

that will completely lay to rest the problem of the *misplaced gender* of the main body of the sonnets is to assume that *Shakespeare was a woman*. A fantastic idea? Hardly, when for years Mary, Countess of Pembroke, has been seriously considered as a candidate for Shakespeare's position. T. W. Baldwin is of the opinion that both the "dark lady" sonnets of the 127-152 series and the allusion to a lady in Sonnets 40, 41, and 42 are purely literary fictional fabrications. If such be the proper interpretation, then for the sonnets to have been written by a woman makes even greater sense. It would be quite natural for a woman to feel called upon to show her esteem and admiration for a lovely boy.

In the two books of Frank Harris, *The Man Shakespeare* and *The Women of Shakespeare*, the author many times points out the womanly qualities of Shakespeare. In the introduction to *The Women of Shakespeare* he makes this explanation about choosing a title for the book: "Here again Shakespeare will reveal himself as the gentle, irresolute, meditative poet-thinker-lover we learned to know in the Orsino-Hamlet-Antony, an aristocrat of most delicate sensibilities and sympathetic humour whose chief defects are snobbishness and overpowering sensuality, if indeed this latter quality is not to be reckoned a virtue in an artist or at least an endowment. But the public probably would have misunderstood the title *The Woman Shakespeare*, so I changed it to *The Women of Shakespeare*." Mary Fitton has long been the popular choice for the dubious honor of being the "dark lady" of the sonnets. Mary Fitton was Frank Harris' enthusiastic choice. Toward the end of the book *The Women of Shakespeare*, Harris says: "Mary Fitton was so strong that she seems to have been the positive or masculine element and Shakespeare so gentle-sensitive that he was the feminine element in the strange union. The soul has not always the sex of the body." We agree with but little of what Mr. Harris has to say. For entirely different reasons we can see feminine traits in Shakespeare.

Does Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, fit the time-scale? She does not. In April 1587 she was twenty-five and would hardly fit either the age or the time sonnets. Furthermore, she would be about the last person in the world to have had a love affair with the Earl of Essex or anyone else. Only the year before, her beloved brother had been killed in The Netherlands in battle; Mary was busy with her husband and her young children; apparently she was content and happy except for the shadow of the death of Philip Sidney.



George Elliott Sweet, scientist turned literary detective, is seen with his son, Jerry.

Shakespearian Scientist

A descendant of Sir Francis Drake would naturally be curious about the world his ancestor lived in. George Elliott Sweet, '27chem, '29ms, certainly is, and for years he's been reading all he can find concerning the Elizabethan age. When Sweet isn't traveling around the country in fulfillment of his duties as president of the Sweet Geophysical Company, he may be found at the nearest library. Always the scientist, he likes to dig out facts and sift them for truth; such a sifting process formed the backbone of his new book *Shakespeare the Mystery*, published at Stanford University Press.

Sweet turned down an unsolicited appointment to Annapolis in order to come to O.U. for two degrees in science. He was a college athlete, a hurdler and quarter-miler, but a heart murmur almost put

a stop to that. However, a wise doctor told him to keep running and the murmur would go away. It did.

Sweet's controversial book is dedicated to his son Jerry, just turned 13 and of whom his father writes this: "In the last year in Little League Jerry won ten games and lost two; for all I know he may be pitching for the Sooner Nine some day." He is married to the former Mildren Robison, '36ba, '38Law. The family lives in Malibu, California.

Comments made thus far by first readers of *Shakespeare the Mystery* have ranged from orchids to onions: some are convinced by Sweet's argument, others outraged. Most, though, seem fascinated by the book, which Barbara Bundschu of United Press said "reads like a detective story"—a description with which the editors are inclined to agree.

WE HAVE ANOTHER woman candidate; she fits the age sonnets perfectly, and in April 1587 she fell in love with Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. On May 3, 1587, one Anthony Bagot wrote a letter in which he said, "When she is abroad, nobody with her but my lord of Essex, and at night my lord is at cards, or one game or another with her, that he cometh not to his own lodging till birds sing in the morning." The lady

was none other than England's queen, Elizabeth Tudor. She was fifty-three, her lovely boy but twenty; a much greater discrepancy than between Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning. Elizabeth Tudor was charming at any age and she was a great and noble queen.

The critics specify that Sonnet 104 was written for a birthday or some other kind

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