

THE EARL OF ESSEX

in

La Calprenède, Thomas Corneille,
and Henry Jones

by

Helen Mary Hamilton

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Approved by:

Redacted Signature

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Head of Department

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**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ROBERT DEVEREUX,
SECOND EARL OF ESSEX**

Biographical Sketch of Robert Devereux,
Second Earl of Essex.

Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, was born at Netherwood, Herefordshire, in 1576, and Lytton Strachey (1) gives us a good idea of his ancestry. The family of Devereux was descended from all the great houses of medieval England. The names of Huntingdon, Dorset, Ferris, Bohun, Rivers, Bouchier, Plantagenet, all are on the family tree.

We know very little of his early training and childhood. After the death of his father, who had been created Earl of Essex by Elizabeth, the young Earl was, by an agreement of long standing, placed under the guardianship of Lord Burghley. One of the earliest mentions we have of him is in an anecdote. (2) The story runs that on the occasion of his presence at court when he was about ten years old, the Queen, charmed by the winning manners of the boy, offered to kiss him, but he refused. This has been cited as typical of the relations during later years between the Earl of Essex and the Queen. In his tenth year he was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, where in 1581, at the age of fourteen, he received the degree of Master of Arts. His vacations were passed in the country at one or another of his remote western estates---at Lanfey in Pembrokeshire, or at Chartley in Staffordshire. He enjoyed hunting and all the manly sports, but he also loved reading and wrote well in both English and Latin. His literary tastes were well

known and all the writers of the day refer to him with real affection.

At seventeen he was formally presented at court. From the contemporary accounts we find of him, we picture him as high-strung, sensitive, daring, sometimes foolhardy, but altogether charming. He was very popular and soon came to wield great influence as Elizabeth's favorite. With all the confidence of youth, he felt himself secure in the good graces of the Queen and often tried her temper sorely. As he grew older, he won distinction for his military victories, and with the polish of court life became increasingly attractive personally. Many stories are told (3) of his affairs with the ladies of the court, but his attentions to Elizabeth Brydges, one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, were so marked as to draw forth much criticism.

The Earl was married secretly to Frances Walsingham, the widow of Sir Philip Sidney. On learning of her favorite's marriage, the Queen's anger knew no bounds, and Essex was again restored to favor only when he finally consented that his wife "should live very retired in her mother's house" (4). They had five children, of whom the youngest, Dorothy, was born only a few months before her father's death.

The Earl showed himself personally brave, and altho he was never a military genius, he won several battles, and was especially praised for his victory over the Spanish fleet at Cadiz. When the time came to quell in Ireland a rising rebellion led by the Earl of Tyrone, Essex was the logical

commander. In March, 1599, he was given complete charge, but when he asked to have the Earl of Southampton made a member of his council, Elizabeth refused. However, upon setting out he immediately appointed Southampton General of the Horse. When the news reached the Queen, she revoked the appointment, and Southampton was, for the rest of the campaign, merely in charge of a small troop of cavalry; but he remained a staunch friend to Essex.

The rebellion was chiefly in Ulster, and the rest of Ireland was not generally in arms, so Essex tried to create good-will by knighting a number of the outstanding Irish leaders. While this was entirely within his power, the Queen rebuked him for having exceeded his authority, in appointing too many, and this same charge was later brought against him at the trial.

He next faced the problem of choosing one of two plans of action. He could go into Ulster immediately and with his superior force subdue the rebellion there, at the risk of allowing an uprising in Munster. Or, he could go to Munster, insure quiet in Southern Ireland and then deal with Ulster at his leisure. This latter plan was advised by the Irish Council and is the one which Essex decided upon, although Elizabeth was opposed to it. The action proved unwise in that he used up about half of his force and accomplished little. The Earl of Tyrone, still unconquered, now had the advantage in numbers. However, he refused to fight and arranged with Essex for a six weeks' truce, on the con -

dition that the terms of the agreement be kept secret. This secrecy cast suspicion upon Essex at home.

It was inevitable that such a personage should have enemies at court, and the most powerful of these, Raleigh and Cecil, constantly did everything in their power to prejudice the Queen against him. So long as Essex was at court, they could accomplish little, but in his absence they persuaded Elizabeth to withdraw the authorization previously given him (Appendix A), to return from Ireland to England at any time he saw fit.

When the truce was declared, Essex felt that he needed a further understanding with the Queen. So, using the permission granted him before he left England and disregarding the more recent order to remain in Ireland until all negotiations should be concluded, he left for England to have a personal interview with Elizabeth.

Immediately upon his arrival, Essex went to the Queen's chamber and was graciously received, but within a few hours, was officially summoned to explain his conduct. After a long examination, he was placed in the custody of the Lord Keeper Edgerton. The charges brought against him were: (5)

1. Divers contempts in the late government of Ireland;
2. Making Southampton General of the Horse;
3. Making too many knights in Ireland;
4. The Munster journey;
5. Treating with Tyrone;
6. Coming home without license.

The people cheered Essex and expressed resentment against his confinement, but his popularity proved his undoing, as it aroused the Queen's jealousy and apprehension. The Bishop of London was severely reprimanded for permitting expressions of sympathy for the Earl, and the Bishop of Worcester was called before the Queen for preaching in his behalf.

In March, 1600, the Earl was moved from the Lord Keeper's house to his own estate. His repeated efforts to obtain an interview with the Queen were unsuccessful, and in the eighth month of his imprisonment, she even rejected his letters, a treatment which he complained was not meted out even to traitors. Finally, on Queen's Day 1600, Essex's resentment broke all bounds. With Southampton and a few other trusted friends, he planned to lead a band of armed citizens and force an entrance into the presence of the Queen, there to prove his innocence and obtain his liberty. He started through the streets of London shouting to the people to arm themselves and follow him, that a plot had been made against his life. He put faith in his popularity with the English people, but they were comfortable and prosperous and their loyalty to the Queen prevented their helping him to redress his personal grievances. The consequences of defeat were so serious that many were loath to identify themselves with his cause. As news of the proposed revolt had reached the Palace, all element of surprise was ruined, and Essex and his chief aids were taken as prisoners to the Tower. After this

episode, the further charges of conspiring to depose and slay the Queen and subvert the government; endeavoring to usurp the royal dignity; and leading a rebellion, were added to those already held against him. This rebellion was the climax of the contest between the two political factions--- one led by Robert Cecil, the other by the Earl of Essex. From this time on, Cecil held the upperhand.

The 19th of February 1601, Essex was brought to trial privately with his friend Southampton in Westminster Hall. His noted enemies Cobham, Nottingham, Raleigh and Cecil were among his judges, (Appendix B), and he was refused permission to question them. Laura H. Cadwallader states (6) that testimony against Essex was heard in advance and accepted at the trial. This was an unlawful practice. After several hours, the judges retired to an adjoining room, and the Earl of Essex and the Earl of Southampton were pronounced guilty and sentenced to die on the scaffold. It is said (7) that Elizabeth showed great reluctance to sign the death warrant, and when she finally did, recalled her signature and pardoned Southampton. Then, the 24th of February, 1601, she again affixed her signature, and this time the warrant was duly executed.

The Earl's "murder", as many termed it, caused much disaffection and unrest. Camden is reported as saying (8) that those who spoke worst of Essex's conduct called it ill-advised and rashly indiscreet, but few ever thought it criminal.

There is a legend (Appendix C) which is attested by no historian, but which was widespread even at the time, that Elizabeth had given Essex a ring with the promise of protection whenever he should send it to her. It is said that he intrusted the ring to a lady of the court, but she being jealous of his attentions to another, did not deliver it. She was haunted by remorse, and on her deathbed sent for the Queen and confessed what she had done. Upon hearing her avowal, Elizabeth is reported to have shaken the dying woman, crying, "God may forgive you, but I never will." (9)

Because of the Earl's execution, the Queen became subject to public affronts by the people, and thereafter, whenever she passed through any town or city, especially London, the crowds which greeted her became less numerous and more silent than formerly. (10) The Queen's remorse was noticed and commented upon in letters to their various countries by the French, Scottish and Venetian ambassadors. (11) In a speech given by Elizabeth when Henri IV of France sent his envoy to England, she "is made to acknowledge that she would have pardoned Essex had he appealed to her for mercy and confessed himself worthy of death." (12) She became morbid and given to fits of violent weeping. Never again did she have the whole-hearted admiration of her people. Her strength failed rapidly, and in 1603, two years after the execution of her favorite, she died.

This tragic story has appealed to many writers. The

earliest play was produced in France, in 1638, by La Calprenède, only thirty-seven years after the Earl's death. Forty years later, in 1678, Thomas Corneille treated the subject in a play which remained until the beginning of the nineteenth century in the répertoire of the Comédie Française.

In England, Henry Jones wrote "The Earl of Essex", which was presented in 1753 at the Covent Garden theater. Of these tragedies, Corneille's is the only one, however, which was played for any length of time.

Other plays of minor importance also appeared on the subject. In France, in 1678, a "Comte d'Essex" was produced by l'Abbé Boyer. Reynier describes the relation it bears to the tragedy by Thomas Corneille which had appeared earlier in the same year. Of the latter author he writes: "L'Hôtel de Bourgogne, déserté par ses meilleurs auteurs, lui fit des avances qu'il accepta et, abandonnant Guénégaud sans trop de scrupule, il écrivit pour les 'grands comédiens' le Comte d'Essex.....Il eut la rare fortune d'obtenir dans sa nouveauté le succès qu'il méritait. La troupe de Guénégaud, qu'animait un désir de vengeance, en somme assez naturel, fit tout ce qu'elle put pour le faire tomber; elle en fit même faire une contrefaçon par l'abbé Boyer qui, pour aller plus vite, copia bon nombre de vers dans La Calprenède." (13)

In England, in 1682, John Banks dramatized the story in his "Unhappy Favourite", and in 1749 Henry Brooke presented an "Earl of Essex". (14) In Spain, in 1645, only seven years after La Calprenède had produced the first of the plays on

this subject, Don Antonio Coello wrote his "Tragedia más lastimosa de Amor titulada El Conde de Sex ó Dar la Vida por su Dama". (14a) An Italian translation of the Spanish play, published in 1696 in Bologna under the title, "Il Reo Innocente", is ascribed to Creognini, although there is some doubt as to the real authorship. (15) In Germany, also, W. Laube wrote a "Graf von Essex" which was acted in America in 1868. (12) These plays, however, are not at hand and will not be treated in this thesis.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHORS.

Biographical Sketch of the Authors.

La Calprenède.

Gauthier de Costes de la Calprenède was born at the Château de Toulgan in Périgord in 1614. He studied at Toulouse, and went to Paris in 1632. There, he entered as a cadet in a regiment of guards where he was later promoted to the rank of officer. About 1650, he was made "gentil-homme ordinaire de la chambre du Roi". In 1648, he married Madeleine de Lyée. Edmund Gosse in his "Gossip in a Library" (16) tells that the lady had been married five times before, and hints that La Calprenède showed more courage in his marital adventures than in any other phase of his life. In 1663, while at the Château de Mouflaine, he wished to demonstrate to the ladies his ability with a gun, but the powder exploded in his face and disfigured him. A few months later, in Normandy, he was injured by a horse and he died in October of 1663.

The Biographie Universelle tells us (17) that the Chevalier de La Calprenède was less known for his works than for the verses of Boileau:

"Tout a l'humeur gasconne en un auteur gascon,
Calprenède et Juba parlent du même ton."

"Le Comte d'Essex", a tragedy written in 1637, is the best of La Calprenède's plays. It was presented in 1638, and the last edition was in 1650. All of La Calprenède's dramatic works except this play are detestable. The Cardinal de Richelieu said (18) of one of La Calprenède's tragedies

that the least of its faults was that it was written in "vers lâches", a charge which the author vigorously denied.

THOMAS CORNEILLE

Thomas Corneille was born at Rouen, the 20th of August, 1625, the sixth of the family, when his eldest brother Pierre, who was to be known as the Grand Corneille, was already nineteen years old. He attended the Jesuit college, and wrote a play in Latin verse which so pleased his masters that it was substituted for the annual play given by the students of the school. In the winter of 1642 or 1643, he left school. Upon his father's death three years before, his mother had been named his guardian, but in reality he was under the tutelage of Pierre whose guidance he later mentions with love and gratitude.

From the beginning, Thomas decided to follow the same career as his brother. In 1647, his first play, entitled "Les Engagements du hasard", and taken from "Los Empeños de un acaso" by Calderón, was presented and was a great success. Some people were inclined to the opinion that the recommendation of Pierre was largely responsible for its reception, but Reynier says (19) that: "Pierre Corneille put intéresser ses amis les plus chauds aux débuts de son cadet; mais le gros public applaudit la comédie sans en connaître l'auteur." Thomas did not dare claim his own work, at first, for fear of disgracing a name already made famous by his brother.

This first play was presented not by the troupe du Marais to which Pierre was faithful, but by the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Floridor, the famous actor, was an intimate friend of the Corneille family, and he had recently left the troupe

du Marais to join the Hôtel de Bourgogne. It was undoubtedly he who recommended the play to the troupe and caused them to accept it.

In 1650, Thomas Corneille was married to Marguerite de Lampérière, a sister of his brother's wife. She was four and one-half years older than he. The two households were as one, and after twenty-five years of marriage the two brothers had not yet divided their wives' property. This division was made only when Pierre's death made it necessary.

The younger Corneille's association with the society of the "précieuses" had an influence on his later career. Tradition has it that his brother presented him at the Hôtel de Rambouillet in 1647. He was a regular attendant there, and later when the salon was closed to all but a few intimate friends, Thomas continued to be a welcome guest on his visits to Paris. Among his many influential friends were the Comtesse de Fiesque and the Comtesse de Noailles, both avowed "précieuses". It is to them that he dedicated his "Illustres Ennemis" and "Bérénice."

In 1654, he was working on a play from a comedy of Francisco de Rojas. At the same time, Scarron and l'Abbé de Boisrobert were engaged in the same task. Since Thomas Corneille composed rapidly, he finished his play first. It bore the title, "Les Illustres Ennemis", and was played with great success at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Scarron and Boisrobert were indignant and charged Corneille with stealing the idea. In the quarrel which ensued, Corneille did not lose

his dignity. The only statement he made in his own defense was (20): "Vous connaissez jusques au fond de mon coeur, et vous pouvez répondre pour moi que, quand je n'estimerais pas tous ceux qui écrivent aujourd'hui pour la scène, au point que je les estime, je suis trop persuadé qu'il n'est pas tout à fait beau de marcher sur les pas d'autrui, pour avoir jamais la pensée de m'engager à un dessein où j'aurais été prévenu."

In 1655, appeared Corneille's "Geôlier de soi-même" taken from Calderón, which again conflicted with the work of Scarron. This same year, the troupe du Marais presented Scarron's "Gardien de soi-même". Corneille's was judged the better of the two plays. The noted comedian Jodélet had the leading role and he was so outstanding that the public gave his name to the play. Until the end of the eighteenth century, "Le Geôlier de soi-même" was known only as "Jodelet Prince."

In 1662, Pierre and Thomas Corneille with their families moved to Paris. In 1679 they were living in the same house, and it is during their stay here, doubtless, that the story of the trap-door became current. This famous anecdote, related for the first time by Voisenon, (21) tells that the brothers' workrooms were connected by a trap-door. When Pierre could not think of the rhyme he needed, he would lift the door and ask the help of his brother. Thomas, who worked more easily, would often supply the word. Titon du Tillet in "Le Parnasse français" (22) speaks of Thomas Corneille as "---un vrai dictionnaire poétique français, soit pour la

construction du vers, soit pour la rime."

In 1664, the king issued a proclamation revoking all letters of nobility accorded in Normandy during the previous thirty-four years. Since the Corneilles' father had been granted his title only in 1637, it came within the limits of the revocation. Pierre, however, addressed a beautiful sonnet of remonstrance to the king, and Thomas used his influence to such advantage that they soon received a letter confirming their title. Thereafter, Pierre signed himself simply "Corneille, écuyer", and Thomas took the title of "H. de l'Isle".

After 1655, he produced "Timocrate", "Bérénice", "La Mort de l'Empereur Commode", and several other tragedies. During this time he also wrote a number of comedies, among which are "Le Baron d'Albikrac", "Don César d'Avalos", and "L'Inconnu". In 1677 appeared his arrangement of "Le Festin de Pierre" in verse, which was very successful. Altho it was performed only thirteen times, the play remained in this form until 1819 when it was again printed from the text of Molière. (22a) The time was now ripe for Thomas to return to tragedy, for in 1677, "Phèdre" had failed and Racine had left the theater, Quinault was writing only operas and Pierre Corneille had definitely retired three years before, after the failure of "Suréna". In 1678, Thomas Corneille wrote for the Hôtel de Bourgogne "Le Comte d'Essex". This is assuredly one of his best works. It achieved recognition as such from its very first presentation, remaining until

the beginning of the nineteenth century in the répertoire of the Comédie Française.

In 1684, Pierre Corneille died. This was a severe blow to the devoted younger brother; but one of the finest tributes paid to Thomas's literary ability is the fact that, in spite of the recent failure of several plays, he was unanimously elected to fill his brother's place in the French Academy.

From 1680 on, altho Thomas Corneille ceased to be counted among the outstanding French dramatists of the day, his retirement from the stage by no means put an end to his literary work. He continued to study and became in turn journalist, grammarian, historian and scientist. During his last years, his greatest occupation was the "Dictionnaire universel géographique et historique."

Toward the end of his life, he was harassed on all sides by creditors. He died December 8th, 1709, with only a niece, and his old and faithful secretary near him, and was taken back to Normandy for burial. Perhaps one of the greatest honors to be bestowed on any man of his century was given to him by his associates. De Visé in the "Mercure" for January 1710, says (23): "On avait donné à Corneille, le cadet, le surnom d'honnête homme à cause de la droiture de son coeur généralement connue."

HENRY JONES

Henry Jones was born in Ireland at Beaulieu, near Drogheda, Louth, in 1721, and though apprenticed to a bricklayer, he contrived to study privately. His complimentary verses addressed to the corporation of Drogheda and his lines "On Mr. Pope's Death", attracted the attention of Lord-Chief-Justice Singleton, who lived at Beaulieu, and who thereafter did everything in his power to help the young poet.

In 1745, Jones obtained employment in Dublin, and celebrated the arrival of Lord Chesterfield as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in a poem which was presented to Chesterfield by Singleton. He was liberally rewarded by the Lord-Lieutenant and was encouraged to follow him to London in 1748 where, within a year, with the assistance of Chesterfield and his friends, Jones published by subscription, "Poems on Several Occasions", eight volumes, from which he drew a handsome profit.

Near the end of 1752, he finished the tragedy, "The Earl of Essex". Chesterfield warmly commended it to Colley Cibber, who introduced Jones to the manager of the Covent Garden Theatre, February 21, 1753. (Appendix D). Genest, "History of the Stage" (24) tells us that thanks to the excellent acting of Barry in the title rôle, the tragedy was played seventeen nights during the season to crowded houses, but John Bell in the introduction to the play in the "British Theatre", says that it ran only twelve nights. In either case, it was considered a success not only in London but in Dublin and the provinces. The play was printed soon

after its production and reached a fourth edition in 1770.

The success ruined Jones, whose drunkenness, indolence, coarse manners, and arrogant temper soon disgusted most of his patrons. With Lord Chesterfield, however, by a careful system of hypocrisy, he managed to keep on good terms for some years longer, but at length, offended him by borrowing money from one of his servants.

During this time, Jones had made progress with a tragedy called "Harold", and on this security, raised some money from the book-sellers. His relations with several of the leading actors were friendly, so he sponged on the minor ones and flattered them all.

He continued to sink lower and lower, but even when he was an inmate of sponging-houses, he usually managed to flatter the wife or daughter of the bailiff with verses on her beauty or talents, and thus secure comfortable sleeping quarters. Finally the master of the Bedford Coffee-House at Covent Garden took pity on him and gave him free board and lodging. It is here that he is reported to have died, (25) altho the Dictionary of National Biography tells us that he left his room early one morning, unnoticed, and after being in a state of intoxication for two days, was run over by a wagon in St. Martin's Lane and died in the parish workhouse in April of 1770.

Reddish, the actor of Drury Lane, obtained all^{of} Jones's manuscripts, including "Harold" and three acts of another tragedy named, "The Cave of Idra". This last-named drama

was augmented and completed by Paul Heffernan and was produced March 25, 1774, under the title of "The Heroine of the Cave". It was printed the following year. The fate of "Harold" is unknown.

RÉSUMÉ OF THE PLAYS

Résumé of the Plays.

Le Comte d'Essex, by La Calprenède.

The setting of the play is in the Palace and in the Tower at London. When the play opens, the Queen is accusing the Earl of Essex of disloyalty to the state and to her; however, she assures him that she will grant full pardon if he will only admit his guilt. But even when Elizabeth confronts him with a letter in his own handwriting to the Earl of Tirron, the Irish leader, he refuses to confess a crime which he staunchly declares he did not commit. In punishment for his stubbornness, the Queen declares that he shall stand trial, and that he may expect no favors from her. When he has gone, she tells her confidante that even though her own happiness be ruined, she must preserve the royal dignity.

In answer to Substantonne's anxious pleas that he flee for safety, Essex reveals that he has received from the Queen a secret guaranty of protection and is utterly amazed when the Captain of the Guards comes to take them prisoners.

In the second act, Lord Cecil is urging the Queen to deal severely with Essex, but Lord Salisbury advises further investigation. Elizabeth, although convinced of the Earl's guilt, later sends Lady Cecil to see if he has any message for her. Lady Cecil, who is angry with the Earl for having deserted her, carries out the Queen's orders by going to the Tower, but makes no mention of the message. She pretends to

believe him when he assures her of his love for her, but she is really seeking to avenge her wounded pride.

In the third act, at the trial, Essex and Soubtantonne are defending their honor and claiming their innocence. They cite all of their valiant deeds for England, and the posts of responsibility that they have held, and very eloquently plead for justice. Raleigh and Cecil appear against them, and both Essex and Soubtantonne are sentenced to die.

At the Tower a royal messenger arrives with an order to delay the execution. Altho Elizabeth is almost overcome by her love for the young Earl, she yet insists that she can do nothing if he will not ask for pardon. When ^{lady}Madame Cecil again comes to the Tower to see Essex, he requests her to return the ring, which the queen had given him together with the promise that whenever he should send it back, she would grant him any boon that he might ask. The boon ^{he asks} is that his life be spared. This was the message for which the Queen had been waiting.

As Lady Cecil leaves the Tower, debating whether or not to return the ring, she meets her husband, and he, seeing the way to assure his rival's death, persuades her to deliver neither the ring nor the message.

In the last act, preparations are being made for the execution which Essex's noted enemies are to witness. In the Palace, while the Queen is still contending that she is helpless until the Earl sues for pardon, word comes that he is dead. She reproaches herself for grieving over the

death of a traitor.

The execution of the Earl of Essex proves a fatal blow to Lady Cecil. On her death-bed she requests a private interview with the Queen, in which she confesses her treachery and implores forgiveness. This the heart-broken Elizabeth refuses and for herself renounces all happiness and glory.

Le Comte d'Essex, by Thomas Corneille

The opening scene is laid in the Palace at London. The Earl of Essex is assuring his friend, the Earl of Salisbury, that his great services to England are a sure defense against his trial as traitor, but Salisbury insists that there are many witnesses against him, and that the Queen's dignity has been wounded. Salisbury cannot understand why Essex led an attack against the Palace during the marriage of Henriette to the Duke of Irton until the Earl confesses that he and Henriette are in love; but, that to escape the Queen's jealous wrath, he had pretended to be devoted to Lady Suffolk, while Henriette had accepted attentions from Irton whom now she has married to allay any suspicions the Queen may have had. When Salisbury has gone, the Duchess of Irton comes, and in reply to Essex's sorrowful reproaches, says that by her marriage she has done her part in the effort to save him and that he must go before the Queen to defend himself. The Earl insists that his innocence is enough, even against the plots of Cecil, and when the latter comes to summon him to an audience with the Queen, Essex accuses him of trying to prejudice her and the court, but Cecil denies these charges.

In the second act, Elizabeth, having just learned that Essex has been paying attentions to Lady Suffolk, refuses to do anything in his defense, even when her confidante tells her that a subject cannot hope to love his Queen, and when

the Duchess of Irton pleads in his behalf.

In the presence of the Duchess and the confidante, Cecil brings testimony against the Earl, but the Queen orders the decision to be left to the judges. After Cecil's departure, she says that the sole condition of pardon for Essex is that he sue for mercy in the name of their love.

Upon the Earl's arrival, she puts this condition before him, in the presence of the Duchess, and the Earl answers that his innocence is his only defense. The Duchess, alone with him, implores him to throw himself on the Queen's mercy, but while he is replying that his only crime is his love for her, and that he will not admit even a suspicion of guilt, the Captain of the Guards enters and arrests him.

In the third act, Essex has been condemned to die, and Elizabeth has given the order for his execution. Yielding to the entreaties of her confidante, the Queen agrees to give him a last opportunity to beg for mercy. When the Duchess of Irton comes to plead for the Earl's life, Elizabeth refuses to save him for Lady Suffolk, whereupon the Duchess reveals the truth of their love. Even in her anger upon learning with certainty that he loves another, Elizabeth cannot conquer her own love for him, so she sends the Duchess to urge him to ask for pardon.

In the fourth act, the Queen's confidante, Salsbury, and the Duchess of Irton all plead with the Earl, but, out of loyalty to his love for the Duchess, he refuses to make any petition to the Queen. The Captain of the Guards comes

to take him to the scaffold.

In the last act, Essex's uncompromising refusal is reported to the Queen, who, nevertheless, sends her confidante with orders to prevent the carrying out of the sentence, but it is too late. Salsbury's account reveals the fact that the enemies of Essex have hastened the execution. Elizabeth says that she must devote her efforts to making the death of Essex seem just to the people, but that even though her grief be concealed, it must eventually be fatal to her.

The Earl of Essex, by Henry Jones.

The scene is laid in the Palace except for the beginning and end of the last act, which have their setting in the Tower.

Sir Walter Raleigh and Lord Burleigh are overjoyed because the House of Commons has passed a bill impeaching the Earl of Essex. Their triumph over him is assured by the news of the arrival of a person who will testify that Essex has been plotting treason and has treated secretly with the Earl of Tyrone. They find an ally in the unscrupulous Lady Nottingham, to whom the Earl had formerly made love, and who on hearing of his secret marriage to Lady Rutland, has become his bitter enemy. In her desire to be avenged, she agrees to do her best to poison the Queen's mind against Essex. The Lord of Southampton is the Earl's only defender until news of the impeachment is brought to the Queen, who, although secretly troubled, tells herself that he could not be disloyal, and determines to give him her full protection, ordering all action postponed until she recalls Essex from Ireland.

In the second act, however, the Earl of Essex incurs the Queen's displeasure by returning without her permission. He says that he has come to purge his name of slanderous accusations, whereupon the Queen replies that she had been the guardian of his reputation, but, since he has taken matters into his own hands, the law shall decide at a trial. Before going to meet Lady Rutland, his beloved

wife, Lord Essex, with his customary haughtiness, refuses to yield his staff of office to anyone but Her Majesty, thus offending Burleigh who has been sent to take it from him.

In the third act, when the Queen is in her chamber with her ladies-in-waiting, Lady Nottingham accuses the Earl harshly, urging all severity in his punishment. Lady Rutland, on the other hand, is so vehement in his defence that the Queen's jealousy is aroused. Dismissing her ladies-in-waiting, she admits the Earl, but in a moment of hot anger, goes so far as to strike him. Infuriated, Essex forgets with whom he is dealing and begins planning some means of revenge.

In the fourth act, Essex and Southampton have been taken prisoners as leaders of an uprising against the government and are brought before the Queen. Alone with the Earl, however, her anger melts before his ardent pleas, and his insistence that only jealousy of his good name and not disloyalty to his beloved Ruler prompted his actions. She gives him a ring as a pledge of "eternal friendship", with the promise that whenever he shall send it back, she will grant whatever boon he asks.

When Essex has gone, Lady Rutland, thinking that the Queen is still angry with the Earl, comes to beg for his life and reveals their secret marriage. The Queen cannot now recall her pledge, but she realizes that all happiness is gone since Essex is married to another.

The first scene of the final act is in the Tower. Lady Nottingham comes with a message from the Queen, and

Essex sends the ring by her, but his pride prevents him from asking for his own life. His only request is that his friend Southampton, who has been condemned to die with him, be spared. Lady Nottingham, however, conceals the ring from the Queen, and reports Essex to be haughty and stubborn. In her rage at hearing this, Elizabeth orders his immediate execution, but Southampton she pardons.

Lady Rutland, half-mad with grief, is admitted to the Tower and in the very act of saying farewell to her husband, is parted from him by the guards who take him away to the scaffold. A moment afterwards---but too late---the Queen enters to order his release. Elizabeth accuses Burleigh of hastening the execution, but he lays all blame on Lady Nottingham, revealing her treachery. The play ends with the Queen's lamenting the unjust "murder" of her favorite.

COMPARISON.

Comparison

Plots

The opening scene of all three plays is laid in the Palace in London. In Thomas Corneille and *La Calprenède*, the Earl of Essex has returned to England and is already in disgrace at court. In *Henry Jones*, however, when the play begins the Earl is still in Ireland.

In the first scene of *La Calprenède*, the Queen, after reproaching Essex for having turned traitor to her and to his country, shows him a letter which she accuses him of having written to the Earl of Tirron, but Essex haughtily denies any guilt, and destroys the letter. In her indignation, the Queen leaves him to the justice of the court. In neither of the other plays is Essex confronted by the Queen with any tangible evidence.

In Thomas Corneille, the Earl does not come before the Queen until the second act. During the first act, he has told his staunch friend Salsbury that he is sure that the Queen's love for him will prove a bulwark against the malicious schemes of his enemies. He has explained that the rebellion he led against the Palace was a mad attempt to stop the marriage of Henriette, whom he loves, to the Duke of Irton. He also reveals that, in order to shield Henriette from the Queen's jealousy, he has pretended to love Lady Suffolk. Even when the Duchess comes, however, and begs him in the name of their love to obtain audience with

the Queen, and plead his just cause, he refuses. When Essex finally appears before Elizabeth, the Duchess is in attendance upon her. In the presence of Henriette the Queen gives him this difficult choice of begging for her mercy in the name of their love, or going to the scaffold. Essex's pride and his loyalty to his love for the Duchess prevent him from suing for pardon and the Queen completely withdraws her support.

In Henry Jones, the Earl does not appear until the second act which is immediately upon his return from Ireland. During the first act, Raleigh and Burleigh are overjoyed at the passage of a bill of impeachment against Essex, but the Queen orders all proceedings stopped until the Earl's return from Ireland. In order to persuade Lady Nottingham to use her influence with the Queen against Essex, Burleigh reveals to her the Earl's secret marriage to Lady Rutland. Burleigh and Southampton argue Essex's case before the Queen, who cannot believe any accusations against her favorite. But, when Essex returns from Ireland without permission and first comes before Elizabeth in the second act, she very abruptly tells him that the judges shall decide his fate.

History relates that the Earl went to the Queen directly upon his arrival and was very graciously received, but within an hour was called before her and the members of her Council to explain his conduct.

Later, in the first act of *La Calprenède*, when the Earl of Essex is being warned by his friend Soubtantonne of the Queen's anger, he replies that he has proofs of her love

which are a guaranty against any threatening action which may be taken against him. Soubtantonne, however, is not fully convinced that his beloved friend is not in grave danger. It is in the opening scene of Thomas Corneille that we find Salsbury giving Essex the same advice, but here the Earl does not mention any secret proof of the Queen's love. In Henry Jones, also, Southampton is disturbed because of Elizabeth's attitude towards Essex, but in this play the Earl himself is not at all sure of his safety. He feels that he is unjustly accused and that malicious enemies are gaining over him by unfair means, but he has no hope of protection from the Queen.

In the last scene of the first act of La Calprenède, and the last scene of the second act of Thomas Corneille, the Earl is arrested by the Captain of the Guards, but in Henry Jones it is his bitter enemy, Lord Burleigh, who comes, in the second act, to demand of Essex his staff of office. The Earl haughtily refuses to surrender it. His insubordination leads to his arrest, and at the beginning of the third act, he is brought under guard to the Palace.

At the opening of the second act, La Calprenède presents Cecil and the Earl of Salsbury in audience with Elizabeth. While Cecil is urging that immediate and severe punishment be meted out to Essex, Salsbury recommends further investigation in order to obtain additional proof of the Earl's guilt. The Queen, convinced that Essex is a traitor, sends Cecil to the Tower to gain any information possible from

Then, in the third act, she gives her confidante the difficult mission of inducing Essex to save himself; and, even after she has learned that Henriette and the Earl love each other, she conquers her pride and resentment to the extent of sending the Duchess, also, to him, telling her to stop short at nothing, in order to bring him to terms and save him. In Henry Jones, it is not until the last act that there is any suggestion of such action on the part of the Queen. Then, Lady Nottingham arrives at the Tower saying that the Queen wishes to know if Essex has not something to offer which would obtain the royal mercy, but not until the Queen herself comes, too late to stop the execution, is there any other effort made to save his life.

When, in La Calprenède, Lady Cecil is delegated by Elizabeth to try to secure an apology from the Earl, she goes thru an inward struggle as to whether to obey the Queen and thus be an instrument of saving the man who has spurned her love, or to risk disobedience. She finally decides to go to Essex but not to try to prevent his execution. Upon Lady Cecil's arrival at the Tower, the Earl assures her of his love, and even tho she tells him that she does not believe him and that all is over between them, he insists that it is she and not the Queen whom he really loves. In reply to her plea that he seek the Queen's mercy, he bitterly and proudly refuses to:

"Luy demander pardon de toutes mes victoires,
 Luy demander pardon du sang que i'ay perdu,
 De mille beaux effects, de mille bons services,
 De cent fameux combats, & de cent cicatrices."

Acte II, Sc. 5.

His haughty attitude is the same in all of the plays and in history.

In Thomas Corneille, at the beginning of the third act, Cecil brings to the Queen the account of the trial, and in Henry Jones, Raleigh tells the Lieutenant of the Tower the Court's decision. La Calprenède, however, is the only one who shows the court scene. It is interesting to see the pros and cons of the case argued here, with Essex maintaining his innocence and loyalty to the state in the face of Cecil's accusations and insinuations. The Earl of Soubtantonne cleverly refutes Cecil point by point, defending himself and Essex, and accusing the judges of being prejudiced against them. Cecil and Essex arraign each other bitterly, but finally Essex and Soubtantonne are convicted and sentenced to die on the scaffold. Accepting his own condemnation, Essex yet hopes to secure his friend's pardon but Soubtantonne is determined to share Essex's fate.

As the fourth act of La Calprenède opens, the Queen having heard of the court's decision, sends word to the Tower to stay the execution until her final wishes be known. In Thomas Corneille, Elizabeth sends no word to the Tower until, in the last act, she hears that Essex is on his way to the scaffold, when she dispatches her confidante to stop the execution. It is too late, however, and Cecil brings word of

the Earl's death. In Henry Jones, it is the Queen herself who, in the fifth act, rushes to the Tower, but too late to save her favorite.

In the fourth act of La Calprenède, the Earl of Soubtantonne whom the Queen has pardoned, comes to plead for the life of his friend as does the Earl of Salisbury in the third act of Thomas Corneille. In Henry Jones, Southampton, in the first act, defends Essex before the Queen, but after their imprisonment Lady Rutland is their only champion at court.

In the fourth act of La Calprenède, when Lady Cecil returns to see Essex in the Tower, the Earl puts his life and his honor in her hands as a proof of his love, and sends back by her to Elizabeth the ring which the Queen had given him as a pledge of her good-will.

In Henry Jones, in the last act, Lady Nottingham is the messenger to whom Essex entrusts the ring, but it is a pardon for his friend that he craves as a boon, while in La Calprenède, the Earl weakens and asks that his own life be spared. La Calprenède, however, gives us to understand that the ring had been given Essex at a previous time, while in the fourth act of Henry Jones, Elizabeth touched by the Earl's pleas of innocence, says that, altho she cannot shield him from a public trial, she will give him the ring as a promise of "Eternal friendship" with the vow to grant any favor he may ask when it is returned. Thomas Corneille does not introduce the incident of the ring.

Upon leaving the Tower, Lady Cecil, in La Calprenède, cannot decide whether to avenge herself by not delivering the ring, or to relent and save the Earl, but on the advice of her husband she withholds the ring. In Henry Jones, however, Lady Nottingham not only deliberately conceals the ring, but reports Essex haughty, sullen, disdainful, and the Queen orders his immediate execution.

The last act of La Calprenède opens in the Tower where Essex is upbraiding Raleigh for seeking his death and for even planning to be present at the execution. He then calls Heaven to witness his unjust fate, sends to Lady Cecil a last message of gratitude for her efforts in his behalf, and prepares to die. In Thomas Corneille, at the end of the fourth act, while the Duchess is still pleading with him to save himself, the Captain of the Guards comes to take him to the scaffold. In Henry Jones, the royal mandate comes bringing death for Essex but a pardon for Southampton. While Lady Rutland is clinging desperately to her husband, Essex is taken away.

In the Queen's chamber, in La Calprenède, when one of the Queen's attendants announces the death of the Earl of Essex, the Queen is overcome but rallies her strength to try to cease mourning a traitor. Her confidante tells her that at the news of Essex's death, Lady Cecil suddenly became terribly ill and that she is pleading for a private interview with the Queen. When they are alone together and Lady Cecil has confessed her treachery in withholding the

ring, the Queen swoons and, after her attendants have restored her to consciousness, she renounces all happiness in the world and feels that she can never recover from her sorrow.

In Thomas Corneille, Cecil brings the news of Essex's death, and the Queen sees that Cecil has not played an impartial role in the proceedings. When Salisbury comes to give the account of the execution he reveals that Essex's enemies have hastened the affair. The Queen, weeping bitterly and imploring the Duchess to forgive her, abandons herself to her grief and feels that her death will soon follow that of the Earl.

In Henry Jones, Elizabeth herself arrives too late to save her favorite. When she learns that he is dead, she accuses Burleigh of undue haste in "murdering" Essex, but he shifts all the blame to Lady Nottingham, revealing her guilt in not delivering the ring. The Queen says of Lady Rutland:

"She shall henceforth be partner of my sorrows,
And we'll contend who most shall weep for Essex."

Act V, Sc. 3.

The Earl of Essex

Essex as a Statesman

The Earl of Essex, as pictured by La Calprenède, shows all the pride and self-assurance that is attributed to him. He is highly offended that any one should suspect him of disloyalty and has full confidence in his power over the Queen. When he is brought before the judges in the court room, he displays the eloquence and logic of a scholar, but his unbridled temper runs away with him and he engages in a heated argument with Raleigh and Cecil, his personal enemies, who are among his judges. While Essex is imprisoned in the Tower, he becomes more subdued and, in this play, even weakens to the extent of sending back the ring, by Lady Cecil, with the request that his life be spared; then, when he is to be taken to the scaffold he sends her a message of gratitude for her efforts to save him.

In Thomas Corneille, Essex is much more proud-spirited. He is desperate on learning of Henriette's marriage, and goes to greater lengths than in the other plays in expressing his indignation over his wrongs. His unyielding pride will not allow him to stoop to justify himself; and his whole attitude, in fact, is summed up in his famous words: (26)

"Le crime fait la honte, et non pas l'échafaud."

Acte IV, Sc. 3.

Thruout the play Essex maintains his air of unjustly

accused innocence, and after his first outburst of despair at Henriette's marriage, does not again lose control of his emotions. He even bids the Duchess a dignified and reserved farewell, saying:

"---je meurs innocent, et je vivrois coupable,"

Acte IV, Sc. 4.

and goes bravely to the scaffold.

The play of Henry Jones, perhaps offers more examples of the Earl's many-sided temperament. Essex first appears as the extravagant, flattering court favorite, but under adverse circumstances becomes bitter and resentful. He wishes to flee from the pomp and blaze of court life to quiet happiness in the country with his beloved wife. Again, when in furious reproach Elizabeth strikes him, he forgets that he is dealing with a woman and a queen, and angrily swears vengeance.

In an interview alone with Elizabeth the Earl is so charming, flattering and submissive that he sways, as he had so often done before, the heart of the old Queen, until she gives him the ring.

In the last act, Essex is proud and stern, accepting his fate, but using his last means of power with the Queen to save his friend. As the time comes for him to be taken to the block, the suffering which he endures in parting from Southampton and from his beloved wife, is shown much more clearly than in any of the other plays.

The Earl of Essex

Essex and the Queen

The Queen, as presented to us by La Calprenède, is not so fiery-tempered as in the other plays. She is deeply hurt that Essex should prove disloyal and is determined to punish him. She reproaches him bitterly, yet retains control of her temper. Even when she realizes that he is going to die unless she saves him, she contends that she is helpless until he sends a plea for mercy. When news of his death reaches her, she involuntarily cries out, but immediately reproaches herself for grieving at the death of a traitor. However, when Lady Cecil reveals that Essex had sent back the ring with the request that his life be spared, the Queen forgets that he was convicted^d of treachery and blames Lady Cecil for having "murdered" the Earl. Elizabeth is overcome and abandons herself to her grief, feeling that she can endure no more.

In Thomas Corneille, the Queen from the very beginning of the play shows a great deal of fire and spirit. Even while admitting her love for the Earl, she refuses to do anything in his behalf because she is jealous of his attentions to Lady Suffolk. In response to the entreaties and arguments of her confidante and the Duchess of Irton, she agrees to pardon him, but only if he will beg for mercy in the name of their love. Finally, even knowing of his love for Henriette and having received no word from him, she sends orders to

stay the execution, but it is too late. When she is informed of the Earl's death, she immediately accuses his enemies of hastening the execution, then, begging forgiveness of the Duchess for having unjustly slain the man she loved, the Queen, weeping for her favorite, feels that her death will soon follow him.

In Henry Jones, Elizabeth at first absolutely refuses to entertain any suspicions against Essex, but when he disobeys her commands and returns to England, she is curt and sarcastic in receiving him. Later in the play, the Queen becomes so incensed with the Earl that she strikes him. During a second interview alone with the Queen, however, Essex is so charming and so convincing that Elizabeth is once more persuaded of his innocence and gives him a ring with the pledge to grant any boon he may ask on its return. Upon learning of the Earl's marriage to Lady Rutland, Elizabeth is in despair, but succeeds in controlling her emotions. When Lady Nottingham reports, however, that Essex is still sullen, proud, resentful and even scornful, the Queen's anger breaks forth. She orders his immediate execution, then goes to the Tower to save him, but arrives too late. She repents having authorized his execution and takes Lady Rutland, the bereaved wife, as "partner of her sorrows."

Essex and the Ladies of the Court

During Essex's life at court, altho he was happily married to Frances Walsingham, widow of Sir Philip Sidney, there were many scandalous rumors linking his name with no less than four ladies-in-waiting: Elizabeth Southwell, Elizabeth Brydges, Mrs. Russell, and Lady Mary Howard; but not with any whose names figure in the plays.

In *La Calprenède*, Lady Cecil, who had been deserted by the Earl, does not try to use any influence she may have with the Queen either for or against Essex. Delegated to try to induce him to beg for mercy and save himself, she finally decides to obey the Queen's orders, but is determined to make no effort to save the man who has betrayed her love. Even when the Earl intrusts the ring to her care, it is on the advice of her husband that she does not deliver it. She is never actively against the Earl, and at the news of his death, she is so conscience-stricken that she becomes desperately ill and confesses her crime to the Queen.

Henriette, the Duchess of Irton, in *Thomas Corneille*, loves Essex so dearly that she marries another in order to save the Earl from the jealous wrath of the Queen. Thruout the entire play, the Duchess does everything in her power to move the Queen to mercy, and to persuade Essex to beg for pardon. She is his faithful champion at court and in every possible way tries to offset the plots of his enemies.

In *Henry Jones*, Lady Nottingham allies herself with Essex's enemies in order to get revenge for her wounded love. She becomes furiously jealous on discovering that he has

married her rival, Lady Rutland. Lady Nottingham betrays the Earl, withholds the ring, brings false reports to the Queen, does her utmost to harm him, and never shows any sign of remorse. Lady Rutland, on the other hand, uses every means within her power to save her beloved husband. As a last resort, she even reveals their marriage and throws herself on the mercy of the Queen. She goes to say farewell to her husband in the Tower, and when the Queen arrives too late to save him, becomes half-mad with grief. This is the only one of these plays in which any character figures as the Earl's wife. (Appendix C)

It might not be out of place to mention, at this point, minor women characters in the plays, all of whom are kindly disposed toward the Earl. In *La Calprenède*, Alix is the Queen's confidante, her closest personal attendant. To her the Queen confides her innermost thoughts and feelings, and even asks for advice, and Alix does everything in her power to help the Earl of Essex. She tells the Queen that a subject cannot hope to love his sovereign, and is to the end, one of the Earl's ardent defenders. Léonore, another confidante, enters only in the last act to bring the news of the death of the Earl, and of Lady Cecil's wish for a private audience with the Queen.

Tilney, in *Thomas Corneille*, plays much the same part as Alix in *La Calprenède*. Tilney arouses the Queen's pity for the Earl, and also serves as messenger between the two at the time of the Earl's imprisonment in the Tower.

In Henry Jones, the ladies of the court serve as personal attendants to the Queen, and there is no character who plays any part comparable to the confidantes of the French plays.

Essex and His Friends

All of the historical accounts of the life of the Earl of Essex mention the devoted friendship of the Earl of Southampton. Altho Southampton's influence was limited, since he was out of favor at court, he yet did everything in his power to help Essex, and when the Earl decided to lead an armed force against the Palace, Southampton was his chief aid. They were tried and sentenced together, the 19th of February, 1601, in Westminster Hall, but Southampton was later pardoned.

In La Calprenède, the staunch friend of Essex is the Earl of Soubtantonne. In the first act, he strongly advises the Earl to flee from the country for safety. Then, in the course of their trial, Soubtantonne very cleverly takes up Cecil's accusations and refutes them point by point. His devotion is clearly shown by his steadfast refusal to accept pardon for himself, if his beloved Essex must die. In this play, the Comte de Salisbury enters only incidentally, to urge that fairness be used in the proceedings against the Earl of Essex, but in Thomas Corneille the loyal friend bears the name of Salisbury.

In Corneille's play, Salisbury warns Essex to be less incautious in his conduct and to try to regain the good-will of Elizabeth. After the imprisonment of his friend, he makes a last, desperate appeal to the Queen, then tries vainly to persuade Essex to sue for mercy. It is Salisbury, too, who brings the dead Earl's last reproachful message to the

Queen.

In Henry Jones, Southampton appears under his own name. He defends his friend against Cecil and Raleigh before the Queen, and is the main champion for Essex at court. When the Earl arrives from Ireland, Southampton is with him constantly, advising him against impulsive actions, and in the Tower Southampton staunchly insists on sharing the fate of his beloved friend. Even when the pardon comes, he refuses it until Essex bids him live and take care of his dearest treasure, his wife.

Essex and His Enemies

In the historical accounts and in two of the plays, Essex's enemies are the same---Sir Walter Raleigh and Cecil, Lord Burleigh. In Thomas Corneille, Raleigh, tho alluded to, does not appear on the stage.

In La Calprenède, Cecil shows his bitter enmity toward the Earl of Essex by arguing against him both before the Queen, and in the court room, and finally by persuading Madame Cecil not to deliver the ring intrusted to her by Essex. In this way, he is really responsible for the Earl's death. Raleigh enters only in the court room scene where he uses every possible means to convict Essex.

In Thomas Corneille, Cecil and Essex quarrel in the first act and Cecil brings all available testimony against Essex before the Queen, then does not reappear.

In Henry Jones, Cecil, Lord Burleigh, is the chief conspirator against the Earl, and uses every means, fair or foul, to bring about the downfall of his rival. He very artfully stirs up the Queen's anger and fans Lady Nottingham's jealousy. Then, at the last, when the Queen would blame him for hastening the execution, he shifts all guilt to Lady Nottingham, revealing her treachery.

Raleigh also is introduced here as an enemy of Essex, but he serves merely as an accomplice of Burleigh's.

CONCLUSION.

Conclusion.

Use of History in the Three Plays.

The historical background is necessarily much the same in the three plays, but in each one divergences may be noted both from the historical sources and in the use of these sources in the different plays.

In his preface, La Calprenède attempts to forestall doubts as to his historical accuracy: "Si vous trouvez quelque chose dans cette Tragedie que vous n'ayez point leu dans les Historiens Anglois, croyez que ie ne l'ay point inuenté, & que ie n'ay rien écrit que sur de bonnes memoires que i'en auois receuës de personnes de condition, & qui ont peut estre part à l'Histoire." (27). Careful examination of his play substantiates this statement. It will be noted, however, that he chooses incidents less to further the play than to contribute a dramatic episode, and that he does not hesitate to embellish history if he considers that it heightens the effect. As an example of his method may be taken the court scene. Three of the judges mentioned in history, Popham, Raleigh and Cecil, figure among his characters, and the charges brought against Essex are also authentic. The main purpose of the scene, however, is to give the opportunity for a dramatic quarrel between Essex and his enemies, entirely the invention of the author, and during which the development of the plot is at a standstill. In his treatment of the ring episode it is with deliberate

intent that he makes the spurned Lady Ceoil the messenger to whom Essex must intrust the delivery of the ring, his last hope of life.

Thomas Corneille, tho declaring in his preface (28) that he has respected history, is the author who has taken the most liberties with it. Much of the action centers around the Duchess of Irton, an entirely fictitious character, more in accord with the classic French tradition than with the ladies of Elizabeth's court. He uses even the attack led by Essex against the Palace as an element in a love plot rather than the attempt of a desperate man to regain his liberty. This author has omitted the incident of the ring which he is convinced is "---de l'invention de monsieur de la Calprenède; du moins je n'en ai rien lu dans aucun historien. Camdenus, qui a fait un gros volume de la seule vie d'Élisabeth, n'en parle point; et c'est une particularité que je me serois cru en pouvoir de supprimer, quand même je l'aurois trouvée dans son histoire." (28).

Henry Jones introduces a greater number of historical events than the other authors, altho, like them, he emphasizes the love plot as his main theme. He alone alludes to Elizabeth's jealousy over the popularity of Essex with her subjects (29). Jones, too, is the only one to introduce the scene in which the Queen strikes Essex. In this play, the ring incident occurs, but the vengeful Lady Nottingham is the messenger to whom Essex gives the ring, while her rival, Lady Rutland, is the Earl's wife.

In *La Calprenède*, the interest of the plot springs from history, whereas in Thomas Corneille, history is made subservient to the love story, and the action is suited to the seventeenth century French conception of monarchy. The tragedy of *Henry Jones* is equally correct historically for England, bringing out the masterful, violent nature of the sovereign of the Tudor period.

Literary Appreciation of the Three Plays.

In "Le Comte d'Essex" by La Calprenède, the Earl of Essex seems to be more dignified and restrained than in the other plays, or even than as history portrays him. Not only in the Queen's accusations of Essex and in his replies, but also in the scenes with Madame Cecil in the Tower, he shows judgment and self-control. The court room scene, (found only in La Calprenède) is excellently done. In it are set forth the charges against the Earl, and the treachery of Raleigh and Cecil is clearly shown. Altho Essex loses control of his temper to the extent of involving himself in a personal argument with Raleigh and Cecil, who are among his judges, he is not so rash and hot-headed as in Henry Jones.

The rôle of Soubtantonne is carefully worked out, but for the most part, the rest of this play is lacking in movement. Not until the last scene, when Madame Cecil comes to confess her crime is there any revival of interest. Then, the extreme despair of the dying Madame Cecil seems to bring to us something of the usual spirit of Queen Elizabeth.

In Thomas Corneille, the characters are well drawn. The Earl's desperation over the marriage of Henriette, and the struggle of the Queen between her pride and her love for her favorite are strongly brought out in the opening act. The Duchesse d'Irton shows the depth of her feeling for the Earl by using every possible means to save him, even, in order to protect him, marrying a man she does not love. The

omission of the incident of the ring, altho perhaps more correct historically, detracts from the romantic interest of the play. The tragedy is artistically written, and the characterizations are excellent, but the entire play lacks action. As Voltaire aptly said in his criticism of it: "Je veux qu'il me demande pardon, je ne veux pas demander pardon: voilà la pièce."

In the "Earl of Essex" by Henry Jones, there is certainly no lack of action. The characters are not shown so well by their words as they are in Thomas Corneille, but their deeds paint them for us. If the multiplicity of action sometimes leaves us a little bewildered, at least our interest is never lost.

The high points of La Calprenède---the court room scene and the Queen's interview with the dying Madame Cecil---are excellent, but they cannot carry the rest of the play. Altho the lack of action is a serious fault in Thomas Corneille, his characterizations and his polished style are admirable. There is a kind of remote stateliness in his play which is in marked contrast to the rapid, surging action in Henry Jones. In Henry Jones, the swift movement is somewhat overdone, but as a whole it is the most stirring of all the plays, the one which most successfully fulfils the function of a tragedy in arousing pity for an over-ambitious yet noble victim.

NOTES.

Notes.

1. Strachey, L. G: "Elizabeth and Essex", pp. 2-4
2. Cheyney, E. P: "History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth", Vol. 1, p. 27
3. Cheyney: op. cit., Vol. II, p. 452
Dictionary of National Biography: Vol. 14, p. 436
4. Dictionary of National Biography: Vol. 14, p. 427
5. Cadwallader, L. H: "Career of Earl of Essex from the Islands Voyage in 1597 to his Execution in 1601", p. 69
6. Cadwallader: op. cit., pp. 91-93
7. Dictionary of National Biography: Vol. 14, p. 437
8. Cadwallader: op. cit., End of Preface
9. British Theatre: Vol. 22, Preface to "Earl of Essex", p. 6
10. Cadwallader: op. cit., pp. 91-92
11. Cadwallader: op. cit., p. 92
12. Dictionary of National Biography: Vol. 14, p. 438
13. Reynier, G: "Thomas Corneille, sa vie et son théâtre," p. 54
14. Lessing, G. E: "Hamburgische Dramaturgie", 2^{er} Band, 59 Stück. Lessing, having mentioned the plays of Banks, Jones, and Brooke adds: "Auch muss noch ein Essex von einem James Ralph vorhanden seyn."
- 14a. Reynier: op. cit., pp. 178-179 (Reynier, quoting from Lessing's "Dramaturgie", attributes an "El Conde de Sex" to Juan Matos Fragoso.)

15. Kipka, Karl: "Maria Stuart im Drama der Welt-
litteratur", pp. 383-384 (These pages give further
details on the disputed authorship of this play,
and a fuller treatment of other translations.)
16. Gosse: "Gossip in a Library", p. 87
17. Biographie Universelle: Vol. 6, p. 569
18. Biographie Universelle: Vol. 6, p. 470
19. Reynier: op. cit., p. 5
20. Reynier: op. cit., p. 10
21. Reynier: op. cit., p. 33
22. Reynier: op. cit., p. 34
- 22a. Molière, OEuvres de: Édition Lutetia, Title-page
of Don Juan
23. Reynier: op. cit., p. 111
24. Dictionary of National Biography: Vol. 11, p. 721
25. British Theatre: Vol. 4, Preface by John Bell, p. vi
26. Reynier: op. cit., p. 173 Charlotte Corday, a
great-grand-niece of Pierre and Thomas Corneille,
is said to have quoted this verse to her father
shortly before her execution for the assassination
of Marat.
27. La Calprenède: "Comte d'Essex", Préface
28. Corneille, T: "OEuvres Choiesies de Thomas Corneille",
Préface, p. 369
29. Cheyney: op. cit., Vol. II, p. 543

APPENDICES.

Warrant of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Essex before His Starting on the Irish Expedition, Giving Him Permission to Return to England.

Printed in "Calendar of the Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland" (Dublin and London, 1861-63), II, pp. 531-532.

The Queen to the Earl of Essex, Lieutenant and Governor General of Ireland, the Council of State, and all other ministers and officers: "Where we have constituted you our cousin of Essex, by our Commission under our Great Seal, to be our Lieutenant and Governor-General of Ireland, and you have made humble suit unto us, that we would be pleased to grant unto you leave to make your repaire into England, as well to see our person, as to inform us of such things as may be for our important service; without which license if you should now depart, how great occasion soever you might finde to come over for such purposes, both your desire might be frustrated, by contrarie accident of winde, and these good opportunities lost, by protraction of sendinge to and fro for answere, which might otherwise have proved of good consequence to us and for our State; upon these considerations, at your humble request, and out of our confidence and full assurance in your care, dutye, and judgment, that you will never adventure any such returne, until you have so settled things there, as no danger

may arise by means of your departure, and leaving our kingdom under the rule of any other, a matter whereof we commend you to take special care as you will answer it, we are pleased, and do hereby really and fully authorize you at such time as you shall think best, with observation of the former cautions, to make your personal repaire hither with your ordinarie retinew.

And we do hereby also authorize you, with the advice of our Council of Ireland, to make choice there of such two persons of wisdom and other sufficiency, as shall seem fittest to you and our Council there, to take the charge and government of that State, and to constitute them, under our Great Seal, Justices of Ireland, so to continew until our pleasure be further known by warrant under our hand.

And because our meaninge is not that they shall so continew but for a short time, till we have heard from you the state of affairs, nor have those authorities which you have, though their continuance were to be never so small; we do also hereby forbid them that they shall not meddle with giving any pardons, bestowing of pensions, or other actions of that nature, but only for that short time, till our pleasure be further known in manner aforesaid, to look to the ordinarie administration of civil justice, the defence of our kingdom and continuation of such courses as by your direction, with the consent of our Council in

APP. A.

Ireland, they shall be advised at your departure; for all which, either to be performed by you or our Council, or those justices as it doth or shall jointly or severally appertain, unto all or any of you, we do hereby give this full warrant under our hand and signet manual, at our Manor of Richmond, the 27th of March, in the 41st year of our reign.

Cadwallader, op. cit. pp. 100-101.

APPENDIX B

The Court consisted, in 1594, of:

Sir John Puckering (Lord Keeper of the Great Seal);

Archbishop Whitgift;

Earl of Essex;

Earl of Nottingham;

Lord Buckhurst;

Sir Thomas Heneage;

Sir John Fortescue;

Sir Robert Cecil;

Chief Justice Popham;

Chief Justice Peryam.

Cheney, op. cit. Vol. I p. 83.

APPENDIX C.

About 1650, there was published anonymously a "History of the Most Renowned Queen Elizabeth and her Great Favourite, The Earl of Essex. In Two Parts. A Romance". In this, the story of the ring is told at length, but the whole tract abounds in glaring historical errors, and is quite worthless as historical authority.

Here, the Queen, the Countess of Nottingham, and the Countess of Rutland are represented as rivals for Essex's love, and Essex is made to marry Lady Rutland, the author being ignorant of the fact that Essex was already married. Cecil was said to have intercepted the ring from Lady Nottingham.

This tract was issued repeatedly during the 17th and 18th Centuries, and its popularity fully accounts for the wide dissemination of the anecdote of the ring.

Dictionary of National Biography
Vol. 9 pages 527-28.

APPENDIX D

Poems to Henry Jones on the production of "The Earl of Essex", taken from the introduction to the play in the British Theatre, compiled by John Bell.

To: Mr. Henry Jones,

On his tragedy of

"The Earl of Essex".

As ancient heroes are renown'd in song,
 For rescuing virtue from th'oppressor's wrong,
 So shall thy fame, who snatch'd this well-wrought tale
 From dullness' gloomy pow'r, o'er time prevail.

Long had these scenes, wound up with dext'rous art,
 In spite of reason, gained upon the heart;
 Thaw'd ev'ry frozen fountain of the eye,
 We wept 'till even Sorrow's self was dry;
 Yet judgment scorn'd what passion had approv'd,
 And the head wonder'd how the heart was mov'd.
 But, with a fate revers'd thy work shall boast,
 That soundest judgments shall admire it most.
 Cloath'd in the easy grandeur of thy lines,
 The story brightens, as the diction shines.
 Renew'd with vigour as in age 'tis grown,
 The wond'ring scene sees beauties not its own.

APP. D.

Thus, worn with years, in Afric's sultry vales,
 The crested snake shifts off his tarnish'd scales;
 Assumes fresh beauties, brighter than the old,
 Of changing colors intermix'd with gold;
 Reburnish'd, basks beneath the scorching ray,
 Shines with new glories in the face of day,
 Darts fiercer lightning from his brandish'd tongue,
 Rolls more sublime, and seems, at last, more young.

No more shall noise and wild bombastic rage,
 Usurp th'applauding thunder of the stage;
 Eustian no more shall pass for true sublime,
 Nor nonsense musically float in rhyme;
 Nor, in a worse extreme, shall creeping prose,
 For nature and simplicity, impose:
 By thee reform'd, each vicious taste shall fail,
 And critic Justice hold aloft her scale.

Whence beams this dazzling lustre on thy mind?
 Whence this vast fund of knowledge in mankind,
 Unletter'd genius? Whence hast thou been taught,
 This dignity of style, this majesty of thought;
 This rapid fire, by cool correctness rul'd,
 And every learned elegance unschool'd?
 Say, hath great Shakespeare's transmigrated shade
 Inform'd thy mass, or lent thee friendly aid?

APP. D.

To him, bless'd bard, untaught, 'twas also giv'n,
 T'ascend, on native's wings, invention's brightest Heaven *
 Assuming Phoebus' post; and in his train,
 The muses all, like handmaids, not in vain,
 Crouch for employment.-----

The passions too, subservient to his will,
 Attentive wait on his superieur skill;
 At the command of his enchanting art,
 Unlock the bursting flood-gates of the heart,
 And in the rapid head-long stream bear down
 The vanquish'd soul, and make it all his own.

Happy the clime, distinguish'd be the age,
 When genius shoots spontaneous for the stage;
 Not too luxuriant, nor too trimly neat,
 But, in loose wilderness, negligently great.
 O may the gen'rous plant, so wond'rous rare,
 Ne'er want the tender hand of fost'ring care;
 But, like Apollo's fav'rite tree, be seen,
 For ever flourishing, for ever green.

M'Namara Morgan.

*Alluding to Prologue to Henry V.

APP. D.

EPILOGUE

By an Unknown Hand.

Spoken originally by Mrs. Cibber.

News! News! good folks, rare news, and you shall know it.--
 I've got intelligence about our poet,
 Who do you think he is? ---You'll never guess;
 An Irish Bricklayer, neither more nor less.
 And now the secret's out, you cannot wonder,
 That in commencing bard he made a blunder.
 Has he not left the better for the worse,
 In quitting solid brick for empty verse?
 Can he believe th'example of Old Ben,
 Who chang'd, like him, the trowel for the pen,
 Will in his favour move your critic bowels?--
 You rather wish most poets' pens were trowels.
 One man is honest, sensible, and plain,
 Nor has the poet made him pert in vain:
 No beau, no courtier, nor conceited youth;
 But then so rude, he always speaks the truth;
 I told him he must flatter, learn address,
 And gain the heart of some rich patroness;
 'Tis she, said I, your labours will reward,
 If you but join the bricklayer with the bard;
 As thus----Should she be old and worse for wear,
 You must new-case her, front her, and repair;

APP. D

If cracked in frame, as scarce to bear a touch,
 You cannot use your trowel then too much;
 In short, whate'er her morals, age or station,
 Plaister and white-wash in your dedication.
 This I advis'd---but he detests the plan:
 What can be done with such a simple man?
 A poet's nothing worth and naught availing
 Unless he'll furnish where there is a failing.
 Authors in these good times are made and us'd,
 To grant these favours nature has refus'd.
 If he won't fib, what bounty can he crave:
 We pay for what we want, not what we have----
 Nay, tho' of ev'ry blessing we have store,
 Our sex will always wish----a little more.----
 If he'll not bend his heart to this his duty,
 And sell, to who will buy, wit, honour, beauty;
 The bricklayer still for him the proper trade is,
 Too rough to deal with gentlemen and ladies.----
 In short, they'll all avoid him, and neglect him,
 Unless that you, his patrons, will protect him.

The End.

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