk. When in 1572 the latter was imprisoned in the Tower, awaiting execution, Oxford used the whole of his influence to secure his release. When this proved unavailing he made an unsuccessful attempt to rescue him by force ; and after Norfolk's execution he is said to have devised a scheme of revenge on Burleigh, involving the dissipation of his own estates. Family connections, poetic interests, and the power of romantic appeal in the character and career of the poet Surrey, mark him as a dominant influence in the spirit of Oxford.

Now the life record of the Earl of Surrey belongs in a very peculiar sense to the history of Windsor Castle, and is told with much charm in William Hepworth Dixon's work on " Royal Windsor "

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(Vol. III.) The story of the protecting friendship extended by Surrey towards the Duke of Richmond, illegitimate son of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth Blount, and the romantic courtship and marriage of the two noblemen to Frances de Vere and Surrey's sister Mary, throw a beautiful ray of chaste light through the sombre and sensual annals of the court of Henry VIII. It was at Windsor where the four young people associated and where much of Surrey's poetry was written. Speaking of the poet's birth Hepworth Dixon sums it up thus : "He was . . . that Henry of Surrey, who was to spend so many of his days at Windsor, to become a great poet, to have his arms set up in St. George's choir, to suffer harsh imprisonment in the Norman tower, and found at Windsor Castle a national School of Song."

When, therefore, in 1562 Edward de Vere, as a royal ward, was brought to court, it was to a Windsor, "Each tower, each gate, each garden (of which) spoke . . . of Surrey," whilst the volume in the hands of all readers of poetry was Surrey's Book of Songs and Sonnets.

Now let the reader turn to the "Merry Wives of Windsor."

At the very beginning he is met by Surrey's book. "I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets here." (I., I.)

The play, then, which furnishes the most precise Shakespearean topography gives us the environment not of William Shakspere's early poetic life, but of

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Edward de Vere's, and the poetry to which direct reference is made is not that of William Shakspere's period, but of the period of the Earl of Oxford. We may therefore confidently assume that Oxford had roamed over this ground and walked through the rooms and galleries of the Castle with the identical volume in his hand.

Again, these early Windsor poets had begun the work of versifying the Psalms. Wyat and Surrey initiated the practice, and, later, we find it continued by Sidney and his sister Mary whilst at Wilton. To this we find a mocking allusion : (II., I.) . . . "the Hundredth Psalm to the tune 'Green Sleeves.' "

Even the direct reference to this song emphasises the period of the play, for the song "Lady Green Sleeves" was itself published in another collection in 1584 ("Handful of Pleasant Delights.") The probability is that it would be current some years before, but even 1584 is quite close to Oxford's court period, if not within it ; and is many years in advance of the Shakspere period.

It is interesting, too, that the particular "Shakspere" play which furnishes such important lyrical links with Oxford's life and poetic interests, contains also very vital connections with what we are entitled to regard as Oxford's lyrical contributions to Munday's and Lyly's plays. The Munday connection we have already given in the Biographi-

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cal Outline (p. xxix.) The Llyl connection is with the song of the Fairies :

“ Pinch him, fairies mutually ;

Pinch him for his villainy.

Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.”

(“ *Merry Wives*, ” V. 5.)

In Llyl’s “ *Endymion* ” an almost identical Fairies’ song had appeared.

“ Pinch him, pinch him black and blue

Saucy mortals must not view

What the Queen of Stars is doing,

Nor pry into our fairy wooing.

Pinch him blue

And pinch him black,

Let him not lack

Sharp nails to pinch him blue and red

Till sleep has rock’d his addle head.”

The context too is practically the same, so that an intimate connection is indisputable, and many will agree at once that both are from the same pen.

Although written near to the same early period (1585), this song was not published until 1632, sixteen years after William Shakspere’s death, twenty-six after Llyl’s and twenty-eight after Oxford’s, a clear evidence of the existence of some extraordinary secret concerning which not the slightest detail has leaked out.

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Between the 1557 book of Songs and Sonnets, associated specially with Oxford's uncle, Surrey, and the 1576 collection, the "Paradise of Dainty Devices," which we associate specially with Oxford himself, there is a connecting link in the person of Lord Vaux, whose poems appear in both volumes. Lord Vaux had died in 1562—the year of the death of Oxford's father. His contribution to the 1576 collection was, therefore, like Surrey's contribution to the 1557 collection, the posthumous publication of verses previously circulating in manuscript. Lord Vaux' influence on Oxford's work is also traceable; he has not the sweetness of Surrey, but at the same time he possesses distinctive notes which contributed to the formation of Oxford's style. It is therefore of special interest that a song by Lord Vaux should have been incorporated with adaptation into Shakespeare's masterpiece, "Hamlet." This is the gravedigger's song, and its insertion in such a place, forty years after the death of the poet, is not only an act of honour to his memory, but links on the great Shakespearean drama to a period of Oxford's life very far removed from the time usually associated with the writing of the play. "Hamlet," too, is a drama of court life, and being written by an Englishman who has shown himself intimate with Windsor, we may assume that Elsinore is but Windsor thinly disguised (the alert may even detect the suggestion of an anagram). The introduction

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of this particular song at any rate connects this play also with the Windsor of Oxford's early days. The age of Hamlet himself, it has been pointed out, varies at different parts of the drama ; which marks it both as the product of very many years, and also as a special work of self-revelation on the part of the dramatist.

Whatever may be said for the theory of Shakespearean authorship we advocate, it is clear that "Windsor was the cradle of the school of (English) song" (Royal Windsor, III., 116) ; that the Earl of Surrey, in Henry VIII.'s reign, there gave to our national lyric its first strong impulse ; that his nephew, the Earl of Oxford, was its dominating force in the early part of Elizabeth's reign ; and that when it culminated in the work of "Shakespeare," it was with a very clear recognition of its intimate connection with the home of our English monarchs. From this point of view, Windsor may be regarded as the centre and source of England's greatest achievement in the domain of man's mind, the foundation on which rests the nation's most enduring title to an exalted position amongst the peoples of the world ; and the symbol of it all is the one play from the pen of the great dramatist which bears in its title an English place name. The circumstances, therefore, which bring Fenton, the nominal hero of the drama, into accordance with Edward de Vere cannot therefore be deemed unimportant. (See p. xxi.)

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Important as is the connection of Oxford's work with that of Surrey and Vaux, the impulse which he derived from them in no way lessens the distinctiveness of his position in Elizabethan song, a position which carries with it special honours in respect to our song literature as a whole.

III.

There are facts connected with the writing and publication of early Elizabethan poetry concerning which it is well that the general reader should be informed. The usual practice with these writers of verse—who were invariably of the upper classes—seems to have been to pass copies of their separate poems, in manuscript, to their friends. These, it would appear, were freely transcribed and sometimes preserved. In this way those who were interested in poetry would be able to gather together appreciable collections of miscellaneous verse, quite independently of printed publication.

From collections of this kind much poetry was published after the death of the poets : in Surrey's case ten years, and, in Vaux' case fourteen years after. Some of these sheets were signed by their authors ; others would doubtless be allowed to go forth without signatures, whilst the omission by transcribers of the names of the authors would very frequently occur. The erroneous ascription of verses to authors when the work was subsequently published is, in consequence, quite a marked feature of this literature.

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From time to time either on the initiative of some of the poets themselves, who seem to have had a strong reluctance to be seen in the work of publication, or as the result of enterprise on the part of some publisher, collections of these verses found their way into print. Speaking from general indications, we should be inclined to say that the earliest of these collections were published at the instigation of some of the authors of the poems, and that publishers' ventures and surreptitious issues followed somewhat later. The "Paradise of Dainty Devices," for example, which was published hot-foot upon the incidents in Oxford's life to which his contributions make distinct reference, and which contained a number of poems from another poet whom he had evidently studied, but who had been dead for fourteen years, would seem from these considerations to have been published at his suggestion. It was in the identical year, too (1576), that he not only caused to be published Bedingfield's translation of Cardanus's "Comfort," but also contributed to it a prefatory letter and an introductory poem. (*See Poems pp. 14-20.*)

The title given to the 1576 collection (A Paradise of Dainty Devices) is indicative of Oxford's faculty for striking new notes. The earlier collection had appeared under the plain title of the "Book of Songs and Sonnets." The "Paradise of Dainty Devices" was published, and then there followed a series of collections : the "Gorgeous Gallery of

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Gallant Inventions" (1578), the "Handful of Pleasant Delights" (1584), the "Garland of Good Will," the "Bower of Delights" (1597), Anthony Munday's "Banquet of Dainty Conceits," the "Phœnix Nest," "England's Parnassus," "England's Helicon," and Davison's "Poetical Rhapsody." Apart from its historic interest much of this work would make no appeal to the modern reader, and therefore it is not surprising that re-prints of many of the collections are not available.

Such, then, are the conditions under which much of the Elizabethan poetry was produced and published. One curious result probably of the loose-leaf transcriptions has been the ascription to Oxford's antagonist, Sidney, of poems written by Oxford himself. In 1591, between four and five years after Sidney's death, there was published an edition of the Astrophel and Stella Sonnets, and in this collection were included certain verses that Oxford had written: work, doubtless, which had been attributed to Sidney for no other reason than that it had been found amongst his papers after his death. This work Oxford reclaimed for himself by having it included above his own signature in "England's Parnassus" (1600).

In the same year there appeared "England's Helicon," which ultimately will probably be found to contain matter of the utmost importance in relation to the "Shakespeare" problem. There is in it but one poem attributed to the Earl of Ox-

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ford, namely, that beginning “What cunning can express ?” and but one set of lines attributed to “Shakespeare,” and quoted from “Love’s Labour’s Lost.” This poem of Oxford’s had appeared in “The Phœnix Nest,” in 1593, and, on being reprinted in “England’s Helicon,” the opening line was modified in order to bring it into keeping with the character of the anthology, namely to “What *Shepherd* can express ?” This change, and some verbal improvements, indicate that Oxford was in touch with the publisher, Nicholas Ling, who afterwards published “Hamlet.”

The work contains, moreover, one very striking feature, quite unlike anything else with which we have met in Elizabethan poetry. In the book as it originally came from the press there are poems attributed to men who, like Sidney, had been Oxford’s rivals and antagonists, notably Sir Walter Raleigh ; work which, in some cases, is not only superior to their other poems, but is conceived in a totally different vein. Then, before the volumes had been put upon the market, a printed slip, containing the one word “*Ignoto*,” had been pasted over the original name or initials : presumably the result of intervention on the part of someone who was interested in seeing that these writers were not allowed to be decked in another’s plumes. Then in 1614, that is to say ten years after the death of the Earl of Oxford, and within two years of the death of his widow, a second edition of

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“England’s Helicon” appeared, with several additional poems subscribed “*Ignoto*.”

A first reading of these “*Ignoto*” poems will probably convince most people that there is about them a distinctiveness which marks the work as a whole (allowing for some exceptions) as the production mainly of one writer, the name “*Ignoto*” indicating not merely anonymity, but rather one definite concealed personality. We had, therefore, reserved for later examination the question of whether these poems might not represent a connecting link between the early De Vere poetry and the later Shakespearean work, when we discovered that we had, indirectly and by inference, been fore-stalled by Mr. R. Warwick Bond, M.A., the biographer of Lyly, and the editor of Lyly’s work. In this way: Mr. Bond, who in this matter is amply supported by Sir Sidney Lee, establishes very clearly the connection between “Shakespeare” and what he conceives to be Lyly’s special contribution to Elizabethan drama and poetry; and he concludes his work by suggesting that certain “*Ignoto*” poems were probably from Lyly’s pen. We may repeat therefore that Lyly was a servant of the Earl of Oxford, and is credited with achievements, both in drama and poetry, which we believe to have been those of his master, and it is this which links itself up with the Shakespeare work. In so far then as we may have been able to make good

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our contribution on this point, we may claim the indirect authority of Mr. Bond for the theory we now present tentatively, respecting the " *Ignoto* " poems. Certainly the probable appearance of Oxford's hand in " *England's Helicon*," together with his relationship to the personalities for whose names " *Ignoto* " has been substituted, furnishes quite appreciable support to the theory.

There remains one other significant detail in " *England's Helicon* " relevant to our problem. The verses in Spenser's " *Tears of the Muses* " referring to " *our pleasant Willie*," which have received much attention as one of the mysteries of Elizabethan literature, we were led to connect with Oxford, by means of an earlier poem of Spenser's in the " *Shepherd's Calendar*." This is a versifying competition between two shepherds called " *Willie and Perigot*," the opening sentences of which, and an interposition by a third party: " *What a judge Cuddy were for a King*," furnishing important clues identifying Oxford with " *Willie*." Now this " *roundelay* " is reproduced in " *England's Helicon* " (after Spenser's death) stripped of all these marks of identification. Even the name " *Willie*," which Spenser placed first, is struck out, and what was given by the poet himself as Willie's and Perigot's roundelay, is there given as Perigot's and Cuddy's roundelay. There could be no accident about this.

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IV.

Whatever the ultimate verdict on these points may be, they, at any rate, serve to illustrate the surprising feature of Oxford's literary career, namely, that after his first literary output he deliberately adopted a course of self-effacement. What had already gone forth as his could not be recalled, but, so far as later productions were concerned, he was resolved not to obtrude himself on the public notice. And, although he was quite willing to employ a mask of his own choice, he was not willing that rivals and antagonists should walk away with his laurels if he could prevent it. Certainly around the person of the Earl of Oxford there hangs an extraordinary literary mystery, as great as that which has surrounded the production of the great Shakespeare dramas, and from every point of view, chronological, poetic and dramatic, these two mysteries fit into and explain one another, if we suppose Oxford to have been the great poet dramatist, and William Shakspere but a mask. It is the extraordinary character of each of these mysteries, along with the infinitesimal probability that two such mysteries, so mutually explanatory, could exist at the same time by purely accidental coincidence, that establishes our theory with almost mathematical certainty.

Although the authorship of the "Ignoto" poems must remain for some time an open question, we

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have included a selection of them in the present issue: Section III. Poems which might reasonably be supposed to have come from one pen, or have a bearing on our problem, and also have an interest for the general reader of poetry, are what have been included. For the critical students of the poetry as a whole these verses are already accessible in a modern setting in the late A. H. Bullen's edition of "England's Helicon," and are discussed in Mr. Bond's edition of Lylly's works.

Every lyric included in both groups of the first section has been accepted as Oxford's work, and appears in the collection brought together in 1872 by Dr. Grosart for the "Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library" (Vol. IV.) Only 106 copies were printed for private circulation, and, so far as we are aware, no reprint of the collection has since been published. The present is not, however, a simple reprint. Dr. Grosart's work retains the archaic and irregular spelling of the originals, whilst several of the poems are printed with the separate lines and stanzas running into one another. It has therefore been necessary to modernise the spelling, to make some attempt at correct versification, and, in some cases, to supply titles.

There are moreover variant readings of most of the lyrics, all of which are indicated in the notes which Dr. Grosart appended to the separate poems. In almost every case we have kept to the rendering which he selected for the main text. The

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principal exception to this is the opening line of the poem, "What cunning can express?" The substitution of the word "shepherd" for "cunning" in "England's Helicon" is so obviously a modification made to meet the new setting of the work, and introduces an element so out of harmony with the purely personal character of the entire lyric, that we have preferred to revert to the earlier text of the "Phœnix Nest" version.

One other important change we have introduced. With the exception of placing together, in the opening pages, most of the poems that had appeared in the "Paradise of Dainty Devices," Dr. Grosart made no pretence of grouping or arranging these lyrics. To attempt this with any hope of success required a closer and more prolonged study of the personality and career of the author than was possible to one occupied with the immense literary undertaking that the learned and indefatigable editor had in hand.

The dates of the publication of the poems furnish hardly any clue to the actual order of their composition. It has already been pointed out, for example, that certain verses of Oxford's, which were not published with any indication of authorization until the year 1600, had already appeared in a collection of Sidney's poems so early as 1591. Moreover, as this error is most reasonably explained by supposing that copies had been found amongst Sidney's papers after his death, which

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had occurred in 1586, whilst it is impossible to surmise how long they had lain there previously, it is evident that the date of publication is widely separated from the actual time of writing.

This fact must be borne clearly in mind in studying the problem of Shakespearean authorship ; to produce, and to secrete his productions, is one of the most pronounced features of Edward de Vere's methods. Indeed, small as is the number of his lyrics which have been preserved, we owe some of them to their having been rescued almost by accident in modern times from ancient manuscripts. Writings preserved in this way may be expected to retain blemishes which would have been removed had their author actually published them. Indeed they contained many errors which could not possibly have been the work of the poet himself ; but are self-evidently due to defective transcription by others. Several obvious mistakes of this kind were corrected by Dr. Grosart, but it has not always been possible to surmise what the original version has been, and therefore crudities have been allowed to stand, for which the poet cannot be held responsible. This will illustrate the folly of cavilling at isolated expressions ; his work must be judged by what are self-evidently finished productions and by general quality, especially when comparing them with the later "Shakespeare" work. For the order of their composition we are, at any rate, thrown back very largely upon

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internal evidence, and, fresh from the work of following the career of Oxford with what there is of available detail, we have attempted a rough grouping of these lyrics. This can only be considered as a first step, and although considerable modification may be called for later, we trust that a start has been made in the right direction.

With the exception of the points just indicated the poems presented in the first section are substantially a reproduction of Dr. Grosart's issue, and we have appended a few important details selected from his notes. The sources from which Dr. Grosart gathered the poems were the various anthologies, the Rawlinson and Tanner M.S.S., and an ancient M.S. miscellany.

V.

It will be well to point out at this stage some very striking facts in connection with these publications: facts which have a distinctly significant bearing upon the theory of Shakespearean authorship which we have propounded. There are in all only twenty-two short poems attributed to the Earl of Oxford. Three of these are merely single stanzas, each of six lines, in the precise manner of Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis"; and two of these Oxford would seem to have acknowledged only because they had been previously claimed for Sidney, and published as his. Of the remainder no less than seven were published in the "Para-

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dise of Dainty Devices" and one in Bedingfield's "Cardanus." That is to say, eight of the longest poems were published authoritatively in the year 1576, the year of his domestic crisis, and when he was but twenty-six years of age ; and although he lived for nearly thirty years longer (died 1604) and was a prominent figure in the literary and dramatic life of his times, only three other of his poems were originally published during his lifetime, or until recent years, with his name attached. Even these three were published separately, at intervals of thirteen, four, and seven years respectively, in what were probably publishers' ventures, which suggest that Oxford himself was not responsible for their appearing. No less than seven of the remainder were printed, some for the first time by Dr. Grosart in 1872, from the Rawlinson and Tanner M.S.s., and two from "an ancient M.S. miscellany." Generally, we may say, he published his poems *voluntarily* in 1576, but probably never again.

Even as a poet, then, he deliberately effaced himself, so far as publication was concerned, from the age of twenty-six ; notwithstanding that throughout his life and in the period immediately following his death his poetic eminence was recognised. This is hardly the place to discuss the publication of his plays, but it is important to connect with the fact just stated, the further fact, that he attained eminence as a writer

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of drama, but never published a single play; whilst not the slightest vestige of manuscript of his unpublished dramas has ever been unearthed. In view of the survival, after so many years, of fragments of his unpublished manuscript verse, is it reasonable to suppose that the total disappearance of the much more voluminous manuscript dramas is purely accident: that these writings were simply "lost or worn out"? And, in view of the evident deliberateness of the non-publication of superb poems, is it not reasonable to suppose that the non-publication of dramas under his own name was equally deliberate?

The division of the first section of poems into two groups, and the assigning of the first group to the years prior to 1576, may require some justification. What has governed the arrangement has been chiefly the nature of their contents. Contrasted with the disappointment and chagrin expressed in the 1576 set, along with the explicit reference to youth in the Echo Poem, and the tone of unsullied youth in the sonnet "Love thy Choice," the happier, healthier spirit of the latter poems seems amply to justify the position here assigned to them. The other poems reflecting a similar spirit are accordingly associated with these two. Moreover, as the manuscripts of these poems are signed by Oxford, it is reasonable to suppose that they were allowed to go forth before he had resolved on self-effacement, a resolution which

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many things indicate was made shortly after the 1576 crisis.

Adopting this general classification the one fact which stands out above everything else is this : that practically the whole of the poetry known as Oxford's belongs to his very early manhood, much of it being preserved in spite of him ; and whilst he lived to the age of fifty-four, and was closely identified with the literary and dramatic movements of his time, there has been up to the present nothing to show for it, notwithstanding the remarkable character of his powers.

With reference to the lyrics which form the second section, these are selections taken from Lyly's plays. At the time when Lyly produced the dramas he was working as secretary to the Earl of Oxford, assisting with the troupe known as "Oxford's Boys." Lyly has shown himself, in some of his work, to have been noticeably deficient in lyrical capacity, and as these lyrics are in some ways the best things his plays contain, doubts have been freely expressed respecting Lyly's authorship of them. It is not an unreasonable assumption therefore that they were a contribution made by Oxford to Lyly's dramas. This is further supported by the fact that when Lyly published his dramas he did not include the lyrics—their positions alone were indicated in the text. This continued until 1632. Then these lyrics unaccountably reappeared simultaneously in an edition of

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Lyl's works, published in the same year and from the same firm that published the Second Folio Shakespeare. They are of especial value, therefore, as a bridge between Oxford's early lyrics and the Shakespeare work, and help to make good our contention that the right understanding of Elizabethan literature is just in its beginnings ; that that literature has a key to it in the person of the poet whose early lyrics we now present for the first time to the general reader.

VI.

Having now the poems before him in their entirety, the reader must be left very largely to himself in estimating their literary value and distinctive qualities. Nevertheless, the reminder is necessary that accurate judgments respecting poetical technique, as of technique in any department of art, cannot be formed from an absolute standpoint. Only when it is viewed in relation to the contemporary and immediately preceding work, and then in relation to what has followed, can its merits be properly appreciated. Failing this relativity, a more modern writer, who had merely imitated the numerous improvements made by others, might be adjudged superior to one who had initiated and carried through some fundamental developments.

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There is probably no better way of examining the work of Oxford according to this relative method than by first of all comparing it with that of Sir Philip Sidney, which may be taken as fairly representative of contemporary verse. Sidney, as a matter of fact, was four and a half years younger than Oxford, and had spent much of his time in early manhood in continental travel. When, therefore, he returned to court in 1575, a few months before Oxford set out for Italy, the latter had evidently been already engaged in writing poetry for some years. Sidney would, therefore, have the advantage of starting with some of Oxford's work in front of him. As, then, Oxford is spoken of by a contemporary (Webbe) as one of the "most excellent in the rare devices of poetry," and as it is quite in keeping with Sidney's methods to learn what he could from the verses of others, whilst one poem of Sidney's contains unmistakable traces of some of this early work of Oxford's, we may be sure that he did not neglect his opportunities.

Without discounting anything for this advantage, and regarding Sidney as quite contemporary, his work is altogether of an inferior type. He, indeed, admits that poetry was not to him an "elected vocation," and almost plaintively refers to himself as one "who, I know not by what mischance, in these my not old years and idlest times, having slipped into the title of a poet." The feebleness and affectation which disfigure much

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of his verse is precisely what might be expected from one who, as a poet, had had "greatness thrust upon him," and who, lacking ideas, is compelled to admit :

"Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow,

Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain."

A true poet no doubt derives delight and inspiration from the work of fellow artists, but the poet, who works definitely along such lines as these, can only be expected to produce inferior stuff, or to lapse into mere parody or unseemly plagiarism. As an example of parody we have (following the example of Dr. Grosart) included in the collection, what has been spoken of as Sidney's "sensible reply" to Oxford's stanza, "Were I a King." It is included both because of the way it illustrates the relations between the two men, and also because it has assisted in the valuable identification of Oxford with Spenser's "Willie." Although, in concluding the first of the "Astrophel and Stella" sonnets from which we have just quoted, Sidney professes to have learnt the lesson, "Look into thy heart and write," we are assured by Sir Sidney Lee that many of the best of the poems are almost verbatim translations from the French.

Nevertheless, the poetry of Sir Philip Sidney may be taken as quite typical of, if not superior to,

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most of the work of the group to which he belonged. Spenser, who did not enter the literary world of London until just before the antagonism between Oxford and Sidney culminated in the tennis-court quarrel, stands quite apart, and is of no group. Comparing the poetry of Oxford with that of the Sidney group, we are struck with the contrast which the strength and reality of the one presents to the feebleness and unreality of the other. Each poem of his is an expression of actual experience either internal or external. Theirs, on the other hand, often suggest writers afflicted with literary vanity, and wishful to write poetry, but with nothing very particular to say which demanded metrical or figurative expression. His is the work of a man looking life full in the face, seeing clearly, feeling deeply, thinking earnestly, and striving after an expression of corresponding intensity. Such are the true roots of metrical diction and the matter of spontaneous metaphor.

Although the imagery he employs reveals an intimacy with classical literature as well as a knowledge of the poems and lives of his fellows, his compositions are neither mere imitations or translations of the classics, nor, with one exception, the poem attributed to Queen Elizabeth, were they dramatic poses; nor had he searched "others' leaves" for his theme. It is always himself he is expressing. There may be exaggeration of expression—the natural result of a combination of intense

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feeling, large command of language, and comparative youthfulness—but the feeling is real and the words are relevant. We make bold to say that he struck a note of personal realism not heard before in English poetry; such as was not heard again with the same clear ring, until the “Shakespeare” sonnets appeared, with their challenging declaration: “I am that I am.” Before and since those days we have had an affected conventional personalism, and, by way of reaction, just as unreal a defiant and anti-conventional personalism; we doubt whether the line of truth and just proportion has ever since been so well maintained in personal poetry as in Oxford’s and “Shakespeare’s.”

After comparing this poetry with that of the Sidney group, we have only to turn to the group that arose in the following decade: Daniel, Drayton, Marlowe, Thomas Campion and Thomas Greene, in order to realize the relation of Oxford’s work to, and its probable effect upon, the poetry of his times. His is certainly the work of the early days of Queen Elizabeth’s reign which foreshadowed most distinctly, if it did not actually furnish, the generating impulse for the poetry of her later years. It is amongst these later writers that we find the Elizabethan poetry which has more than an historic interest; verses that, by their fidelity to actualities, and by their appeal to what is perennial in human nature, may be read to-day with something of the same interest as that

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with which we read "Shakespeare" and Burns. We are not now discussing the question of whether or not Edward de Vere was "Shakespeare," but we are quite entitled to claim that, at the time when these early poems were written, he was the only poet whose work foreshadowed Shakespeare's.

VII.

We append a few suggestive notes to assist the reader in making a beginning at comparing Oxford's lyrics with the "Shakespeare" work. Our advice would be, however, that he should make himself so familiar with the poems themselves as to detect correspondences independently, bearing in mind always that these are the effusions of a young poet, and that between these and the writing of the Shakespeare work he passed many years in a severe school of life, in contact with all the varied phases of the most energetic, dramatic and literary movement that England has ever known. Familiarity with these verses will also assist in discriminating between what is distinctive and personal, and what was common to the poetic fashions or stock of the times. Even conventional forms and phrases were not conventional to the first men who employed them, and a study of dates will probably show how much of what ultimately became common stock actually had its source in the Earl of Oxford.

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These are matters of prime importance. The question is whether such a thing as the identification of literary work is possible, and if so by what method. It has, for example, been asserted with full confidence by some critics that the "Shakespeare"-Oxford poetic parallels, indicated in "Shakespeare Identified," are merely commonplaces of Elizabethan verse. The reader, however inexpert in literature, may, by a very simple method, test this for himself.

Let him first study carefully all the various parallels, noting how these extend not merely to turns of expression and literary style, but to definite conceptions, sequence of ideas, figurative associations, mental qualities and moral dispositions. When he has fixed *the whole* in his mind—and here, as elsewhere, it is the whole which furnishes the standard of judgment—let him turn to collections of Elizabethan verse. We would suggest the small Anthology of Sixteenth Century poetry published by the Gresham Company, and the Elizabethan section of the "Oxford Book of English Verse" (poems 53 to 234). He will thus have before him between two and three hundred poems of the period, drawn from the work of about forty different poets: ample, certainly, for judging what was common to the poetry of the time. Now let him see if he can find much about the haggard hawk, or gather together passages from the whole of the forty poets, with this

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word in, that will reproduce the ideas in Oxford's poem on Women. Yet "Shakespeare's" few references to this bird, when placed together, do this. And so let him proceed. If he can find many poems imitating an echo, or young ladies making caves re-echo with their lovers' names, or verses on the loss of the poet's own good name, or verses expressive of mental distraction and violent emotional disturbance, or even if he can find many poets showing an equal fondness for the "Venus and Adonis" stanza, he will have been more successful in his search than we have been.

By the time he has completed his study he will probably be convinced that Oxford is the only one—with Thomas Campion as the nearest competitor—who wrote verses "which Shakespeare might have written." Odd illustrations or suggestions of similarity he may be able to discover; but, as for the statement that the parallels were the common-places of the poetry of the times, he will probably be amazed at the recklessness of our would-be literary guides, and be indisposed ever to trust them again. Points of contact between the work of Oxford, "Shakespeare" and others are bound to exist, but to say that there is not a very great deal common to the two which is not general amongst the others—and it is thus that identifications are established—is a complete and culpable misrepresentation of facts.

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Like the biographical argument, the poetical argument can be burlesqued by representing minor points as constituting the whole ; but this is not the way of those who want the truth.

One or two simple examples may perhaps bring home the identity of mental processes better than a multiplicity of cases would do. We shall therefore draw attention first of all specially to the two echo poems, De Vere's echo poem and that in "Venus and Adonis." In each case we have a female represented as pouring out her woes and being answered by echoes from caves ; and in both cases the echoing is preceded by three identical conceptions in an identical order. First she beats her heart, next the caves are moved by pity, and then she breaks into song ; after which comes the echo.

"*Venus and Adonis*" : (Stanza 139.)

"And now she beats her heart whereat it
groans,

That all the neighbour caves as seeming
troubled,

Make verbal repetition of her moans :

• • • • •

She marking them begins a wailing note

And sings extemporally a woeful ditty."

This is then followed by the echoing.

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De Vere's poem :

“ Three times with her soft hand full hard
on her left side she knocks,
And sighed so sore as might have mov'd
some pity in the rocks,
From sighs and shedding amber tears
into sweet song she brake.”

This is again followed by the echoing. The critic may call this plagiarism if he likes, but no man with the slightest regard for his own reputation for veracity would say that this was a mere commonplace of the poetry of the times. (See Note p. 3.)

Again, we have had to point out remarkable correspondences of expression between Oxford's lyrics and Shakespeare's “ Romeo and Juliet.” Here is an example :

Oxford :

“ (I) with the careful culver climb the
worn and withered tree,
To entertain my thoughts, and there my
hap to moan,
That never am less idle, lo ! than when
I am alone.”

“ Shakespeare ” :

“ He stole into the covert of the woods ;
I, measuring his affections with my own,
That most are busied when they're most
alone.” (R. and J. I. 1.)

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In both cases we have again three lines, expressive of identical ideas in an identical order: (1) the hiding in the woods, (2) the internal life of thought and affection, (3) the third lines, which are the merest paraphrase of one another. Let the reader now search the collections of poems named above, and draw his own conclusions respecting the object of representing the parallelisms as the mere common-places of the poetry of the times.

The truth is that the poems of Edward de Vere furnish a much stronger body of evidence in support of his authorship of the Shakespeare writings than we were justified in expecting. All we were entitled to demand, and indeed all that we hoped to find, was a certain psychological correspondence, along with a reasonable promise of technical skill, which should give a measure of support to a sound biographical argument. Correspondences therefore in literary minutiae such as are found to exist, combined with biographical accordances with the contents of Shakespeare's dramas—which are, again, much greater than need have existed between an author and his creative work—together with several lines of valuable external evidence, furnish a volume of practical proof, which, we venture to claim, is almost unprecedented in the records of personal identification. What is required is that the question should be rescued from the entanglements of literary contentiousness, and the evidence sifted and weighed by capable and disinterested

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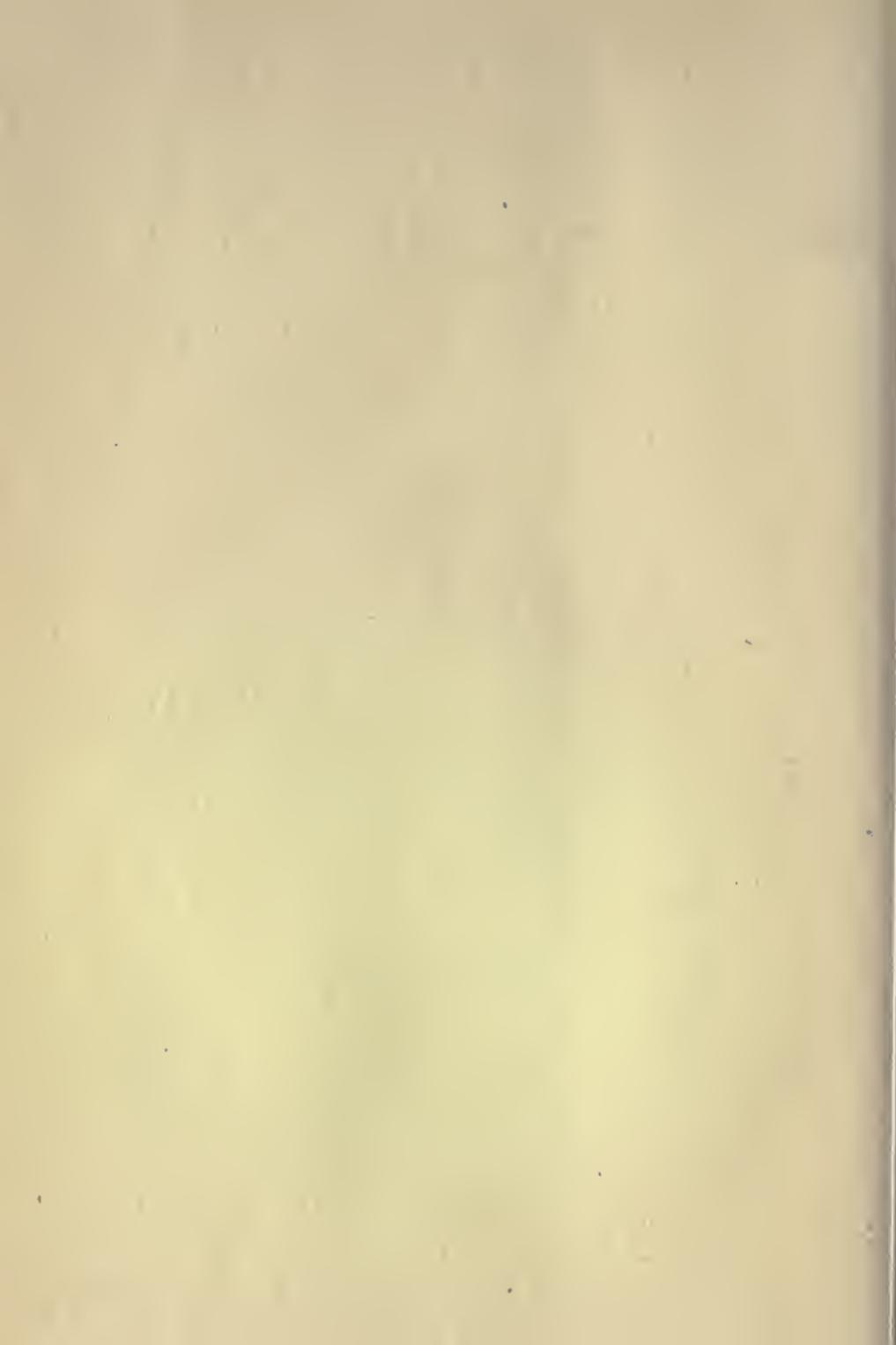
men and women. We would again urge this matter with the utmost earnestness ; for if Edward de Vere is to be finally recognised as "Shakespeare," it would not be to the intellectual credit of England that the first appreciable recognition should come from outside.

Whether "Shakespeare" was Edward de Vere in his maturity, or a kind of *alter ego* of that nobleman, the one thing which is becoming clear, as minds are being directed to the question, is that Oxford is the key to Elizabethan literature ; and although a few of our best literary men had noticed something of his distinctive position and powers, the most of our savants have never come within measurable distance of the knowledge. From the lyrics of Surrey, through the courtier poets of Elizabeth's early years, to the playhouses and dissolute acting companies of the succeeding years, and on to the great Shakespeare dramas culminating in "Hamlet"—for which it is now being admitted that he was the model—the Earl of Oxford is the personal thread which unifies all. In the Shakespeare work writers have shown to us the separate influence of Arthur Golding, of Anthony Munday, and of John Lyly, but have failed to perceive that what was linking all together was the person of Edward de Vere, the relative and pupil of Golding, and the employer in turn of both Anthony Munday and John Lyly. The idea that such a phenomenon as our Elizabethan drama, "that marvel and pride

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of the greatest literature in the world," required an explanation, or possessed a personal key, has never before occurred to any of us. The suggestion has already been made somewhere, however, that there was behind the movement some wealthy enthusiast, who was spending lavishly and secretly upon it. 'That some of Oxford's wealth was spent in this way we know. That just before the great Shakespearean outburst his material resources were exhausted we also know. And that Edward de Vere is the personality linking the Earl of Surrey, who "founded at Windsor a school of national song," with the "Shakespeare" who made Windsor the actual scene of his triumph as a comic dramatist, and the thinly disguised scene of his greatest tragic drama, is now almost beyond dispute. Whether or not Edward de Vere was himself "Shakespeare" must, sooner or later, be seriously considered, and determined. In the solving of this problem his poems must play an important part; and therefore we now submit them to the careful attention of our readers.

* * *



POEMS OF EDWARD DE VERE

Seventeenth Earl of Oxford

SECTION I.

First Group of Poems, I. to VIII., and a letter written for Bedingfield's translation of Cardanus's *Comfort*; all accepted as authentic by Dr. Grosart.

These were probably written before the crisis of 1576.

Both Groups in Section I. belong mainly to the period of the Courtier Poets of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

I.

Echo Verses.

Sitting alone upon my thought in melancholy mood,
In sight of sea, and at my back an ancient hoary
wood,
I saw a fair young lady come, her secret fears to
wail,
Clad all in colour of a nun, and covered with a
veil ;
Yet (for the day was calm and clear) I might dis-
cern her face,
As one might see a damask rose hid under crystal
glass.

Three times, with her soft hand, full hard on her
left side she knocks,
And sigh'd so sore as might have mov'd some pity
in the rocks ;
From sighs and shedding amber tears into sweet
song she brake,
When thus the echo answered her to every word
she spake :

Oh heavens ! who was the first that bred in me this
fever ? Vere (Ver.)
Who was the first that gave the wound whose fear
I wear for ever ? Vere.

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What tyrant, Cupid, to my harm usurps thy golden
quiver? Vere.

What wight first caught this heart and can from
bondage it deliver? Vere.

Yet who doth most adore this wight, oh hollow
caves tell true? You.

What nymph deserves his liking best, yet doth in
sorrow rue? You.

What makes him not reward good will with some
reward or ruth? Youth.

What makes him show besides his birth, such pride
and such untruth? Youth.

May I his favour match with love, if he my love
will try? Ay.

May I requite his birth with faith? Then faithful
will I die? Ay.

And I, that knew this lady well,
Said, Lord how great a miracle,
To her how Echo told the truth,
As true as Phœbus' oracle.

The Earle of Oxford.

Notes.—From Rawlinson M.S.; “Vere” pronounced Ver. Compare Venus and Adonis (139-42) and Romeo and Juliet (II. 2).

“Hist, Romeo hist! O for a falconer’s voice
To lure this tassel gentle back again.
Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud,
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,
With repetition of my Romeo’s name.”

See p. lxxiii—iv. As Oxford’s poem was not published in his day
“Shakespeare” must have known it in manuscript.

II.

Sonnet :

LOVE THY CHOICE.

Who taught thee first to sigh, alas, my heart ?
Who taught thy tongue the woeful words of
plaint ?
Who filled your eyes with tears of bitter smart ?
Who gave thee grief and made thy joys to faint ?
Who first did paint with colours pale thy face ?
Who first did break thy sleeps of quiet rest ?
Above the rest in court who gave thee grace ?
Who made thee strive in honour to be best ?
In constant truth to bide so firm and sure,
To scorn the world regarding but thy friends ?
With patient mind each passion to endure,
In one desire to settle to the end ?
Love then thy choice wherein such choice thou bind,
As nought but death may ever change thy mind.

Earle of Oxenforde.

Notes.—From Rawlinson M.S. The only sonnet in the collection : it is in the Shakespeare form. Compare contents with character of Romeo.

“ You must lay lime to tangle her desires
By wailful sonnets, whose composed rhymes
Should be full-fraught with serviceable vows.
You sacrifice your tears your sighs your heart.
I have a sonnet that will serve the turn.”

“ Two Gent.” (iii. 2.)

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III.

What Cunning can Express.

What cunning can express
The favour of her face ?
To whom in this distress,
I do appeal for grace.
A thousand Cupids fly
About her gentle eye.

From which each throws a dart,
That kindleth soft sweet fire :
Within my sighing heart,
Possessèd by Desire.
No sweeter life I try,
Than in her love to die.

The lily in the field,
That glories in his white,
For pureness now must yielde,
And render up his right ;
Heaven pictured in her face,
Doth promise joy and grace.

Fair Cynthia's silver light,
That beats on running streams,
Compares not with her white,
Whose hairs are all sun-beams ;
So bright my Nymph doth shine,
As day unto my eyne.

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With this there is a red,
Exceeds the Damask-Rose ;
Which in her cheeks is spread,
Whence every favour grows.
In sky there is no star,
But she surmounts it far.

When Phœbus from the bed
Of Thetis doth arise,
The morning blushing red,
In fair carnation wise ;
He shows in my Nymph's face,
As Queen of every grace.

This pleasant lily white,
This taint of roseate red ;
This Cynthia's silver light,
This sweet fair Dea spread ;
These sunbeams in mine eye,
These beauties make me die.

Notes.—First appeared in “*Phœnix' Nest*” (1593), afterwards in “*England's Helicon*” (1600) as “*What Shepherd can Express.*” Compare specially with “*Lucrece*” (Stanzas 2-11, 37, 56, 69) ; also with Sonnets 98, 99, 130, and “*Passionate Pilgrim.*” For dying lovers see *Troilus and Cressida* (III.,¹ 1 and 2).

IV.

Desire.

THE MEETING WITH DESIRE.

The lively lark stretched forth her wing,
The messenger of Morning bright ;
And with her cheerful voice did sing,
The Day's approach, discharging Night ;
When that Aurora blushing red,
Descried the guilt of Thetis' bed.

I went abroad to take the air,
And in the meads I met a knight,
Clad in carnation colour fair ;
I did salute this gentle wight :
Of him I did his name inquire,
He sighed and said it was Desire.

Desire I did desire to stay ;
And while with him I cravèd talk,
The courteous knight said me no nay,
But hand in hand with me did walk ;
Then of Desire I ask'd again,
What things did please and what did pain.

He smiled and thus he answered than (*then*) :
Desire can have no greater pain,
Than for to see another man,
The things desirèd to attain ;
Nor greater joy can be than this :
That to enjoy that others miss.

POEMS *of* EDWARD DE VERE

V.

WHAT IS DESIRE ?

What is Desire, which doth approve,
To set on fire each gentle heart ?
A fancy strange, or God of Love,
Whose pining sweet delight doth smart ;
In gentle minds his dwelling is.

Is he god of peace or war ?
What be his arms ? What is his might ?
His war is peace, his peace is war ;
Each grief of his is but delight ;
His bitter ball is sugared bliss.

What be his gifts ? How doth he pay ?
When is he seen ? or how conceived ?
Sweet dreams in sleep, new thoughts in day,
Beholding eyes, in mind received ;
A god that rules and yet obeys.

Why is he naked painted ? Blind ?
His sides with shafts ? His back with
brands ?
Plain without guile, by hap to find ;
Pursuing with fair words that with-
stands (*mistranscribed*),
And when he craves he takes no nays.

POEMS *of* EDWARD DE VERE

What were his parents ? Gods or no ?

That living long is yet a child ;

A goddess' son ? Who thinks not so ?

A god begot, beguiled ;

Venus his mother, Mars his sire.

What labours doth this god allow ?

What fruits have lovers for their pains ?

Sit still and muse to make a vow

T' their ladies, if they true remain ;

A good reward for true desire.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

VI.

FOND DESIRE.

Come hither, shepherd swain !
Sir, what do you require ?
I pray thee show to me thy name ;
My name is Fond Desire.

When wert thou born, Desire ?
In pride and pomp of May.
By whom, sweet boy, wert thou begot ?
By fond conceit men say.

Tell me who was thy nurse ?
Fresh youth, in sugar'd joy.
What was thy meat and daily food ?
Sad sighs and great annoy.

What had'st thou then to drink ?
Unfeignèd lover's tears.
What cradle wert thou rockèd in ?
In hope devoid of fears.

What lulled thee to thy sleep ?
Sweet thoughts that liked one best.
And where is now thy dwelling place ?
In gentle hearts I rest.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

Doth company displease ?

It doth in many one.

Where would Desire then choose to be ?

He loves to muse alone.

What feedeth most thy sight ?

To gaze on beauty still.

Whom find'st thou most thy foe ?

Disdain of my good will.

Will ever age or death

Bring thee unto decay ?

No, no, Desire both lives and dies

A thousand times a day.

Then, Fond Desire, farewell ;

Thou art no mate for me ;

I should be loath, methinks, to dwell

With such a one as thee.

Earle of Oxenforde.

Notes.—The poems on Desire were taken by Dr. Grosart from the Rawlinson M.S. A less complete version (of vi.) had appeared in Puttenham's "Art of Poesy" (1589) as by "Edward Earl of Oxford, a most noble and learned gentleman." The M.S. had been a negligent transcription, and although Dr. Grosart was able to correct some errors, others had to remain. The penultimate line in stanza 4 (v.) is evidently wrong. Compare specially with "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (I., 1) and with the predominance of the idea of Desire throughout "Shakespeare's" works. "Fond Desire" see "Two Gentlemen" (I., 1) : "Desire in especial has inspired him (Shakespeare) with phrases (most) magically expressive."—FRANK HARRIS.

Compare first stanza (iv.) with :

"It was the lark the herald of the morn."

(Romeo and Juliet, III., 5).

See also Notes p. 47.

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VII.

Fortune and Love.

Faction that ever dwells
In court, where wit excels.

Hath set defiance :
Fortune and Love have sworn,
That they were never born
Of one alliance.

Cupid, which doth aspire,
To be God of Desire,
Swears he gives laws ;
That where his arrows hit,
Some joy, some sorrow it,
Fortune no cause.

Fortune swears weakest hearts
(The books of Cupid's arts)
Turn'd with her wheel.
Senseless themselves shall prove
Venter hath place in love,
Ask them that feel.

This discord it begot
Atheists, that honour not.
Nature thought good,
Fortune should ever dwell
In court, where wits excel,
Love keep the wood.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

So to the wood went I,
With love to live and lie,
 Fortune's forlorn.

Experience of my youth,
Made me think humble Truth
 In deserts born.

My saint I keep to me,
And Joan herself is she,
 Joan fair and true.

She that doth only move
Passions of love with love.
 Fortune adieu !

E.O.

Notes.—Taken from a copy signed E.O. This poem was first published as Sidney's in Nash's edition of the Astrophel and Stella sonnets (1591). We may assume therefore that it was found amongst Sidney's papers after his death, and may have inspired Sidney's conception of "Arcadia." Compare with "As you like it" (I. 2 and II. 1). "Faction" (line 1.) Fortune (?)

VIII.

Labour and its Reward.

The Earl of Oxford to the Reader of Bedingfield's
Cardanus's Comfort.

The labouring man that tills the fertile soil,
And reaps the harvest fruit, hath not indeed
The gain, but pain ; and if for all his toil
He gets the straw, the lord will have the seed.

The manchet fine falls not unto his share ;
On coarsest cheat his hungry stomach feeds.
The landlord doth possess the finest fare ;
He pulls the flowers, he plucks but weeds.

The mason poor that builds the lordly halls,
Dwells not in them ; they are for high degree ;
His cottage is compact in paper walls,
And not with brick or stone, as others be.

The idle drone that labours not at all,
Sucks up the sweet of honey from the bee ;
Who worketh most to their share least doth fall,
With due desert reward will never be.

The swiftest hare unto the mastive slow
Oft-times doth fall, to him as for a prey ;
The greyhound thereby doth miss his game we
know
For which he made such speedy haste away.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

So he that takes the pain to pen the book,
Reaps not the gifts of goodly golden muse ;
But those gain that, who on the work shall look,
And from the sour the sweet by skill doth choose ;
For he that beats the bush the bird not gets,
But who sits still and holdeth fast the nets.

Published 1576, along with the following letter, as preface to Bedingfield's translation. Lines 3 and 4 in the last stanza contain the germ of Shakespeare's dictum :—

“There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men *observingly* distil it out.”

(Henry V. iv.i.)

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IX.

The Bedingfield Letter.

The following letter from Oxford also appeared in the same work, which was “published by commandment of the right honourable the Earl of Oxford.” Dr. Grosart remarks: “This letter as in various ways extremely interesting and characteristic, graceful and gracious, is here reprinted for the first time.”

“TO MY LOVING FRIEND THOMAS BEDINGFIELD ESQUIRE,
ONE OF HER MAJESTY’S GENTLEMEN PENSIONERS.”

After I had perused your letters, good master Bedingfield, finding in them your request far differing from the desert of your labour, I could not choose but greatly doubt, whether it were better for me to yield to your desire, or execute mine own intention towards the publishing of your book. For I do confess the affections that I have always borne towards you could move me not a little. But when I had thoroughly considered in my mind, of sundry and diverse arguments, whether it were best to obey mine affections, or the merits of your studies: at the length I determined it were better to deny your unlawful request, than to grant or condescend to the concealment of so worthy a work. Whereby as you have been profitted in the translating, so many may reap knowledge by the reading of the

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

same, that shall comfort the afflicted, confirm the doubtful, encourage the coward, and lift up the base-minded man to achieve to any true sum or grade of virtue, whereto ought only the noble thoughts of men to be inclined.

And because next to the sacred letters of divinity, nothing doth persuade the same more than philosophy, of which your book is plentifully stored : I thought myself to commit an unpardonable error to have murdered the same in the waste bottoms of my chests ; and better I thought it were to displease one than to displease many ; further considering so little a trifle cannot procure so great a breach of our amity, as may not with a little persuasion of reason be repaired again. And herein I am forced, like a good and politic captain, oftentimes to spoil and burn the corn of his own country, lest his enemies thereof do take advantage. For rather than so many of your countrymen should be deluded through my sinister means of your industry in studies (whereof you are bound in conscience to yield them an account) I am content to make spoil and havock of your request, and that, that might have wrought greatly in me in this former respect, utterly to be of no effect or operation. And when you examine yourself, what doth avail a mass of gold to be continually imprisoned in your bags, and never to be employed to your use ? I do not doubt even you so think of your studies and delightful Muses. What do they

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avail if you do not participate them to others? Wherefore we have this latin proverb: *Scire tu nihil est, nisite scire hoc sciat alter.* What doth avail the tree unless it yield fruit unto another? What doth avail the vine unless another delighteth in the grape? What doth avail the rose unless another took pleasure in the smell? Why should this tree be accounted better than that tree but for the goodness of his fruit? Why should this vine be better than that vine unless it brought forth a better grape than the other? Why should this rose be better esteemed than that rose, unless in pleasantness of smell it far surpassed the other rose?

And so it is in all other things as well as in man. Why should this man be more esteemed than that man but for his virtue, through which every man desireth to be accounted of? Then you amongst men, I do not doubt but will aspire to follow that virtuous path, to illuster yourself with the ornaments of virtue. And in mine opinion as it beautifyeth a fair woman to be decked with pearls and precious stones, so much more it ornifyeth a gentleman to be furnished in mind with glittering virtues.

Wherefore, considering the small harm I do to you, the great good I do to others, I prefer mine own intention to discover your volume, before your request to secret the same; wherein I may seem to you to play the part of the cunning and expert

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mediciner or physician, who although his patient in the extremity of his burning fever is desirous of cold liquor or drink to qualify his sore thirst, or rather kill his languishing body : yet for the danger he doth evidently know by his science to ensue, denyeth him the same. So you being sick of so much doubt in your own proceedings, through which infirmity you are desirous to bury and inseuill (sic) your works in the grave of oblivion : yet I knowing the discommodities that shall redound to yourself thereby (and which is more unto your countrymen) as one that is willing to salve so great an inconvenience, am nothing dainty to deny your request.

Again we see, if our friends be dead we cannot show or declare our affection more than by erecting them of tombs : whereby when they be dead indeed, yet make we them live as it were again through their monument ; but with me behold it happeneth far better ; for in your lifetime I shall erect you such a monument, that as I say, in your lifetime you shall see how noble a shadow of your virtuous life, shall hereafter remain when you are dead and gone. And in your lifetime, again I say, I shall give you that monument and remembrance of your life, whereby I may declare my good will, though with your ill will, as yet that I do bear you in your life.

Thus earnestly desiring you in this one request of mine (as I would yield to you in a great many)

POEMS *of* EDWARD DE VERE

not to repugn the setting forth of your own proper studies, I bid you farewell.

From my new country Muses of Wivenghole, wishing you as you have begun, to proceed in these virtuous actions. For when all things shall else forsake us, virtue will ever abide with us, and when our bodies fall into the bowels of the earth, yet that shall mount with our minds into the highest heavens.

From your loving and assured friend,

E. OXFORD.

Note.—Compare p. 19 (middle par.) with :
“If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.”
“Much Ado” (V. 2.)

SECTION I.

Second Group : Poems X. to XXIV.

Poems of the 1576 crisis and after. All these are accepted as authentic by Dr. Grosart.

The dates given are those of the earliest known versions : not necessarily those of the text.

X.

Loss of Good Name.

Fram'd in the front of forlorn hope past all recovery,
I stayless stand, to abide the shock of shame and
infamy.

My life, through ling'ring long, is lodg'd in lair of
loathsome ways;

My death delay'd to keep from life the harm of
hapless days.

My sprites, my heart, my wit and force, in deep
distress are drown'd;

The only loss of my good name is of these griefs
the ground.

And since my mind, my wit, my head, my voice
and tongue are weak,

To utter, move, devise, conceive, sound forth,
declare and speak,

Such piercing plaints as answer might, or would
my woeful case,

Help crave I must, and crave I will, with tears
upon my face,

Of all that may in heaven or hell, in earth or air
be found,

To wail with me this loss of mine, as of these
griefs the ground.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

Help Gods, help saints, help sprites and powers
that in the heaven do dwell,
Help ye that are aye wont to wail, ye howling
hounds of hell ;
Help man, help beasts, help birds and worms, that
on the earth do toil ;
Help fish, help fowl, that flock and feed upon the
salt sea soil,
Help echo that in air doth flee, shrill voices to
resound,
To wail this loss of my good name, as of these griefs
the ground.

E.O.

Notes.—Appeared in *Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576). Compare sonnets on this theme, written at least 14 years later, specially 29. (71, 72, 81, 110, 111, 112, 121) and “*Othello*” (III. 3).

“When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes,
I, all alone, beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries;
And look upon myself and curse my fate.”

(Sonnet 29).

“He who filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.” (Othello III., 3).

For the peculiar animate combination see *Luciana’s speech* “*Comedy of Errors*” (II. i. 15-23.) This Act contains other associated ideas and phrases : e.g. “name” and shame ; “can be found,” “is he the ground” ; “in earth, in heaven, or in hell.”

XI.

Revenge of Wrong.

Fain would I sing, but fury makes me fret,
And Rage hath sworn to seek revenge of wrong;
My mazèd mind in malice so is set,
As Death shall daunt my deadly dolours long ;
Patience perforce is such a pinching pain,
As die I will, or suffer wrong again.
I am no sot, to suffer such abuse
As doth bereave my heart of his delight ;
Nor will I frame myself to such as use,
With calm consent, to suffer such despite ;
No quiet sleep shall once possess mine eye
Till Wit have wrought his will on Injury.
My heart shall fail, and hand shall lose his force,
But some device shall pay Despite his due ;
And Fury shall consume my careful corse,
Or raze the ground whereon my sorrow grew.
Lo, thus in rage of ruthful mind refus'd,
I rest reveng'd on whom I am abus'd.

Earle of Oxenforde.

Note.—From the Tanner M.S. It may be questioned whether the fury of revenge, sprung from a sense of being abused, expressed in this poem, has found an equivalent intellectual expression anywhere outside the Shakespeare dramas. See "Hamlet" throughout. For mental correspondence compare latter half of Sonnet 140 and Sonnet 147.

" My reason, the physician to my love,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve :
Desire is death, which physic did except,
Past cure I am now reason is past care,
And frantic mad with evermore unrest." (Sonnet 147).

XII.

Love and Antagonism.

The trickling tears that fall along my cheeks,
The secret sighs that show my inward grief,
The present pains perforce that Love aye seeks,
Bid me renew my cares without relief ;
In woeful song, in dole display,
My pensive heart for to betray.

Betray thy grief, thy woeful heart with speed ;
Resign thy voice to her that caused thee woe ;
With irksome cries, bewail thy late done deed,
For she thou lov'st is sure thy mortal foe ;
And help for thee there is none sure,
But still in pain thou must endure.

The stricken deer hath help to heal his wound,
The haggard hawk with toil is made full tame ;
The strongest tower, the cannon lays on ground,
The wisest wit that ever had the fame,
Was thrall to Love by Cupid's slights ;
Then weigh my cause with equal wights (weights).

She is my joy, she is my care and woe ;
She is my pain, she is my ease therefore ;
She is my death, she is my life also,
She is my salve, she is my wounded sore :
In fine, she hath the hand and knife,
That may both save and end my life.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

And shall I live on earth to be her thrall ?

And shall I live and serve her all in vain ?

And kiss the steps that she lets fall,

And shall I pray the Gods to keep the pain
From her that is so cruel still ?

No, no, on her work all your will.

And let her feel the power of all your might,

And let her have her most desire with speed,
And let her pine away both day and night,

And let her moan, and none lament her need ;
And let all those that shall her see,
Despise her state and pity me.

E.O.

Notes.—From *Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576). Compare, for literary form, with “*Lucrece*,” stanzas 122-141; especially the last stanza with stanza 141 in “*Lucrece*.”

“ Let him have time to tear his curlèd hair,
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of Time’s help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
Let him have time a beggar’s orts to crave,
And time to see one that by alms doth live
Disdain to him, disdainèd scraps to give.”

(*Lucrece*, S. 141).

Compare the line,

“ And let her moan and none lament her need,”
with “*Lucrece*,” 140,
“ To make him moan and pity not his moans.”

XIII.

Song : The Forsaken Man.

A crown of bays shall that man wear,
That triumphs over me ;
For black and tawny will I wear,
Which mourning colours be.
The more I follow'd one,
The more she fled away,
As Daphne did full long agone,
Apollo's wishful prey.
The more my plaints I do resound
The less she pities me ;
The more I sought the less I found,
Yet mine she meant to be.
Melpomene alas, with doleful tunes help
than ; (*then*)
And sing Bis, woë worth on me forsaken
man.

Then Daphne's bays shall that man wear,
That triumphs over me ;
For black and tawny will I wear,
Which mourning colours be.
Drown me with trickling tears,
You wailful wights of woe ;
Come help these hands to rend my hairs,
My rueful hap to show.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

On whom the scorching flame
 Of love doth feed you see ;
Ah a lalalantida, my dear dame
 Hath thus tormented me.
Wherefore you muses nine, with doleful
 tunes help than,
And sing Bis, woë worth on me forsaken
 man.

Then Daphne's bays shall that man wear,
 That triumphs over me ;
For black and tawny will I wear,
 Which mourning colours be ;
An anchor's life to lead,
 With nails to scratch my grave,
Where earthly worms on me shall feed,
 Is all the joy I crave ;
And hide myself from shame,
 Since that mine eyes do see,
Ah a lalalantida, my dear dame
 Hath thus tormented me.
And all that present be, with doleful
 tunes help than,
And sing Bis woë worth, on me forsaken
 man.

E. O.

From Paradise of Dainty Devices (1576) ; "lalalantida" a nonsense refrain.

XIV.

“I am not as I seem to be.”

I am not as I seem to be,
For when I smile I am not glad ;
A thrall, although you count me free,
I, most in mirth, most pensive sad,
I smile to shade my bitter spite
As Hannibal that saw in sight
His country soil with Carthage town,
By Roman force defacèd down.

And Cæsar that presented was,
With noble Pompey’s princely head ;
As ’twere some judge to rule the case,
A flood of tears he seemed to shed ;
Although indeed it sprung of joy ;
Yet others thought it was annoy.
Thus contraries be used I find,
Of wise to cloak the covert mind.

I, Hannibal that smile for grief ;
And let you Cæsar’s tears suffice ;
The one that laughs at his mischief ;
The other all for joy that cries.
I smile to see me scornèd so,
You weep for joy to see me woe ;
And I, a heart by Love slain dead,
Present in place of Pompey’s head.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

O cruel hap and hard estate,
That forceth me to love my foe ;
Accursèd be so foul a fate,
My choice for to prefix it so.
So long to fight with secret sore
And find no secret salve therefore ;
Some purge their pain by plaint I find,
But I in vain do breathe my wind.

E.O.

Notes.—From Paradise of Dainty Devices (1576). For lyric form compare L.L.L. closing song,

“When daisies pied, &c.”

Compare also lines 5 and 6 of third stanza with “Lear” (I. 4),

“Then they for sudden joy did weep
And I for sorrow sung.”

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

XV.

Care and Disappointment.

Ev'n as the wax doth melt, or dew consume away
Before the sun, so I, behold, through careful
thoughts decay ;

For my best luck leads me to such sinister state,
That I do waste with others' love, that hath myself
in hate.

And he that beats the bush the wishèd bird not gets,
But such, I see, as sitteth still and holds the fowl-
ing nets.

The drone more honey sucks, that laboureth not at
all,

Than doth the bee, to whose most pain least
pleasure doth befall :

The gard'ner sows the seeds, whereof the flowers
do grow,

And others yet do gather them, that took less pain
I trow.

So I the pleasant grape have pullèd from the vine,
And yet I languish in great thirst, while others
drink the wine.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

Thus like a woeful wight I wove the web of woe,
The more I would weed out my cares, the more
they seemed to grow :
The which betokeneth, forsaken is of me,
That with the careful culver climbs the worn and
withered tree;
To entertain my thoughts, and there my hap to
moan,
That never am less idle, lo ! than when I am alone.

E. Ox.

Notes.—From Paradise of Dainty Devices (1576). Culver—wood pigeon.
Compare last three lines with three lines in Romeo and Juliet (I. 1), finishing :
“That most are busied when they’re most alone.”

Compare lines 1 and 2 in first stanza with “Lucrece,” stanza 4.

“As soon *decay’d* and done
As is the morning’s silver-melting dew
Against the golden splendour of the sun.”

Compare lines 3 and 4 in first stanza with Sonnets 149 and 142, line 1,

“But love, hate on, for now I know thy mind” (Sonnet 149).

“Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate” (Sonnet 142).

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

XVI.

“Love is a Discord.”

Love is a discord and a strange divorce

Betwixt our sense and rest, by whose power,
As mad with reason, we admit that force

Which wit or labour never may *divorce* (?)

divour

It is a will that brooketh no consent ;
It would refuse yet never may repent.

Love's a desire, which, for to wait a time,

Doth lose an age of years, and so doth pass,
As doth the shadow sever'd from his prime ;

Seeming as though it were, yet never was ;
Leaving behind naught but repentant thought
Of days ill spent of that which profits nought.

It's now a peace and then a sudden war,

A hope consumed before it is conceived ;
At hand it fears, and menaceth afar ;

And he that gains is most of all deceived.

Love whets the dullest wits, his plagues be such,
But makes the wise by pleasing dote as much.

Notes.—From England's Parnassus (1600). Compare with “Two Gentlemen” (I. 1), from :

“To be in love where scorn is bought with groans,”
to end of scene ; also first stanza with sonnet 147 :

“My love is as a fever

Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
And frantic mad with evermore unrest.”

Note the double wit and folly paradox at the close, and compare with :

“A folly bought with wit
Or else a wit by folly vanquish'd.”

(“Two Gent.” I. 1).

XVII.

Reason and Affection.

If care or skill could conquer vain desire,
Or Reason's reins my strong affection stay :
There should my sighs to quiet breast retire,
And shun such signs as secret thoughts betray ;
Uncomely Love which now lurks in my breast
Should cease, my grief through Wisdom's power
oppress'd.

But who can leave to look on Venus' face,
Or yieldeth not to Juno's high estate ?
What wit so wise as gives not Pallas place ?
These virtues rare ech (*sic*) Gods did yield a
mate ;
Save her alone, who yet on earth doth reign,
Whose beauty's string no God can well distraigne.
(*sic*).

What worldly wight can hope for heavenly hire,
When only sighs must make his secret moan ?
A silent suit doth sell to grace aspire,
My hapless hap doth roll the restless stone.
Yet Phœbe fair disdained the heavens above,
To joy on earth her poor Endymion's love.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

Rare is reward where none can justly crave,
For chance is choice where Reason makes no
claim ;

Yet luck sometimes despairing souls doth save,
A happy star made Giges joy attain.

A slavish smith, of rude and rascal race,
Found means in time to gain a Goddess' grace.

Then lofty Love thy sacred sails advance,
My sighing seas shall flow with streams of tears;
Amidst disdains drive forth thy doleful chance,
A valiant mind no deadly danger fears ;
Who loves aloft and sets his heart on high
Deserves no pain, though he do pine and die.

E. O.

Notes.—From Paradise of Dainty Devices (1576). Compare first stanza with Sonnet 147, and the last two lines of this stanza with the last set of sonnets generally.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

XVIII.

Love and Wit.

My meaning is to work
What wonders love hath wrought,
Wherewith I muse, why men of wit
Have love so dearly bought.

For love is worse than hate,
And eke more harm hath done ;
Record I take of those that rede
Of Paris, Priam's son.

It seemed the god of sleep
Had mazed so much his wits,
When he refusèd wit for love,
Which cometh but by fits.

But why accuse I him,
Whom th' earth hath covered long ?
There be of his posterity
Alive, I do him wrong.

Whom I might well condemn,
To be a cruel judge
Unto myself, who hath the crime
In others that I grudge.

E.O.

Notes.—Taken from an edition of the *Paradise of Dainty Devices* published in 1810; no suggestion is given as to the original source.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

XIX.

Woman's Changeableness.

If women could be fair and yet not fond,
Or that their love were firm not fickle, still,
I would not marvel that they make men bond,
By service long to purchase their good will ;
But when I see how frail those creatures are,
I muse that men forget themselves so far.

wonder

firme

To mark the choice they make, and how they change,
How oft from Phœbus do they flee to Pan,
Unsettled still like haggards wild they range,

their
Venus
vile

These gentle birds that fly from man to man ;
Who would not scorn and shake them from the fist
And let them fly fair fools which way they list.

his
go()

Yet for disport we fawn and flatter both,

To pass the time when nothing else can please,
And train them to our lure with subtle oath,

can a
still unt

Till, weary of their wiles, ourselves we ease ;
And then we say when we their fancy try,
To play with fools, O what a fool was I.

wits
Fancies
do it

Earle of Oxenforde.

Notes.—From Rawlinson M.S. A variant copy was printed by Byrd in 1587. Compare with Sonnet 20. And with all "Shakespeare's" references to the haggard, "Othello" (III. 3), "Taming of Shrew" (IV. 1), "Much Ado" (III. 1).

"If I do find her haggard,

Though that her jesses were my dear heart strings,
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind
To play at fortune." (Othello III. 3).

Compare this specially with last lines of second stanza.

POEMS *of* EDWARD DE VERE

XX.

Were I a King.

Were I a king I might command content ;

Were I obscure unknown would be my cares,
And were I dead no thoughts should me torment,
Nor words, nor wrongs, nor love, nor hate, nor
fears ;

A doubtful choice of these things which to crave,
A kingdom or a cottage or a grave.

Vere.

Note.—Line 5 is from the Chetham M.S. Dr. Grosart gives the ancient M.S. Misc. version : “*three* things *one* to crave.” This is one of the few cases in which I have ventured to select a different reading.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

XXI.

Sidney's Answer :

Wert thou a King yet not command content,
Since empire none thy mind could yet suffice,
Wert thou obscure still cares would thee torment ;
But wert thou dead, all care and sorrow dies ;
An easy choice of these things which to crave,
No kingdom nor a cottage but a grave.

Note.—From an ancient M.S. Miscellany and the Chetham M.S. These verses are of value in helping to identify Oxford with Spenser's "Willie" in the "Shepherd's Calendar." Willie (see month of August) takes Perigot to task for matching his "music," and challenges him to a rhyming competition. A third party, Cuddy, is introduced as arbitrator, and he assumes office with the curious remark, "What a judge Cuddy *were for a king.*" This furnishes the key to the long standing mystery of Willie in Spenser's "Tears of the Muses," which were thought by some to refer to Shakespeare, whilst the date presented an almost insuperable difficulty.

XXII.

Doth Sorrow Fret Thy Soul.

Doth sorrow fret thy soul ? O direful sprite.

Doth pleasure feed thy heart ? O blessed man.
Hast thou been happy once ? O heavy plight.

Are thy mishaps forepast ? O happy than (then)
Or hast thou bliss in eld ? O bliss too late :
But hast thou bliss in youth ? O sweet estate.

E. of O.

Note.—Published in England's Parnassus (1600). It had appeared in
“Astrophel and Stella.”

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

XXIII.

Grief of Mind.

What plague is greater than the grief of mind ?

The grief of mind that eats in every vein ;

In every vein that leaves such clots behind ;

Such clots behind as breed such bitter pain ;

So bitter pain that none shall ever find,

What plague is greater than the grief of mind.

E. of Ox.

Note.—Published in “England’s Parnassus” (1600), signed E. of Ox. It had appeared as Sidney’s in the “Astrophel and Stella” sonnets. Compare its peculiar literary form with the six lines in the “Comedy of Errors” (I. 2), beginning :

“She is so hot because *the meat is cold*,
The meat is cold . . . &c.”

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

XXIV.

Verses ascribed to Queen Elizabeth.

When I was fair and young then favour graced me;
Of many was I sought their mistress for to be.
But I did scorn them all, and answered them there-
fore,
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Importune me no more.

How many weeping eyes I made to pine in woe ;
How many sighing hearts I have no skill to show ;
Yet I the prouder grew, and answered them there-
fore,
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Importune me no more.

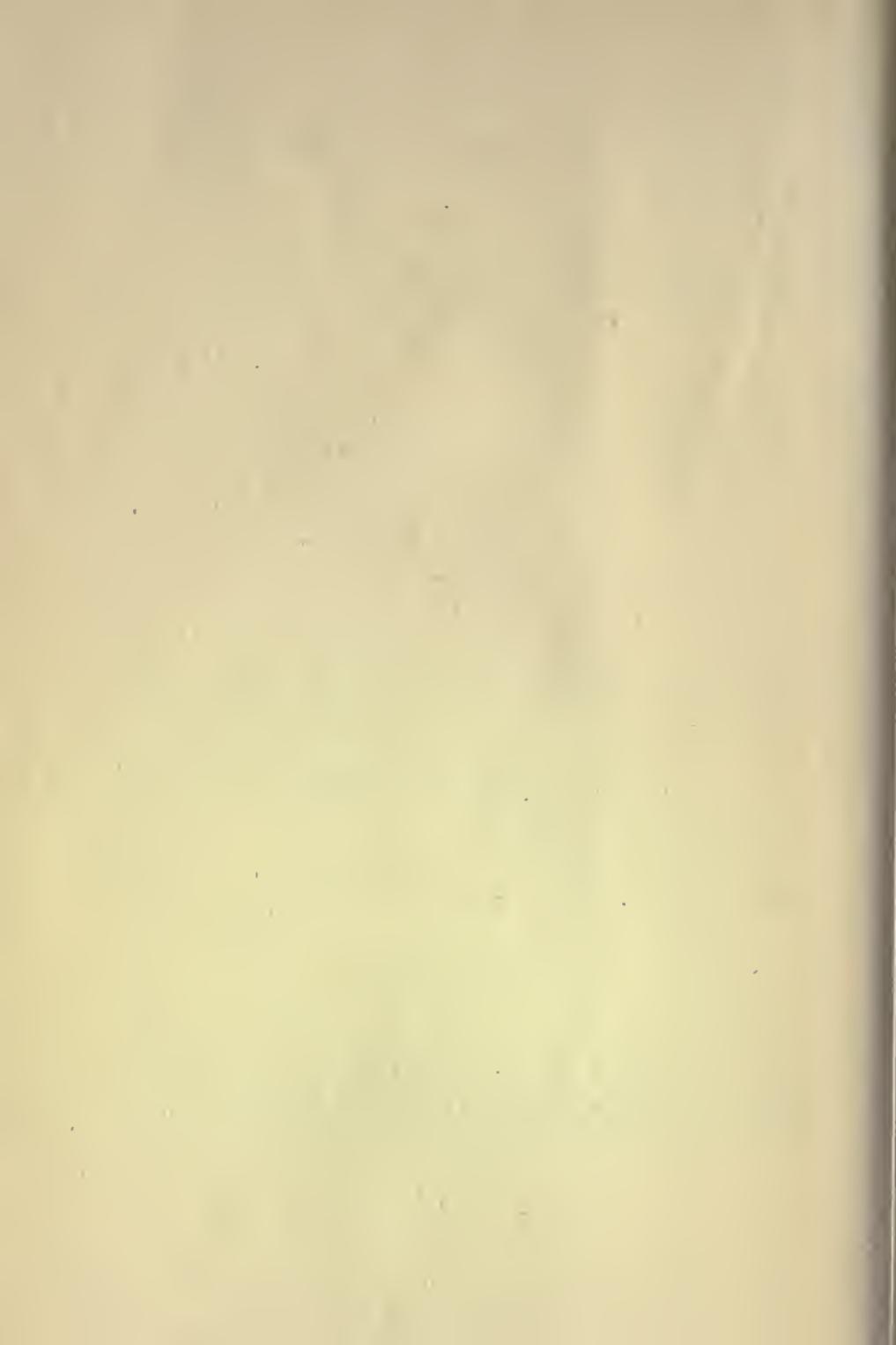
Then spake fair Venus' son, that proud victorious
boy,
And said, you dainty dame, since that you be so
coy,
I will so pluck your plumes that you shall say no
more
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Importune me no more.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

When he had spake these words such change grew
in my breast,
That neither night nor day I could take any rest.
Then, lo! I did repent, that I had said before
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Importune me no more.

E. of O.

Note.—From an ancient M.S. Miscellany, signed E. of O. In the Rawlinson M.S. it is attributed to Queen Elizabeth. Compare Stanza 2 with :
“ Which far exceeds his barren skill to show ” (Lucrece st. 12.)
“ Therefore, be gone, solicit me no more ” (Two Gent., V. 4.)



SECTION II.

SELECTED LYRICS FROM LYLY'S PLAYS.

1580 to 1587.

Age 30 to 37.

Period of the great Elizabethan transition.

(See introduction lxiv.)

During these years we may suppose that the "Shakespeare" work was taking shape. A play of "Hamlet" appeared at the close of the period.

XXV.

Song of Apelles.

Cupid and my Campaspe play'd
At cards for kisses, Cupid paid ;
He stakes his quiver, bow and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows ;
Loses them too ; then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on 's cheek (but none knows how),
With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin ;
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes ;
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
O Love ! has she done this to thee,
What shall (alas !) become of me ?

Note.—From Campaspe. Compare “I saw her coral lips to move.”
Taming of Shrew (I. 1).

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

XXVI.

Song of Trico.

What bird so sings yet so does wail ?

O, 'tis the ravish'd nightingale,

Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu, she cries,

And still her woes at midnight rise.

Brave prick song ! Who is't now we hear ?

None but the lark so shrill and clear ;

Now at heaven's gates she claps her wings,

The morn not waking till she sings.

Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat

Poor Robin red-breast tunes his note ;

Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing

Cuckoo, to welcome in the spring,

Cuckoo, to welcome in the spring.

Note.—From "Campaspe." Compare, "Desire" (poem IV. 1); "Romeo and Juliet" (III. 5); the concluding song in L.L.L.; and specially lines 6, 7 and 8 in the above with Sonnet 29.

"Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth sings hymns *at heaven's gate*,"

and

"Hark ! hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings."
(*Cymbeline* II., 3, song).

XXVII.

Song to Bacchus (Trio).

Arm, arm, the foe comes on apace.
What's that red nose and sulphury face ?
'Tis the hot leader.

What's his name ?
Bacchus, a captain of plump fame :
A goat the beast on which he rides,
Fat grunting swine run by his sides,
His standard bearer fears no knocks,
For he's a drunken butter-box,
Who when ith' red field thus he revels,
Cries out " ten towsan ton of Tivells."
What's he so swaggers in the van ?
O ! that's a roaring Englishman,
Who in deep healths does so excel,
From Dutch and French he bears the bell.
What victualers follow Bacchus' camps ?
Fools, fiddlers, panders, pimps and ramps.
See, see, the battle now grows hot,
Here legs fly, here goes heads to th' pot
Here whores and knaves toss broken glasses,
Here all the soldiers look like asses.
What man e'er heard such hideous noise ?
O ! that's the vintner's bawling boys.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

Anon, anon, the trumpets are,
Which call them to the fearful bar.
Rush in, and let's our forces try.
O no, for see they fly, they fly!
And so will I,
 And I,
 And I.
'Tis a hot day in drink to die.

Notes.—From "Sapho and Phao." Compare line 4 with "Plump
acchus" (Ant. and Cleo., II. 7).

XXVIII.

Vulcan's Song (in making arrows)

My shag-hair Cyclops, come, let's ply
Our Lemnion hammers lustily ;

By my wife's sparrows,
I swear these arrows
Shall singing fly
Through many a wanton's eye.

These headed are with golden blisses,
These silver ones feather'd with kisses,

But this of lead
Strikes a clown dead,
When in a dance
He falls in a trance,
To see his black-brow lass not buss him,
And then whines out for death t'untruss him.
So, so, our work being done let's play
Holiday, boys, cry holiday.

Note.—From Sapho and Phao.

XXIX.

Sapho's Song.

O cruel love! on thee I lay
My curse, which shall strike blind the day :
Never may sleep with velvet hand
Charm thine eyes with sacred wand ;
Thy jailers shall be hopes and fears ;
Thy prison mates, groans, sighs and tears,
Thy play to wear out weary times,
Fantastic passions, vows and rhymes ;
Thy bread be frowns, thy drink be gall,
Such as when you Phao call.
The bed thou liest on be despair ;
Thy sleep, fond dreams ; thy dreams, long care ;
Hope (like thy fool) at thy bed's head,
Mock thee, till madness strike thee dead.

Notes.—From Sapho and Phao. Compare with Oxford's poems on Desire (V. and VI.) and their connections with Shakespeare (M.N.D., I. i.)

XXX.

Song: The Amorous Knight
(Trio).

Here snores Tophas,
That amorous ass,
Who loves Dipsas
With face so sweet,
Nose and chin meet.

At sight of her each Fury skips,
And flings into her lap their whips.

Holla, holla, in his ear,
The witch sure thrust her fingers there,
Cramp him or wring the fool by th' nose
Or clap some burning flax to his toes.

What music's best to wake him,
Baw, wow, let bandogs shake him,
Let adders hiss in's ear,
Else ear-wigs wriggle there.

No, let him batten, when his tongue
Once goes, a cat is not worse strung ;
But if he ope nor mouth nor eyes,
He may in time sleep himself wise.

Note. —From *Endymion*. Compare Falstaff in "Merry Wives."

XXXI.

Song of the Fairies.

Pinch him, pinch him, black and blue,
Saucy mortals must not view
What the Queen of Stars is doing,
Nor pry into our fairy wooing.

Pinch him blue,
And pinch him black.
Let him not lack

Sharp nails to pinch him blue and red,
Till sleep hath rock'd his addle head.

For the trespass he hath done,
Spots o'er all his flesh shall run,
Kiss Endymion, kiss his eyes,
Then to our Midnight Heidegyes.

Note.—From Endymion. Compare with Song of Fairies in “Merry Wives” (V. 5), and “Pinch us black and blue,” Comedy of Errors (II. 2).

XXXII.

The Song of Pan.

Pan's Syrinx was a girl indeed,
Though now she's turn'd into a reed,
From that dear reed Pan's pipe does come,
A pipe that strikes Apollo dumb ;
Nor flute, nor lute, nor gittern can
So chant it as the pipe of Pan ;
Cross garter'd swains and dairy girls,
With faces smug and round as pearls,
When Pan's shrill pipe begins to play,
With dancing wear out night and day :
The bag-pipes drone his hum lays by,
When Pan sounds up his minstrelsy.
His minstrelsy ! O base ! This quill,
Which at my mouth with wind I fill,
Puts me in mind though her I miss,
That still my Syrinx' lips I kiss.

Note.—From *Midas*.

XXXIII.

Song to Apollo.

Sing to Apollo, God of Day,
Whose golden beams with morning play,
And make her eyes so brightly shine,
Aurora's face is called divine.

Sing to Phœbus, and that throne
Of diamonds which he sits upon ;

Iô pæans let us sing
To physic's and to poesie's king.

Crown all his altars with bright fire,
Laurels bind about his lyre,
A Daphnean coronet for his head,
The Muses dance about his bed ;
When on his ravishing lute he plays,
Strew his temple round with bays.

Iô pæans let us sing
To the glittering Delian king.

Note. — From Midas. Compare with Oxford's "What cunning can express" (III.) and "A Crown of Bays, &c." (XIII.)

XXXIV.

Tooth-ache Song (Trio).

O my teeth ! dear barber ease me,
Tongue tell me why my teeth disease me.
O, what will rid me of this pain ?
Some pellitory fetcht from Spain.
Take mastick else.

Mastick's a patch ;
Mastick does many a fool's face catch.
If such a pain should breed the horn,
'Twere happy to be cuckolds born.
Should beards with such an ache begin,
Each boy to th' bone would scrub his chin,
His teeth now ache not.

Caper then,
And cry up chequer'd apron men.
There is no trade but shaves,
For barbers are trimm knaves,
Some are in shaving so profound,
By tricks they shave a kingdom round.

XXXV.

Apollo's Song to Daphne.

My Daphne's hair is twisted gold,
Bright stars a-piece her eyes do hold,
My Daphne's brow enthrones the Graces,
My Daphne's beauty stains all faces,
On Daphne's cheek grow rose and cherry,
On Daphne's lip a sweeter berry,
Daphne's snowy hand but touch'd does melt,
And then no heavenlier warmth is felt,
My Daphne's voice tunes all the spheres,
My Daphne's music charms all ears,
Fond am I thus to sing her praise,
These glories now are turn'd to bays.

Note.—From *Midas.* Compare with Oxford's poem “A Crown of Bays, &c.” (XIII.)

XXXVI.

Song of Cupid.

O yes, O yes, if any maid,
Whom leering Cupid has betray'd
To frowns of spite, to eyes of scorn,
And would in madness now see torn
The boy in pieces ;

Let her come
Hither, and lay on him her doom.

O yes, O yes, has any lost
A heart, which many a sigh has cost ;
Is any cozened of a tear,
Which, as a pearl, disdain does wear ?
Here stands the thief, let her but come
Hither, and lay on him her doom.

Is any one undone by fire,
And turn'd to ashes through desire ?
Did ever any lady weep,
Being cheated of her golden sleep
Stol'n by sick thoughts ?

The pirate's found,
And in her tears he shall be drown'd.
Read his inditement, let him hear
What he's to trust to : boy, give ear.

Note.—From Gallathea.

XXXVII.

Song: Cupid and Venus (Duet).

O Cupid ! monarch over kings,
Wherefore hast thou feet and wings ?
It is to show how swift thou art,
When thou wound'st a tender heart :
Thy wings being clipt and feet held still,
Thy bow so many could not kill.

It is all one in Venus' wanton school,
Who highest sits, the wise man or the fool.

Fools in love's college
Have far more knowledge
To read a woman over,
Than a neat prating lover.
Nay, 'tis confess,
That fools please women best.

Note. —From "Mother Bombie."

SECTION III.

Poems XXXVIII. to XLVIII.

SELECTION OF POEMS
WHICH APPEARED IN
“ENGLAND’S HELICON”

In 1600 or 1614, signed “Ignoto.”
(See introduction liii-l ix.)

The first of these poems are connected with the Shakespeare period proper, through Marlowe.

Note. — It will be observed that nearly all the following poems are Pastorals, though selected on quite other grounds. “England’s Helicon,” moreover contains but one poem with Oxford’s signature. This had been already published some years before, so that concealment of authorship was not possible; but the word “cunning” in the first line was altered to “Shepherd,” thereby converting it, too, into a Pastoral, and thus strengthening the theory that Oxford was in touch with the publishers.

XXXVIII.

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd.

In "England's Helicon" this poem follows immediately upon, and is a reply to Marlowe's poem "Come live with me and be my love." It needs, therefore, to be read in conjunction with Marlowe's verses to which it alludes throughout.

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold ;
And Philomel becometh dumb ;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward Winter reckoning yields ;
A honey tongue a heart of gall,
In fancy's spring but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe in reason rotten.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

Ignoto.

Note.—The above verses, which in “England’s Helicon” are preceded immediately by Marlowe’s poem, and then followed by “Ignoto’s” second reply, which we give next, thus form part of a very interesting group. Marlowe’s poem, *along with the first stanza of ‘Ignoto’s’ reply*, had already appeared in Jaggard’s piratical issue of the “Passionate Pilgrim,” and may be read in most collected editions of “Shakespeare’s” works, as being from the hand of the great dramatist. Again, in the “Merry Wives” (III. 1) Parson Evans quotes from two of these stanzas of Marlowe’s, throwing in a phrase from the Psalms suggestive of the versifying of the early court poets; and in “As you like it” (III. 5) “Shakespeare” makes a direct personal reference to Marlowe as “dead Shepherd.” Some kind of a connection between Shakespeare and “Ignoto” through Marlowe is therefore clearly established. A comparison of “Ignoto’s” reply with Marlowe’s original poem shows the unquestionable superiority of the former, which is further strengthened by an examination of “Ignoto’s” next poem. Most people will agree that both are such as Shakespeare might have written, and also that Ignoto’s first reply is that of an older man to a young one, Marlowe having died in 1593, at the age of twenty-nine, when Oxford was forty-three. The double folly and reason paradox at the end of verse four is characteristic, too, of Oxford.

This poem was originally ascribed to Raleigh, but a slip on which “Ignoto” is printed is pasted over the initials, S.W.R.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

XXXIX.

**Another of the same nature made
since.**

Come live with me and be my dear,
And we will revel all the year,
In plains and groves, on hills and dales,
Where fragrant air breathes sweetest gales.

There shall you have the beauteous pine,
The cedar and the spreading vine ;
And all the woods to be a screen,
Lest Phœbus kiss my summer's queen.

The seat for your disport shall be,
Over some river in a tree,
Where silver sands and pebbles sing
Eternal ditties with the spring.

There shall you see the nymphs at play,
And how the satyrs spend the day ;
The fishes gliding on the sands,
Offering their bellies to your hands.

The birds with heavenly tunèd throats,
Possess woods' echoes with sweet notes,
Which to your senses will impart
A music to inflame the heart.

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

Upon the bare and leafless oak,
The ringdoves' wooings will provoke
A colder blood than you possess,
To play with me and do no less.

In bowers of laurel trimly dight,
We will outwear the silent night,
While flora busy is to spread
Her richest treasure on our bed.

Ten thousand glow-worms shall attend
And all their sparkling lights shall spend,
All to adorn and beautify
Your lodging with most majesty.

Then in mine arms will I enclose,
Lily's fair mixture with the rose,
Whose nice perfection in love's play,
Shall tune me to the highest key.

Thus as we pass the welcome night
In sportful pleasures and delight,
The nimble fairies on the grounds
Shall dance and sing melodious sounds.

If these may serve for to entice
Your presence to Love's paradise,
Then come with me and be my dear,
And we will straight begin the year.

Ignoto.

Note.—A. H. Bullen does not say whether, in this case, "Ignoto" is on a printed slip. If not, a very peculiar situation is presented, in view of the heading to the poem. For it would then appear that someone acting for "Ignoto" had managed to insert this poem between the time of the printing of its companion and the stitching of the volume. Note the "lily and rose" of stanza 9, and compare with Oxford's poem, "What cunning can express." These two poems seem to be pre-eminently "Shakespearean."

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

XL.

The Shepherd's Description of Love.

MELIBŒUS. Shepherd what's love, I pray thee tell ?

FAUSTUS. It is that fountain and that well,
Where pleasure and repentence dwell ;
It is perhaps that sauncing bell,
That tolls all in to heaven or hell,
And this is Love as I heard tell.

MELI. Yet what is love, I prithee say ?

FAUST. It is a work on holiday,
It is December match'd with May,
When lusty bloods in fresh array
Hear ten months after of the play :
And this is Love as I hear say.

MELI. Yet what is love, good shepherd sain ?

FAUST. It is a sunshine mix'd with rain,
It is a tooth-ache, or like pain,
It is a game where none doth gain ;
The lass saith no, and would full
fain ;
And this is Love, as I hear sain.

MELI. Yet shepherd, what is love I pray ?

FAUST. It is a yea, it is a nay,

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

A pretty kind of sporting fray,
It is a thing will soon away,
Then nymphs take vantage while ye
may :
And this is Love, as I hear say.

MELI.

Yet, what is love, good shepherd show?
A thing that creeps, it cannot go,
A prize that passeth to and fro,
A thing for one, a thing for moe,
And he that proves shall find it so :
And, shepherd, this is Love, I trow.

FAUST.

Ignoto.

Note.—This poem was originally subscribed S.W.R. (Sir Walter Raleigh). Over this a slip with the word "Ignoto" has been pasted. "It had been printed with no distinction of dialogue in the *Phœnix Nest* (1593)." —A.H.B. Compare with "As you like it" (V. 2) :

"Good shepherd tell this youth what 'tis to love."

In view of "Ignoto's" connection with Marlowe, and "Shakespeare's" reference to him in this play as the "dead shepherd," the name Faustus chosen for the shepherd is peculiar and highly significant. The poem itself is conceived on the lines of Virgil's "Eclogues," from which even the name "Melibœus" is taken. The name of the shepherd, Faustus, introduces therefore rather an alien element, but for its connection with Marlowe. Melibœus, the shepherd who had lost his lands (Virgil, Eclogue I.) has, in this matter, a suggestion of Oxford, and may have been selected on that account; whilst the first words of Virgil's Melibœus contain the idea of Oxford's echo poem, "You . . teach the woods to echo back the name of your fair Amaryllis." Compare also the style of this poem with Oxford's "Desire" poems; and with XVI and XVIII.

XLI.

Old Melibœus' Song, Courting His Nymph.

Love's Queen, long waiting for her true-love,
Slain by a boar which he had chased,
Left off her tears, and me embraced.
She kiss'd me sweet, and call'd me new Love ;
With my silver hair she toy'd,
In my staid looks she joy'd ;
"Boys," she said, "breed beauty's sorrow,
Old men cheer it even and morrow."

My face she named the seat of favour,
All my defects her tongue defended,
My shape she praised but most commended
My breath, more sweet than balm in savour.
"Be, old man, with me delighted,
Love for love shall be requited."
With her toys at last she won me,
Now she coys that hath undone me.

Ignoto.

Note.—In the 1600 edition this was first ascribed to Mr. Fulke Greville, "Ignoto" being pasted over the signature. In the 1614 edition there is no signature. Compare with Shakespeare's sonnet 138, and observe the note on Melibœus, attached to the preceding poem.

XLII.

A Nymph's Disdain of Love.

“ Hey, down, a down ! ” did Dian sing,
Amongst her virgins sitting ;
“ Than love there is no vainer thing,
For maidens most unfitting.”
And so think I, with a down, down, derry.

When women knew no woe,
But lived themselves to please,
Men’s feigning guiles they did not know :
The ground of their disease.
Unborn was false suspect,
No thought of jealousy ;
From wanton toys and fond affect,
The virgin’s life was free,
“ Hey, down, a down ! ” did Dian sing, &c.

At length men usèd charms,
To which what maids gave ear,
Embracing gladly endless harms,
Anon enthralled were.
Thus women welcomed woe,
Disguised in name of love,
A jealous hell a painted show :
So shall they find that prove.
“ Hey, down, a down ! ” did Dian sing,

POEMS *of* EDWARD DE VERE

Amongst her virgins sitting ;
“ Than love there is no vainer thing,
For maidens most unfitting.”
And so think I, with a down down derry.
Ignoto.

Note.—Compare the diction of this poem with that of the Lyly songs
and also with such of Oxford's as “The Forsaken Man.” (XIII.)

XLIII.

Dispraise of Love and Lovers' Follies.

If love be life I long to die,
Live they that list for me ;
And he that gains the most thereby,
A fool at least shall be ;
But he that feels the sorest fits,
'Scapes with no less than loss of wits.
Unhappy life they gain
Which love do entertain !

In day by feignèd looks they live,
By lying dreams in night,
Each frown a deadly wound doth give,
Each smile a false delight.
If't hap their lady pleasant seem,
It is for others' love they deem ;
If void she seem of joy,
Disdain doth make her coy.

Such is the peace that lovers find,
Such is the life they lead,
Blown here and there with every wind,
Like flowers in the mead ?

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

Now war, now peace, now war again,
Desire, despair, delight, disdain ;
Though dead, in midst of life ;
In peace and yet at strife.

Ignoto.

Note.—This poem appeared first in the 1614 edition of “England’s Helicon.” Many interesting resemblances to Oxford’s verses may be traced in it. Compare specially poems V. and XVIII.

The Shepherd's Slumber.

In peascod time, when hound to horn
 Gives ear till buck be kill'd,
 And little lads with pipes of corn
 Sat keeping beasts a-field,
 I went to gather strawberries tho,
 By woods and groves full fair ;
 And parch'd my face with Phœbus so,
 In walking in the air,
 That down I laid me by a stream,
 With boughs all over-clad ;
 And there I met the strangest dream
 That ever shepherd had.

Methought I saw each Christmas game,
 Each revel all and some,
 And everything that I can name,
 Or may in fancy come.
 The substance of the sights I saw
 In silence pass they shall,
 Because I lack the skill to draw
 The order of them all ;
 But Venus shall not pass my pen,
 Whose maidens in disdain
 Did feed upon the hearts of men
 That Cupid's bow had slain.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

And that blind boy was all in blood,
Be-bath'd up to the ears,
And like a conqueror he stood,
And scornèd lover's tears.
“ I have,” quoth he, “ more hearts at call
Than Cæsar could command,
And like the deer I make them fall,
That runneth o'er the land.
One drops down here, another there ;
In bushes as they groan,
I bend a scornful careless ear
To hear them make their moan.”

“ Ah, sir,” quoth Honest Meaning then,
“ Thy boy-like brags I hear ;
When thou hast wounded many a man,
As huntsman doth the deer,
Becomes it thee to triumph so ?
Thy mother wills it not ?
For she had rather break thy bow,
Than thou should'st play the sot.”
“ What saucy merchant speaketh now ? ”
Said Venus in her rage ;
“ Art thou so blind thou know'st not how
I govern every age ? ”

My son doth shoot no shaft in waste,
To me the boy is bound ;
He never found a heart so chaste,
But he had power to wound.”

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

“ Not so, fair goddess,” quoth Free-will,

“ In me there is a choice ;

And cause I am of mine own ill

If I in thee rejoice.

And when I yield myself a slave

To thee, or to thy son,

Such recompense I ought not have,

If things be rightly done.”

“ Why, fool,” stepp’d forth Delight and said,

“ When thou art conquer’d thus,

Then, lo ! dame Lust, that wanton maid,

Thy mistress is, I wus.

And Lust is Cupid’s darling dear,

Behold her where she goes ;

She creeps the milk-warm flesh so near,

She hides her under close,

Where many privy thoughts do dwell,

A heaven here on earth ;

For they have never mind of hell,

They think so much on mirth.”

“ Be still, Good Meaning,” quoth Good

Sport,

“ Let Cupid triumph make ;

For sure his kingdom shall be short,

If we no pleasure take.

Fair Beauty and her play-pheers gay,

The virgins vestal too,

Shall sit and with their fingers play,

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

As idle people do.
If Honest Meaning fall to frown,
And I, Good Sport, decay,
Then Venus' glory will come down
And they will pine away."

"Indeed," quoth Wit, "thus your device
With strangeness must be wrought ;
And where you see these women nice
And looking to be sought,
With scowling brows their follies check,
And so give them the fig ;
Let Fancy be no more at beck
When Beauty looks so big."
When Venus heard how they conspired
To murther women so,
Methought, indeed, the house was fired
With storms and lightnings thro'.

The thunderbolt through windows burst,
And in there steps a wight,
Which seem'd some soul or sprite accurst,
So ugly was the sight.
"I charge you, ladies all," quoth he,
"Look to yourselves in haste ;
For if that men so wilful be,
And have their thoughts so chaste,
That they can tread on Cupid's breast,
And march on Venus' face,
Then they shall sleep in quiet rest,
When you shall wail your case ! "

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

With that had Venus all in spite
Stirr'd up the dames to ire ;
And Lust fell cold, and Beauty white
Sat babbling with Desire ;
Whose mutt'ring words I might not mark,
Much whispering there arose ;
The day did lower, the sun wax'd dark,
Away each lady goes.
But whither went this angry flock ?
Our Lord himself doth know.
Wherewith full loudly crew the cock,
And I awakèd so.

A dream, quoth I, a dog it is,
I take thereon no keep ;
I gage my head such toys as this
Doth spring from lack of sleep.

Ignoto.

Note.—In the 1600 edition of England's Helicon this is signed "Ignoto"; in the 1614 edition it is without signature. Not only the fact of the dialogue, but even the distinctive manner of leading up to it, is suggestive of Oxford's poems on Desire.

The Unknown Shepherd's Complaint.

My flocks feed not,
My ewes breed not,
My rams speed not,
All is amiss.

Love is denying,
Faith is defying,
Heart's renying,
Causer of this.

All my merry jigs are quite forgot,
All my lady's love is lost, God wot ;
Where her faith was firmly fixed in love,
There a nay is placed without remove.

One silly cross

Wrought all my loss ;

O frowning fortune, cursèd fickle dame !

For now I see,

Inconstancy

More in women than in men remain.

In black mourn I,
All fears scorn I,
Love hath forlorn me,
Living in thrall ;
Heart is bleeding,

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

All help needing,
O cruel speeding,
Fraughted with gall.

My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal,
My wether's bell rings doleful knell.
My curtal dog that wont to have played,
Plays not at all but seems afraid ;
With sighs so deep,
Procures to weep,
In howling-wise to see my doleful plight.
How sighs resound,
Through heartless ground,
Like a thousand vanquish'd men in bloody fight.

Clear wells spring not,
Sweet birds sing not,
Green plants bring not
Forth their dye ;
Herds stand weeping,
Flocks all sleeping,
Nymphs back peeping
Fearfully.

All our pleasure known to us poor swains,
All our merry meeting on the plains,
All our evening sports from us are fled,
All our love is lost, for love is dead.

Farewell sweet Love
Thy like ne'er was
For sweet content, the cause of all my moan ;

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

Poor Corydon

Must live alone ;

Other help for him I see that there is none.

Ignoto.

Note.—In “England’s Helicon,” the poem which immediately precedes this, is the only piece of “Shakespeare” poetry that the volume contains, namely, the lines beginning: “On a day (alack the day !)” from “Love’s Labour’s Lost”; and the two poems had already appeared in the same order, along with the “Passionate Pilgrim” (see note to the first “Ignoto” poem). In 1597 it had appeared anonymously. Briefly, it is a mystery piece with “Shakespeare” connections of some kind. This is why it is included here. Like some others of the “Ignoto” poems it seems to belong to the secret poets of the Oxford school, who imitated his mannerisms but lacked his genius. (See p. xxxviii.)
The last line :

“Other help for him I see that there is none,”
almost reproduces Oxford’s 1576 line :

“And help for me there is none sure.”

It has therefore its Oxford connection too. Compare with poem XII.

A. H. Bullen remarks: “There is good ground for attributing this poem to Richard Barnefield, for the poem that follows, which is headed ‘Another by the same shepherd,’ undoubtedly belongs to Barnefield.”

XLVI.

As it fell upon a day.

As it fell upon a day,
In the merry month of May
Sitting in a pleasant shade,
Which a group of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring,
Everything did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone ;
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast against a thorn,
And there sung the doleful'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie ! now would she cry ;
Teru, teru, by-and-bye.

That to hear her so complain
Scarce I could from tears refrain,
For her griefs so lively shown
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah, thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,
None takes pity on thy pain.
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee ;
Ruthless beasts, they will not cheer thee ;
King Pandion he is dead,
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead ;

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

All thy fellow birds do sing,
Careless of thy sorrowing ;
Even so, poor bird, like thee,
None alive will pity me.

Ignoto.

Note.—“These verses are from a poem of Richard Barnefield. In sonnets appended to *The Passionate Pilgrim* the poem is printed *in extenso*.”—A. H. BULLEN.

There are also slight verbal differences, and as “*The Passionate Pilgrim*” was published the year before “*England’s Helicon*,” it is probable that this “truncated” version is taken from an independent source. The lines added to the above in Barnefield and the “*Passionate Pilgrim*,” moreover, introduce alien matter, and spoil the finish of the poem. They continue :

“Whilst as fickle Fortune smiled,
Thou and I were both beguiled.
Every one that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery.”

I cannot think they are from the same pen; whilst a comparison of the poem with the piece in “*Love’s Labour’s Lost*,” “*On a day*” (IV. 3), strengthens the conviction that “*Ignoto*” was “*Shakespeare*,” and that Barnefield had appropriated and extended lines composed by the dramatist. Certainly this group of three poems, one which “*Shakespeare*” had already published as his, followed by two by “*Ignoto*,” show clearly a connection between the two.

XLVII.

The Shepherd to the Flowers.

Sweet violets, Love's paradise, that spread
Your gracious odours, which you couchèd bear
Within your paly faces,
Upon the gentle wing of some calm breathing wind,
That plays amidst the plain,
If by the favour of propitious stars you gain
Such grace as in my lady's bosom place to find,
Be proud to touch those places ;
And when her warmth your moisture forth doth
wear,

Whereby her dainty parts are sweetly fed,
Your honours of the flowery meads I pray,
You pretty daughters of the earth and sun
With mild and seemly breathing straight display
My bitter sighs that have my heart undone.

Vermillion roses that with new day's rise
Display your crimson folds, fresh looking, fair,
Whose radiant bright disgraces
The rich adorned rays of roseate rising morn.
Ah ! if her virgin's hand
Do pluck you pure, ere Phœbus view the land,
And veil your gracious pomp in lovely Nature's
scorn ;
If chance my mistress traces

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

Fast by your flowers to take the Summer's air,
Then, woeful blushing, tempt her glorious eyes.
To spread their tears, Adonis' death reporting,
And tell Love's torments, sorrowing for her friend,
Whose drops of blood within your leaves con-
sorting,

Report fair Venus' moan to have no end.

Then may remorse, in pitying of my smart,
Dry up my tears, and dwell within her heart.

Ignoto.

Note.—This poem is included for its superior quality, and also because it is signed “*Ignoto.*” It does not, however, seem to be from the same pen as the best of the others. It was first printed anonymously in *The Phoenix’ Nest* (1593).

XLVIII.

An Heroical Poem.

My wanton muse that whilom wont to sing
Fair beauty's praise, and Venus' sweet delight,
Of late had changed the tenor of her string
To higher tunes than serve for Cupid's fight :
Shrill trumpets' sound, sharp swords and lances
strong,
War, blood, and death were matter of her song.

The god of love by chance had heard thereof,
That I was proved a rebel to his crown ;
"Fit words for war," quoth he, with angry scoff,
"A likely man to write of Mars his frown ;
Well are they sped whose praises he shall write,
Whose wanton pen can nought but love indite."

This said, he whisk'd his party-colour'd wings,
And down to earth he comes more swift than
thought ;
Then to my heart in angry haste he flings,
To see what change these news of wars had
wrought.
He pries, and looks, he ransacks ev'ry vein,
Yet finds he nought save love and lover's pain.

P O E M S *of* E D W A R D D E V E R E

Then I that now perceived his needless fear,
With heavy smile began to plead my cause ;
" In vain," quoth I, " this endless grief I bear,
In vain I strive to keep thy grievous laws,
If after proof so often trusty found,
Unjust suspect condemn me as unsound.

" Is this the guerdon of my faithful heart ?
Is this the hope on which my life is stay'd ?
Is this the ease of never-ceasing smart ?
Is this the price that, for my pains, is paid ?
Yet better serve fierce Mars in bloody field,
Where death or conquest, end or joy doth yield.

" Long have I served ; what is my pay but pain ?
Oft have I sued ; what gain I but delay ?
My faithful love is quited with disdain,
My grief a game, my pen is made a play ;
Yea, love that doth in other favour find,
In me is counted madness out of kind.

" And last of all, but grievous most of all,
Thyself, sweet Love, hath kill'd me with suspect.
Could Love believe that I from Love would fall ?
Is war of force to make me Love neglect ?
No, Cupid knows my mind is faster set,
Than that by war I should my Love forget.

" My Muse indeed to war inclines her mind,
The famous acts of worthy Brute to write ;

POEMS of EDWARD DE VERE

To whom the gods this island's rule assign'd,
Which long he sought by seas through Neptune's
spite :

With such conceits my busy head doth swell,
But in my heart nought else but love doth dwell.

“ And in this war thy part is not the least ;
Here shall my Muse Brute's noble love declare;
Here shalt thou see thy double love increas'd
Of fairest twins that ever lady bare.

Let Mars triumph in armour shining bright,
His conquer'd arms shall be thy triumph's light.

“ As he the world, so thou shalt him subdue,
And I thy glory through the world will ring,
So by my pains thou wilt vouchsafe to rue
And kill despair.” With that he whisk'd his
wing,

And bid me write, and promis'd wished rest ;
But sore I fear false hope will be the best.

Ignoto.

Note.—This poem was added in the 1614 edition. It had appeared in Davison's “Poetical Rhapsody,” signed A.W. This, we think, is somewhat against its being from the same pen as others signed “Ignoto”; nor do we think it reflects the same intellect or technical skill. Line 2 does, however, suggest an allusion to “Lucrece” and “Venus” respectively; whilst the close of the first stanza suggests “Shakespeare's” turning to tragedy in his later years. The other poems, then added from the same source, we do not include.

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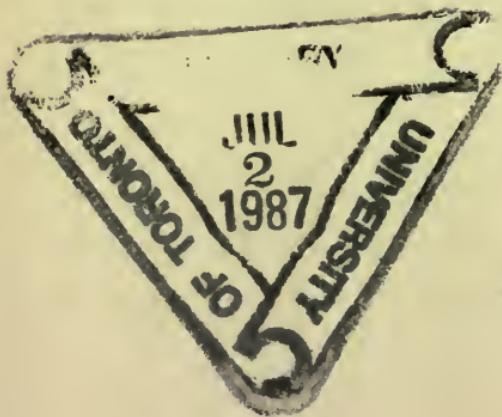
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