

Alias William Shakespeare?

Belfast Telegraph, June 27, 1947

“Alias William Shakespeare” by Claud W. Sykes (Francis Aldor. 15s. net) is a new approach to an old and fascinating problem, the identity of the world’s greatest poet and playwright. Starting off with the assumption that Shakespeare is not the person he is generally supposed to be, Mr. Sykes develops his account with scholarly persuasiveness and skill that make the statement of his case exciting. This is not another book showing that Shakespeare was Bacon. It breaks entirely new ground, and for that reason is an interesting and impressive contribution to a problem that has caused endless discussion. Mr. Arthur Bryant, in contributing a preface to the book, expresses his personal enjoyment of an ingenious piece of work which is sustained by knowledge and good writing.

The Sphere, June 5, 1947

In spite of the fact that Mr. Claud W. Sykes’ book is called ALIAS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (Aldor. 15s.), it is not a treatise on the Baconian theory. True, this excursion into the realms of fancy and speculation is mentioned, but only to be summarily discarded. Bacon never went to Denmark, and the whole of Mr. Sykes’ case hinges on the fact, or what appears to him to be a fact, that the man who wrote Shakespeare’s plays also went to Denmark.

This firmly held point of view enables Mr. Sykes to discard as well the Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Derby, Sir Walter Raleigh, and other pretenders, including W. Shakespeare himself, and to plump for Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland, which theory has at least the virtue of originality. As Mr. Arthur Bryant writes in his preface to this entertaining book, Mr. Sykes’ theme is argued with the persuasiveness, ingenuity and excitement of a well-knit detective story, as well as with immense knowledge and scholarship and but for one circumstance would have completely convinced me.

“This is that nothing in Mr. Sykes’ narrative - for it is more than mere argument - makes me think that the William Shakespeare commemorated in Stratford Church did not write his own plays.”

And to that I can only add Amen. “