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SUMMARY: The excerpt below is from Sir Francis Bacon's *Apophthegmes New and Old* (1625). The incident (if not apocryphal) must have occurred prior to Oxford's banishment from court after the birth of his illegitimate son by Anne Vavasour on 21 March 1581. Raleigh was a 'great mean' in securing Oxford's reinstatement to the Queen's favour after two years' banishment in mid-1583, and it is highly unlikely that Oxford would have jested at Raleigh in this way after he found himself in Raleigh's debt (see BL MS Lansdowne 39/22, f. 130 and HMC Rutland i, p.150 ). Oxford's words 'when jacks go up' are generally taken to allude to Raleigh as an upstart; his words 'heads go down' may refer to Raleigh's participation in the massacre at Smerwick in Ireland in 1580. The incident at court may thus have occurred shortly after the massacre at Smerwick, perhaps while Raleigh was still in Ireland.

When Queen Elizabeth had advanced Raleigh, she was one day playing on the virginals, and my Lord of Oxford and another nobleman stood by. It fell out so that the ledge before the jacks was taken away so as the jacks were seen. My Lord of Oxford and the other nobleman smiled, and a little whispered. The queen marked it, and would needs know what the matter was. My Lord of Oxford answered that they smiled to see that when jacks went up, heads went down