DURNING-LAWRENCE EDWIN

BACON IS SHAKE-SPEARE

Edwin Durning-Lawrence

Bacon is Shake-Speare

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Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence Bacon is Shake-Speare / Together with a Reprint of Bacon's Promus of Formularies and Elegancies

TO THE READER

The plays known as Shakespeare's are at the present time universally acknowledged to be the "Greatest birth of time," the grandest production of the human mind. Their author also is generally recognised as the greatest genius of all the ages. The more the marvellous plays are studied, the more wonderful they are seen to be.

Classical scholars are amazed at the prodigious amount of knowledge of classical lore which they display. Lawyers declare that their author must take rank among the greatest of lawyers, and must have been learned not only in the theory of law, but also intimately acquainted with its forensic practice. In like manner, travellers feel certain that the author must have visited the foreign cities and countries which he so minutely and graphically describes.

It is true that at a dark period for English literature certain critics denied the possibility of Bohemia being accurately described as by the sea, and pointed out the "manifest absurdity" of speaking of the "port" at Milan; but a wider knowledge of the actual facts has vindicated the author at the expense of his unfortunate critics. It is the same with respect to other matters referred to in the plays. The expert possessing special knowledge of any subject invariably discovers that the plays shew that their author was well acquainted with almost all that was known at the time about that particular subject.

And the knowledge is so extensive and so varied that it is not too much to say that there is not a single living man capable of perceiving half of the learning involved in the production of the plays. One of the greatest students of law publicly declared, while he was editor of the *Law Times*, that although he thought that he knew something of law, yet he was not ashamed to confess that he had not sufficient legal knowledge or mental capacity to enable him to fully comprehend a quarter of the law contained in the plays.

Of course, men of small learning, who know very little of classics and still less of law, do not experience any of these difficulties, because they are not able to perceive how great is the vast store of learning exhibited in the plays.

There is also shewn in the plays the most perfect knowledge of Court etiquette, and of the manners and the methods of the greatest in the land, a knowledge which none but a courtier moving in the highest circles could by any possibility have acquired.

In his diary, Wolfe Tone records that the French soldiers who invaded Ireland behaved exactly like the French soldiers are described as conducting themselves at Agincourt in the play of "Henry V," and he exclaims, "It is marvellous!" (Wolfe Tone also adds that Shakespeare could never have seen a French soldier, but we know that Bacon while in Paris had had considerable experience of them.)

The mighty author of the immortal plays was gifted with the most brilliant genius ever conferred upon man. He possessed an intimate and accurate acquaintance, which could not have been artificially acquired, with all the intricacies and mysteries of Court life. He had by study obtained nearly all the learning that could be gained from books. And he had by travel and experience acquired a knowledge of cities and of men that has never been surpassed.

Who was in existence at that period who could by any possibility be supposed to be this universal genius? In the days of Queen Elizabeth, for the first time in human history, one such man appeared, the man who is described as the marvel and mystery of the age, and this was the man known to us under the name of Francis Bacon.

In answer to the demand for a "mechanical proof that Bacon is Shakespeare" I have added a chapter shewing the meaning of "Honorificabilitudinitatibus," and I have in Chapter XIV. shewn how completely the documents recently discovered by Dr. Wallace confirm the statements which I had made in the previous chapters.

I have also annexed a reprint of Bacon's "Promus," which has recently been collated with the original manuscript. "Promus" signifies Storehouse, and the collection of "Fourmes and Elegancyes" stored therein was largely used by Bacon in the Shakespeare plays, in his own acknowledged works, and also in some other works for which he was mainly responsible.

I trust that students will derive considerable pleasure and profit from examining the "Promus" and from comparing the words and phrases, as they are there preserved, with the very greatly extended form in which many of them finally appeared.

EDWIN DURNING-LAWRENCE.

BACON IS SHAKESPEARE

CHAPTER I

"What does it matter whether the immortal works were written by Shakespeare (of Stratford) or by another man who bore (or assumed) the same name?"

Some twenty years ago, when this question was first propounded, it was deemed an excellent joke, and I find that there still are a great number of persons who seem unable to perceive that the question is one of considerable importance.

When the Shakespeare revival came, some eighty or ninety years ago, people said "pretty well for Shakespeare" and the "learned" men of that period were rather ashamed that Shakespeare should be deemed to be "*the*" English poet.

"Three poets in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy and England did adorn,
…
The force of Nature could no further go,
To make a third she joined the other two."

Dryden did not write these lines in reference to Shakespeare but to Milton. Where will you find the person who to-day thinks Milton comes within any measurable distance of the greatest genius among the sons of earth who was called by the name of Shakespeare?

Ninety-two years ago, viz.: in June 1818, an article appeared in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, under the heading "Time's Magic Lantern. No. V. Dialogue between Lord Bacon and Shakspeare" [Shakespeare being spelled Shakspeare]. The dialogue speaks of "Lord" Bacon and refers to him as being engaged in transcribing the "Novum Organum" when Shakspeare enters with a letter from Her Majesty (meaning Queen Elizabeth) asking him, Shakspeare, to see "her own" sonnets now in the keeping of *her* Lord Chancellor.

Of course this is all topsy turvydom, for in Queen Elizabeth's reign

Bacon was never "Lord" Bacon or Lord Chancellor.

But to continue, Shakspeare tells Bacon "Near to Castalia there bubbles also a fountain of petrifying water, wherein the muses are wont to dip whatever posies have met the approval of Apollo; so that the slender foliage which originally sprung forth in the cherishing brain of a true poet becomes hardened in all its leaves and glitters as if it were carved out of rubies and emeralds. The elements have afterwards no power over it."

Bacon. Such will be the fortune of your own productions.

Shakspeare. Ah my Lord! Do not encourage me to hope so. I am but a poor unlettered man, who seizes whatever rude conceits his own natural vein supplies him with, upon the enforcement of haste and necessity; and therefore I fear that such as are of deeper studies than myself, will find many flaws in my handiwork to laugh at both now and hereafter.

Bacon. He that can make the multitude laugh and weep as you do Mr. Shakspeare need not fear scholars… More scholarship might have sharpened your judgment but the particulars whereof a character is composed are better assembled by force of imagination than of judgment…

Shakspeare. My Lord thus far I know, that the first glimpse and conception of a character in my mind, is always engendered by chance and accident. We shall suppose, for instance, that I, sitting in a tap-room, or standing in a tennis court. The behaviour of some one fixes my attention… Thus comes forth Shallow, and Slender, and Mercutio, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek.

Bacon. These are characters who may be found alive in the streets. But how frame you such interlocutors as Brutus and Coriolanus?

Shakspeare. By searching histories, in the first place, my Lord, for the germ. The filling up afterwards comes rather from feeling than observation. I turn myself into a Brutus or a Coriolanus for the time; and can, at least in fancy, partake sufficiently of the nobleness of their nature, to put proper words in their mouths… My knowledge of the tongues is but small, on which account I have read ancient authors mostly at secondhand. I remember, when I first came to London, and began to be a hanger-on at the theatres, a great desire grew in me for more learning than had fallen to my share at Stratford; but fickleness and impatience, and the bewilderment caused by new objects, dispersed that wish into empty air…

This ridiculous and most absurd nonsense, which appeared in 1818 in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was deemed so excellent and so *instructive* that (slightly abridged) it was copied into "Reading lessons for the use of public and private schools" by John Pierpont, of Boston, U.S.A., which was published in London nearly twenty years later, viz., in 1837.

As I said before, the dialogue is really all topsy turvydom, for the writer must have known perfectly well that Bacon was not Lord Keeper till 1617, the year after Shakspeare's death in 1616, and was not made Lord Chancellor till 1618, and that he is not supposed to have began to write the "Novum Organum" before the death of Queen Elizabeth.

I have therefore arrived at the conclusion that the whole article was really intended to poke fun at the generally received notion that the author of the plays was an _un_lettered man, who picked up his knowledge at tavern doors and in taprooms and tennis courts. I would specially refer to the passage where Bacon asks "How frame you such interlocutors as Brutus and Coriolanus?" and Shakspeare replies "By searching histories, in the first place, my Lord, for the germ. The filling up afterwards comes rather from feeling than observation. I turn myself into a Brutus or a Coriolanus for the time and can at least in fancy partake sufficiently of the nobleness of their nature to put proper words in their mouths."

Surely this also must have been penned to open the eyes of the public to the absurdity of the popular conception of the author of the plays as an _un_lettered man who "had small Latin and less Greek"!

The highest scholarship not only in this country and in Germany but throughout the world has been for many years concentrated upon the classical characters portrayed in the plays, and the adverse criticism of former days has given place to a reverential admiration for the marvellous knowledge of antiquity displayed throughout the plays in the presentation of the historical characters of bygone times; classical authority being found for nearly every word put into their mouths.

What does it matter whether the immortal works were written by Shakspeare (of Stratford) or by a great and learned man who assumed the name Shakespeare to "Shake a lance at Ignorance"? We should not forget that this phrase "Shake a lance at Ignorance" is contemporary, appearing in Ben Jonson's panegyric in the Shakespeare folio of 1623.

CHAPTER II

The Shackspere Monument, Bust, and Portrait.

In the year 1909 Mr. George Hookham in the January number of the *National Review* sums up practically all that is really known of the life of William Shakspeare of Stratford as follows: —

> 'We only know that he was born at Stratford, of illiterate parents – (we do *not* know that he went to school there) – that, when 18-1/2 years old, he married Anne Hathaway (who was eight years his senior, and who bore him a child six months after marriage); that he had in all three children by her (whom with their mother he left, and went to London, having apparently done his best to desert her before marriage); – that in London he became an actor with an interest in a theatre, and was reputed to be the writer of plays; – that he purchased property in Stratford, to which town he returned; – engaged in purchases and sales and law-suits (of no biographical interest except as indicating his money-making and litigious temperament); helped his father in an application for coat armour (to be obtained by false pretences); promoted the enclosure of common lands at Stratford (after being guaranteed against personal loss); made his will – and died at the age of 52, without a book in his possession, and leaving nothing to his wife but his second best bed, and this by an afterthought. No record of friendship with anyone more cultured than his fellow actors.
>
> No letter, – only two contemporary reports of his conversation, one with regard to the commons enclosure as above, and the other in circumstances not to be recited unnecessarily.
>
> In a word we know his parentage, birth, marriage, fatherhood, occupation, his wealth and his chief ambition, his will and his death, and absolutely nothing else; his death being received with unbroken and ominous silence by the literary world, not even Ben Jonson who seven years later glorified the plays *in excelsis*, expending so much as a quatrain on his memory.'

[Illustration: Plate III. The Stratford Monument,
From Dugdale's Warwickshire, 1656.]

[Illustration: Plate IV. The Stratford Monument as it appears at the present time.]

To this statement by Mr. George Hookham I would add that we know W. Shakspeare was christened 26th April 1564, that his Will which commences "In the name of god Amen! I Willim Shackspeare, of Stratford upon Avon, in the countie of warr gent in perfect health and memorie, god be praysed," was dated 25th (January altered to) March 1616, and it was proved 22nd June 1616, Shakspeare having died 23rd April 1616, four weeks after the date of the Will.

We also know that a monument was erected to him in Stratford Church. And because L. Digges, in his lines in the Shakespeare folio of 1623 says "When Time dissolves thy Stratford Moniment,"[1] it is supposed that the monument must have been put up before 1623. But we should remember that as Mrs. Stopes (who is by no means a Baconian) pointed out in the *Monthly Review* of April 1904, the original monument was not like the present monument which shews a man with a pen in his hand; but was the very different monument which will be found depicted in Sir William Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," published in 1656. The bust taken from this is shewn on Plate 5, Page 14, and the whole monument on Plate 3, Page 8.

[Illustration: Plate V. The Stratford Bust, from Dugdale's Warwickshire.
Published 1656.]

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[1] Digges really means "When Time dissolves thy Stratford Mask".

The figure bears no resemblance to the usually accepted likeness of Shakspeare. It hugs a sack of wool, or a pocket of hops to its belly and does not hold a pen in its hand.

In Plate 6, Page 15, is shewn the bust from the monument as it exists at the present time, with the great pen in the right hand and a sheet of paper under the left hand. The whole monument is shewn on Plate 4, Page 9.

[Illustration: Plate VI. The Stratford Bust as it appears at the present time.]

The face seems copied from the mask of the so-called portrait in the 1623 folio, which is shewn in Plate 8.

[Illustration: Plate VIII. Full size Facsimile of part of the Title Page of the 1623 Shakespeare folio]

It is desirable to look at that picture very carefully, because every student ought to know that the portrait in the title-page of the first folio edition of the plays published in 1623, which was drawn by Martin Droeshout, is cunningly composed of two left arms and a mask. Martin Droeshout, its designer, was, as Mr. Sidney Lee tells us, but 15 years of age when Shakspeare died. He is not likely therefore ever to have seen the actor of Stratford, yet this is the "Authentic," that is the "Authorised" portrait of Shakspeare, although there *is* no question – there *can be* no possible question – that in fact it is a cunningly drawn cryptographic picture, shewing two left arms and a mask.

The back of the left arm which does duty for the right arm is shewn in

Plate 10, Page 26.

[Illustration: Plate X. The Back of the Left Arm, from Plate VIII]

Every tailor will admit that this is not and cannot be the front of the right arm, but is, without possibility of doubt, the back of the left arm.

[Illustration: Plate XI. The Front of the Left Arm, from Plate VIII]

[Illustration: (not included in list of plates) The Front of Left Arm.

From Plate VIII. The Back of Left Arm *From Plate VIII.* Arranged

Tailor fashion, shoulder to shoulder, as in the *Gentleman's TailorMagazine*, April, 1911]

Plate 11 shews the front of the left arm, and you at once perceive that you are no longer looking at the back of the coat but at the front of the coat.

[Illustration: Plate XII. The [Mask] Head, from the [so-called]

Portrait, by Droeshout, in the 1623 Folio]

Now in Plate 12, Page 32, you see the mask, especially note that the ear is a mask ear and stands out curiously; note also how distinct the line shewing the edge of the mask appears. Perhaps the reader will perceive this more clearly if he turns the page upside down.

[Illustration: Plate XIII. Sir Nicholas Bacon, from the Painting by Zucchero]

Plate 13, Page 33, depicts a real face, that of Sir Nicholas Bacon, eldest son of the Lord Keeper, from a contemporary portrait by Zucchero, lately in the Duke of Fife's Collection. This shews by contrast the difference between the portrait of a living man, and the drawing of a lifeless mask with the double line from ear to chin. Again examine Plates 8, Pages 20, 21, the complete portrait in the folio. The reader having seen the separate portions, will, I trust, be able now to perceive that this portrait is correctly characterised as cunningly composed of two left arms and a mask.

While examining this portrait, the reader should study the lines that describe it in the Shakespeare folio of 1623, a facsimile of which is here inserted.

To the Reader.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
  It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Grauer had a strife
  with Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but haue drawne his wit

As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was euer writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.
B.I.

Plate IX.

VERSES ASCRIBED TO BEN JONSON, FROM THE 1623 FOLIO EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

B.I. call the ridiculous dummy a "portrait" but describes it as the "Figure put for" (that is "instead of") and as "the Print," and as "his Picture"; he likewise most clearly tells us to "looke not on his (ridiculous) Picture, but (only) his Booke." It seems, therefore, evident that he knew the secret of Bacon's authorship and intended to inform those capable of understanding that the graver had done out the life when he writes, "Out-doo the life." In the New English Dictionary, edited by Sir J.A.H. Murray, there are upwards of six hundred words beginning with "Out," and every one of them, with scarcely a single exception, requires, in order to be fully understood, to be read reversed. Out-law does not mean outside of the law, but lawed out by a legal process. "Out-doo" was used only in the sense of "do out"; thus, in the "Cursor Mundi," written centuries before the days of Elizabeth, we read that Adam was out done [of Paradise]; and in Drayton's "Barons' Wars," published in 1603, we find in Book V. s. li.

"That he his foe not able to withstand,
Was ta'en in battle and his eyes out-done."

The graver has indeed done out the life so cleverly that for hundreds of years learned pedants and others have thought that the figure represented a real man, and altogether failed to perceive that it was a mere stuffed dummy clothed in an impossible coat, cunningly composed of the front of the left arm buttoned on to the back of the same left arm, as to form a double left armed apology for a man. Moreover, this dummy is surmounted by a hideous staring mask, furnished with an imaginary ear, utterly unlike anything human, because, instead of being hollowed in, it is rounded out something like the rounded outside of a shoe-horn, in order to form a cup which would cover and conceal any real ear that might be behind it.

Perhaps the reader will more fully understand the full meaning of B.I.'s lines if I paraphrase them as follows: —

To the Reader.

The dummy that thou seest set here,
Was put instead of Shake-a-speare;
Wherein the Graver had a strife
To extinguish all of Nature's life;
O, could he but have drawn his mind
As well as he's concealed behind
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was ever writ in brasse.
But since he cannot, do not looke
On his mas'd Picture, but his Booke.

Do out appears in the name of the little instrument something like a pair of snuffer which was formerly used to extinguish the candles and called a "Doute." Therefore I have correctly substituted "extinguished" for "out-doo." At the beginning I have substituted "dummy" for "figure" because we are told that the figure is "put for" (that is, put instead of) Shakespeare. In modern English we frequently describe a chairman who is a mere dummy as a figurehead. Then "wit" in these lines means absolutely the same as "mind," which I have used in its place because I think it refers to the fact that upon the miniature of Bacon in his 18th year, which was painted by Hilliard in 1578, we read: – "Si tabula daretur digna animum mallem." This line is believed to have been written at the time by the artist, and was translated in "Spedding": – "If one could but paint his mind."

In March, 1911, the *Tailor and Cutter* newspaper stated that the Figure, put for Shakepeare in the 1623 folio, was undoubtedly clothed in an impossible coat, composed of the back and the front of the same left arm. And in the following April the *Gentleman's Tailor Magazine*, under the heading of a "Problem for the Trade," shews the two halves of the coat as printed on page 28a, and says: "It is passing strange that something like three centuries should have been allowed to elapse before the tailors' handiwork should have been appealed to in this particular manner."

"The special point is that in what is known as the authentic portrait of William Shakespeare, which appears in the celebrated first folio edition, published in 1623, a remarkable sartorial puzzle is apparent."

"The tunic, coat, or whatever the garment may have been called at the time, is so strangely illustrated that the right-hand side of the forepart is obviously the left-hand side of the backpart; and so gives a harlequin appearance to the figure, which it is not unnatural to assume was intentional, and done with express object and purpose."

"Anyhow, it is pretty safe to say that if a Referendum of the trade was taken on the question whether the two illustrations shown above represent the foreparts of the same garments, the polling would give an unanimous vote in the negative."

"It is outside the province of a trade journal to dogmatise on such a subject; but when such a glaring incongruity as these illustrations show is brought into court, it is only natural that the tailor should have something to say; or, at any rate, to think about."

This one simple fact which can neither be disputed nor explained away, viz., that the "Figure" put upon the title-page of the First Folio of the Plays in 1623 to represent Shakespeare, is a doubly left-armed and stuffed dummy, surmounted by a ridiculous putty-faced mask, disposes once and for all of any idea that the mighty Plays were written by the illiterate clown of Stratford-upon-Avon.

"He hath *hit* his face"

It is thought that *hit* means *hid* as in Chaucer's Squiere's Tale, line 512 etc.

> "Right as a serpent *hit* him under floures
> Til he may seen his tyme for to byte"

If indeed "hit" be intended to be read as "hid" then these ten lines are no longer the cryptic puzzle which they have hitherto been considered to be, but in conjunction with the portrait, they clearly reveal the true facts, that the real author is writing left-handedly, that means secretly, in shadow, with his face hidden behind a mask or pseudonym.

We should also notice "out-doo" is spelled with a hyphen. In the language of to-day and still more in that of the time of Shakespeare all, or nearly all, words beginning with *out* may be read reversed, out-bar is bar out, out-bud is bud out, out-crop is crop out, out-fit is fit out, and so on through the alphabet.

If therefore we may read "out-doo the life" as "doo out the life" meaning "shut out the real face of the living man" we perceive that here also we are told "that the real face is hidden."

The description, with the head line "To the Reader" and the signature "B.I.," forms twelve lines, the words of which can be turned into numerous significant anagrams, etc., to which, however, no allusion is made in the present work. But our readers will find that if all the letters are counted (the two v.v.'s in line nine being counted as four letters) they will amount to the number 287. In subsequent chapters a good deal is said about this number, but here we only desire to say that we are "informed" that the "Great Author" intended to reveal himself 287 years after 1623, the date when the First Folio was published, that is in the present year, 1910, when very numerous tongues will be loosened.

Examine once more the original Stratford Bust, Plate 5, Page 14, and the present Stratford Bust, Plate 6, Page 15, *with the large pen in the right hand*.

If the Stratford actor were indeed the author of the plays it was most appropriate that he should have a pen in his hand. But in the original monument as shewn in Plate 3, Page 8, the figure hugs a sack of wool or a pocket of hops or may be a cushion. For about 120 years, this continued to be the Stratford effigy and shewed nothing that could in any way connect the man portrayed, with literary work. I believe that this was not accidental. I think that everybody in Stratford must have known that William "Sha_c_kspeare" could not write so much as his own name, for I assert that we possess nothing which can by any reasonable possibility be deemed to be his signature.

[Illustration: Decorative Chapter Heading]

CHAPTER III

The so-called "Signatures."

In Plate 14, Page 36, are shewn the five so-called signatures. These five being the only pieces of writing in the world that can, even by the most ardent Stratfordians, be supposed to have been written by Shakspeare's pen; let us consider them carefully. The Will commences "In the name of God Amen I Willum Shackspeare." It is written upon three sheets of paper and each sheet bears a supposed signature. The Will is dated in Latin "Vicesimo quinto die [Januarij] Mtij Anno Regni Dni nri Jacobi, nunc R Anglie, &c. decimo quarto & Scotie xlix° annoq Dni 1616", or shortly in English 25th March 1616.

Shakspeare died 23rd April 1616 just four weeks after publishing his will.

I say after "PUBLISHING his Will" advisedly, for such is the attestation, viz., "Witnes to the publyshing hereof,"

"Fra: Collyns

Julius Shawe

John Robinson

Hamnet Sadler

Robert Whattcott"

Nothing is said about the witnessing of the signing hereof. The Will might therefore have been, and I myself am perfectly certain that it was, marked with the name of William Shakspeare by the Solicitor, Fra (ncis) Collyns, who wrote the body of the Will.

[Illustration: Plate XIV. The Five so-called "Shakespeare Signatures."

THE FIVE SO-CALLED "SHAKESPEARE SIGNATURES."]

He also wrote the names of the other witnesses, which are all in the same hand-writing as the Will; shewing that Shakspeare's witnesses were also unable to write their names.

This fact, that Shakspeare's name is written by the solicitor, is conclusively proved by the recent article of Magdalene Thumm-Kintzel in the Leipzig magazine, *Der Menschenkenner*, which was published in January 1909.

In this publication, photo reproductions of certain letters in the body of the Will, and in the so-called Shakspeare signatures are placed side by side, and the evidence is irresistible that they are written by the same hand. Moreover when we remember that the Will commences "I Willim Sha_c_kspeare" with a "c" between the "a" and "k," the idea that Shakspeare himself wrote his own Will cannot be deemed worthy of serious consideration. The whole Will is in fact in the handwriting of Francis Collyns, the Warwick solicitor, who added the attestation clause.

I myself was sure that the solicitor had added the so-called signatures, when, many years ago, I examined under the strongest magnifying glasses the Will at Somerset House.

Look first at the upper writings and never again call them "signatures." The top one is on the first page of the Will, the second on the second page, the third on the last page of the Will.

The original of the top one has been very much damaged but the "W" remains quite clear. Look first only at the "W's". If the writings were signatures what could induce a man when signing his last Will to make each "W" as different from the others as possible, and why is the second Christian name written Willm?

Compare also the second and third "Shakspeare" and note that every letter is formed in a different manner. Compare the two "S's", next compare the two "h's", the "h" of the second begins at the bottom, the "h" of the third begins at the top, the same applies to the next letter the "a", so also with respect to the "k's "; how widely different these are.

Plate 14 shews at the bottom two other names also. These are taken, the one on the left from a deed of purchase of a dwelling house in Blackfriars dated March 10th 1612-13 (now in the City Library of the Corporation of London); the other on the right is from a mortgage of the same property executed on the following day, viz: March 11th 1612-13, which is now in the British Museum.

Neither of these documents states that it was "signed" but only says that it was "sealed," and it was at that date in no way necessary that any signatures should be written over the seals, but the clerks might and evidently did, place upon these deeds an abbreviated name of William Shakspeare over the seal on each document. In the case of the other two parties to the documents, the signatures are most beautifully written and are almost absolutely identical in the two deeds.

Look at these two supposititious signatures. To myself it is difficult to imagine that anyone with eyes to see could suppose them to be signatures by the same hand.

[Illustration: The Signatures (so called) of "Shakespeare," which are the best possible reproductions of the originals, and shew that all are written in "lawscript" by skilled penman.]

Note on the so-called "Signatures."

When part of the purchase money is what is commonly called "left on mortgage," the mortgage deed is always dated one day *after*, but is always signed one moment *before*, the purchase deed, because the owner will not part with his property before he receives his security.

The Shakespeare purchase deed and the mortgage deed were therefore both signed at the same time, in the same place, with the same pen, and the same ink.

This is evidently true with respect to the signatures of Wm. Johnson and Jno. Jackson, the other parries to both of the deeds.

But as I wrote to the City authorities and the British Museum authorities, it would be impossible to discover a scoundrel who would venture to perjure himself and falsely swear that it was even remotely possible that the two supposed signature of Wm. Shakespeare could have been written at the same time, in the same place, with the same pen, and the same ink, by the *same hand*.

They are widely different, one having been written by the law clerk of the seller, the other by the law clerk of the purchaser.

According to the law of England, anyone may (by request) attach any person's name to any document, and if that person touch it, any third person may witness it as a signature.

Some years ago by the courtesy of the Corporation of London, the

Librarian and the Chairman of the Library Committee carried the Purchase

Deed to the British Museum to place it side by side with the Mortgage

Deed there.

After they had with myself and the Museum Authorities most carefully examined the two deeds, the Librarian of the City Corporation said to me, there is no reason to suppose that the Corporation deed has upon it the signature of Wm. Shakespeare, and the British Museum Authorities likewise told me that they did not think that the Museum Mortgage Deed had upon it a signature of William Shakespeare.

The more you examine the whole five the more you will be certain, as the writer is, after the most careful study of the Will and of the Deeds, that not one of the five writings is a "signature," or pretends to be a "signature," and that therefore there is a probability, practically amounting to a certainty, that the Stratford Actor could not so much as manage to scrawl his own name.

No! We possess not a scrap of writing, not even an attempt at a signature, [see also Chapter XIV., p. 161] that can be reasonably supposed to be written by the Stratford *gentleman*.

He is styled "gentle Shakespeare": this does not refer to anything relating to his character or to his manners but it means that possessing a coat of arms he was legally entitled to call himself a "gentleman."

Chapter IV

Contemporary Allusions to Shackspere.

Shakspeare the Actor purchased New Place at Stratford-on-Avon in 1597 for £60 and he became a "gentleman" and an esquire when he secured a grant of arms in 1599.

How did the stage "honour" the player who had bought a coat of arms and was able to call himself a "gentleman"?

Three contemporary plays give us scenes illustrating the incident:

1st. Ben Jonson's "Every man out of his humour" which was acted in 1599 the very year of Shakspeare's grant of arms.

2nd. Shakespeare's "As you like it" which was entered at Stationers' Hall in 1600, although no copy is known to exist before the folio of 1623.

3rd. "The Return from Parnassus" which was acted at St. John's College, Cambridge in 1601, though not printed till 1606.

In addition to these three plays, there is a fourth evidence of the way in which the Clown who had purchased a coat of arms was regarded, in a pamphlet or tract of which only one copy is known to exist. This tract which can be seen in the Rylands Library, Manchester, used to be in Lord Spencer's library at Althorp, and is reprinted by Halliwell-Phillipps in "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," 1889, Vol. I, pages 325-6.

[Illustration: PLATE XV. Bacon's Crest from the Binding of a
Presentation Copy of the Novum Organum, 1620.]

To commence with Ben Jonson's "Every man out of his humour." The clown who had purchased a coat of arms is said to be the brother of Sordido (a miser), and is described as an "essential" clown (that is an uneducated rustic), and is styled Sogliardo which is the Italian for the filthiest possible name.

The other two characters in the scene (act iii. sc. I) are Puntarvolo who, as his crest is a *Boar*, must be intended to represent Bacon;[2] and Carlo Buffone who is a buffoon or jester.

Enter Sogliardo (the filth), who is evidently the Stratford Clown, who has just purchased a coat of arms: —

Actus Tertius, Scena Prima,
Sogliardo, Punt., Carlo.

Sog. Nay I will haue him, I am resolute for that, by this Parchment Gentlemen, I haue ben so toil'd among the Harrots [meaning *Heralds*] yonder, you will not beleeue, they doe speake i' the straungest language, and giue a man the hardest termes for his money, that euer you knew.

Car. But ha' you armes? ha' your armes?

Sog. Yfaith, I thanke God I can write myselfe Gentleman now, here's my Pattent, it cost me thirtie pound by this breath.

Punt. A very faire Coat, well charg'd and full of Armorie.

Sog. Nay, it has, as much varietie of colours in it, as you haue seene a Coat haue, how like you the Crest, Sir?

Punt. I vnderstand it not well, what is't?

Sog. Marry Sir, it is your Bore without a head Rampant.

Punt. A Bore without a head, that's very rare.

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[2] Through the whole play the fact that Puntarvolo represents Bacon is continually apparent to the instructed reader. Note especially Act II., Scene 3, where Puntarvolo addresses his wife, who appears at a window, in a parody of the address of Romeo to Juliet. Again in Act II., Scene 3, Carlo Buffone calls Puntarvolo "A yeoman pheuterer." Pheuter or feuter means a rest or supportfor a spear – which is informing.

Car. I, [Aye] and Rampant too: troth I commend
the Herald's wit, he has deciphered him well:
A Swine without a head, without braine, wit,
anything indeed, Ramping to Gentilitie. You
can blazon the rest signior? can you not?
…
…

Punt. Let the word be, *Not without mustard*, your
Crest is very rare sir.

Shakspeare's "word" that is his "motto" was – non sanz droict – not without right – and I desire the reader also especially to remember Sogliardo's words "Yfaith I thanke God" a phrase which though it appears in the quartos is changed in the 1616 Ben Jonson folio into "I thank *them*" which has no meaning.

Next we turn to Shakespeare's "As you like it." This play though entered at Stationers' Hall in 1600 and probably played quite as early is not known in print till it appeared in the folio of 1623. The portion to which I wish to refer is the commencement of Actus Quintus, Scena Prima.

Act 5, Scene i. Enter Clowne and Awdrie

Clow. We shall finde a time *Awdrie*, patience gentle
Awdrie.
Awd. Faith the priest was good enough, for all the
olde gentlemans saying.

Clow. A most wicked Sir *Oliver, Awdrie*, a most vile *Mar-text.* But *Awdrie*, there is a youth heere in the forrest layes claime to you.

Awd. I, I know who 'tis: he hath no interest in mee in the world: here comes the man you meane.

(Enter William)

Clo. It is meat and drinke to me to see a clowne, by my troth, we that haue good wits, haue much to answer for: we shall be flouting: we cannot hold.

Will. Good eu'n *Audrey.*

Awd. God ye good eu'n *William*.

Will. And good eu'n to you sir.

Clo. Good eu'n gentle friend. Couer thy head, couer thy head: Nay prethee bee couer'd. How olde are you Friend?

Will. Fiue and twentie Sir.

Clo. A ripe age: Is thy name *William*?

Will. *William*, Sir.

Clo. A faire name. Was't borne i' the Forrest heere?

Will. I [Aye] Sir, I thanke God.

Clo. Thanke God: A good answer: Art rich?

Will. 'Faith Sir, so, so.

Clo. So, so, is good, very good, very excellent good: and yet it is not, it is but so, so: Art thou wise?

Will. I [Aye] sir, I haue a prettie wit.

Clo. Why, thou saist well. I do now remember a saying: The Foole doth thinke he is wise, but the wise man knowes himselfe to be a Foole… You do loue this maid?

Will. I do Sir.

Clo. Giue me your hand: art thou Learned?

Will. No Sir.

Clo. Then learne this of me, To haue is to haue. For it is a figure in Rhetoricke, that drink being powr'd out of a cup into a glasse, by filling the one, doth empty the other. For all your Writers do consent, that *ipse* is hee: now you are not *ipse*, for I am he.

Will. Which he Sir?

Clo. He Sir, that must marrie this woman.

Firstly I want to call your attention to Touchstone the courtier who is playing clown and who we are told "uses his folly like a stalking horse and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit." Notice that Touchstone refuses to be married to Awdrey (who probably represents the plays of Shakespeare) by a-Mar-text_, and she declares that the Clown William "has no interest in mee in the world." William – shall we say Shakspeare of Stratford? – enters and is greeted as "gentle" (*i. e*. he is possessed of a coat of arms). He says "Thank God" he was born in the forest here (Ardennes, very near in sound to Arden). "Thank God" is repeated by Touchstone and as it is the same phrase that is used by Sogliardo in Ben Jonson's play I expect that it was an ejaculation very characteristic of the real man of Stratford and I am confirmed in this belief because in the folio edition of Ben Jonson's plays the phrase is changed to "I thank *them*" which has no meaning.

The clown of Ardennes is rich but only rich for a clown (Shakspeare of

Stratford was not really rich, New Place cost only £60).

Asked if he is wise, he says "aye," that is "yes," and adds that he has "a pretty wit," a phrase we must remember that is constantly used in reference to the Stratford actor. Touchstone mocks him with a paraphrase of the well-known maxim "If you are wise you are a Foole if you be a Foole you are wise" which is to be found in Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" Antitheta xxxi. Then he asks him "*Art thou learned*" and William replies "*No sir*." This means, *unquestionably*, as every lawyer must know, that William replies that he cannot *read* one line of print. I feel sure the man called Shackspeare of Stratford was an uneducated rustic, never able to read a single line of print, and that this is the reason why no books were found in his house, this is the reason why his solicitor, Thomas Greene, lived with him in his house at New Place (Halliwell-Phillipps: Outlines, 1889, Vol. i, p. 226); – a well-known fact that very much puzzles those who do not realize the depth of Shakspeare's illiteracy.

Chapter V

"The Return from Parnassus" and "Ratsei's Ghost."

The next play to which attention must be called is "The Return from Parnassus" which was produced at Cambridge in 1601 and was printed in 1606 with the following title page: —

The Returne from Parnassus
or
The Scourge of Simony.
Publiquely acted by the Students
in Saint Johns Colledge in
Cambridge.

At London
Printed by G. Eld for John Wright, and
are to bee sold at his shop at
Christchurch Gate.
1606.

The portion to which I wish to direct attention is: —

Actus 5, Scena i.

Studioso. Fayre fell good *Orpheus*, that would rather be
King of a mole hill, then a Keysars slaue:
Better it is mongst fidlers to be chiefe,
Then at plaiers trencher beg reliefe.
But ist not strange this mimick apes should prize
Vnhappy Schollers at a hireling rate.
Vile world, that lifts them vp to hye degree,
And treades vs downe in groueling misery.
England affordes those glorious vagabonds,
That carried earst their fardels on their backes,
Coursers to ride on through the gazing streetes
Sooping it in their glaring Satten sutes,
And Pages to attend their maisterships:
With mouthing words that better wits haue framed,
They purchase lands, and now Esquiers are made.

Philomusus. What ere they seeme being euen at the best
They are but sporting fortunes *scornfull* iests.

Can these last two lines refer to Shakspeare the actor seeming to be the poet? Note that they are spoken by Philomusus that is friend of the poetic muse. Mark also the words "this mimick apes." Notice especially "with mouthing words that *better* wits haue framed, they purchase lands and now Esquiers are made" i.e. get grants of arms. Who at this period among mimics excepting W. Shakspeare of Stratford purchased lands and obtained also a grant of arms?

That this sneer "mouthing words that better wits have framed" must have been aimed at Shakspeare is strongly confirmed by the tract (reprinted by Halliwell-Phillipps in his "Outlines of

Shakespeare," 1889, Vol. I, p. 325) which is called "Ratsei's Ghost or the second part of his mad prankes and Robberies."

This pamphlet bears no date, but was entered at Stationers' Hall May 31st 1605. There is only a single copy in existence, which used to be in Earl Spencer's library at Althorp but is now in the Rylands; Library at Manchester. As I said, it is reprinted by Halliwell-Phillipps, and Stratfordians are obliged to agree with him that the reference is unquestionably to "Wm Shakespeare of Stratford." The most important part which is spoken by Ratsei the robber to a country player is as follows: —

Ratsei. And for you sirra, saies hee to the chiefest of them, thou hast a good presence upon a stage; methinks thou darkenst thy merite by playing in the country. Get thee to London, for if one man were dead, they will have much neede of such a one as thou art. There would be none in my opinion fitter then thyselfe to play his parts. My conceipt is such of thee, that I durst venture all the mony in my purse on thy head to play Hamlet with him for a wager. There thou shalt learn to be frugall, – for players were never so thriftie as they are now about London – and to feed upon all men, to let none feede upon thee; to make thy hand a stranger to thy pocket, thy hart slow to performe thy tongues promise, and when thou feelest thy purse well lined, buy thee some place of lordship in the country, that, growing weary of playing, thy mony may there bring thee to dignitie and reputation; then thou needest care for no man, nor not for them that before made thee prowd with speaking their words upon the stage.

The whole account of buying a place in the country, of feeding upon all men (that is lending money upon usury) of never keeping promises, of never giving anything in charity, agrees but too well with the few records we possess of the man of Stratford. And therefore Stratfordians are obliged to accept Halliwell-Phillipps' dictum that this tract called Ratsei's Ghost refers to the actor of Stratford and that "*he* needed not to care for them that before made *him* proud with speaking *their* words upon the stage." How is it possible that Stratfordians can continue to refuse to admit that the statement in the "Return from Pernassus" "with mouthing words that better wits haue framed they purchase lands and now Esquiers are made" must also refer to the Stratford Actor?

CHAPTER VI

Shackspere's Correspondence!

There is only a single letter extant addressed to Shakspeare, and this asks for a loan of £30 It is dated 25th October 1598, and is from Richard Quiney. It reads

> "Loveinge Countreyman I am bolde of vow as of a ffrende,
> craveinge yowr helpe wth xxxll vppon mr Bushells & my
> securytee or mr Myttons wth me. mr Rosswell is nott come
> to London as yeate & I have especiall cawse. yow shall
> ffrende me muche in helpeinge me out of all the debttes I
> owe in London I thancke god & muche quiet my mynde wch
> wolde nott be indebeted I am nowe towardes the Cowrte in
> hope of answer for the dispatche of my Buysenes. yow shall
> nether loase creddytt nor monney by me the Lorde wyllinge
> and nowe butt perswade yowr selfe soe as I hope & yow shall
> nott need to feare butt wth all hartie thanckefullenes I wyll
> holde my tyme & content yowr ffrende & yf we Bargaine
> farther yow shalbe the paie mr yowr selfe. my tyme biddes me
> hasten to an ende & soe I committ thys [to] yowr care & hope
> of yowr helpe. I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom
> the Cowrte. haste, the Lorde be wth yow & with us all
> amen
> ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane the 25 October 1598.
> yowrs in all kyndenes

Ryc. Quyney

(*addressed*)

> LS To my Loveinge good ffrend
> & contreymann mr wm
> Shackespere d[e]l[ive]r thees."

This letter is the only letter known to exist which was ever addressed to William Shackspere, the illiterate householder of Stratford, who as has been pointed out in these pages was totally unable to read a line of print, or to write even his own name. There are however in existence three, and three only, contemporary letters referring in any way to him, and these are not about literature with which the Stratford man had nothing whatever to do – but about mean and sordid small business transactions.

One is from Master Abraham Sturley, who writes in 1598 to a friend in London in reference to Shakspeare lending "Some monei on some od yarde land or other att Shottri or neare about us."

Another is dated Nov. 4th 1598, and is from the same Abraham Sturley to Richard Quiney in which we are told that "our countriman Mr Wm Shak would procure us monei wc I will like of."

A third from Adrian Quiney written (about 1598-1599) to his son Rycharde Quiney in which he says "yff yow bargen with Wm Sha or receve money therfor, brynge youre money homme."

There exists no contemporary letter from anyone to anyone, referring to the Stratford actor as being a poet or as being in any way connected with literature. But from the Court Records we learn that;

In 1600 Shakespeare brought action against John Clayton in London for £7 and got judgment in his favour. He also sued Philip Rogers of Stratford for two shillings loaned.

In 1604 he sued Philip Rogers for several bushels of malt sold to him at various times between March 27th and the end of May of that year, amounting in all to the value of £1. 15s. 10d. The poet a dealer in malt?

In 1608 he prosecuted John Addenbroke to recover a debt of £6 and sued his surety Horneby.

Halliwell-Phillipps tells us that "The precepts as appears from
memoranda in the originals, were issued by the poet's solicitor Thomas
Greene who was then residing under some unknown conditions[3] at
New Place."

Referring to these sordid stories, Richard Grant White, that strong believer in the Stratford man, says in his "Life and genius of William Shakespeare," p. 156 "The pursuit of an impoverished man for the sake of imprisoning him and depriving him both of the power of paying his debts and supporting himself and his family, is an incident in Shakespeare's life which it requires the utmost allowance and consideration for the practice of the time and country to enable us to contemplate with equanimity – satisfaction is impossible."

"The biographer of Shakespeare must record these facts because the literary antiquaries have unearthed and brought them forward as new particulars of the life of Shakespeare. We hunger and receive these husks; we open our mouths for food and we break our teeth against these stones."

Yes! The world has broken its teeth too long upon these stones to continue to mistake them for bread. And as the accomplished scholar and poetess the late Miss Anna Swanwick once declared to the writer, she knew nothing of the Bacon and Shakespeare controversy, but Mr. Sidney Lee's "Life of Shakespeare" had convinced her that his man never wrote the plays. And that is just what everybody else is saying at Eton, at Oxford, at Cambridge, in the Navy, in the Army, and pretty generally among unprejudiced people everywhere, who are satisfied, as is Mark Twain, that the most learned of works could not have been written by the most _un_learned of men.

Yes! It does matter that the "Greatest Birth of Time" should no longer be considered to have been the work of the unlettered rustic of Stratford; and the hour has at last come when it should be universally known that this mighty work was written by the man who had taken all knowledge for his province, the man who said "I have, though in a despised weed [that is under a Pseudonym] procured the good of all men"; the man who left his "name and memory to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages."

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[3] This fact so puzzling to Halliwell-Phillipps is fully explained when it is realised that William Shackspere of Stratford could neither read or write.

CHAPTER VII

Bacon acknowledged to be a Poet.

In discussing the question of the Authorship of the plays many people appear to be unaware that Bacon was considered by his contemporaries to be a great poet. It seems therefore advisable to quote a few witnesses who speak of his pre-eminence in poetry.

In 1645 there was published "The Great Assises holden in Parnassus by

Apollo and his assessours" a facsimile of the title of which is given on page 57. This work is anonymous but is usually ascribed to George

Withers and in it Bacon as Lord Verulan is placed first and designated

"Chancellor of Parnassus" that is "Greatest of Poets."

After the title, the book commences with two pages of which facsimiles are given on pages 58, 59.

[Illustration: Plate XVI. Facsimile Title Page]

[Illustration: Plate XVII. Facsimile of Page III of "The Great Assises"]

[Illustration: Plate XVIII Facsimile of Page IV of "The Great Assises"]

Apollo appears at the top, next comes Lord Verulan as Chancellor of Parnassus, Sir Philip Sidney and other world renowned names follow and then below the line side by side is a list of the jurors and a list of the malefactors.

A little examination will teach us that the jurors are really the same persons as the malefactors and that we ought to read right across the page as if the dividing line did not exist.

Acting on this principle we perceive that George Wither [Withers] is correctly described as Mercurius Britanicus. Mr. Sidney Lee tells us that Withers regarded "Britain's Remembrancer" 1628 and "Prosopopaeia Britannica" 1648 as his greatest works.

Thomas Cary [Carew] is correctly described as Mercurias Aulicus – Court

Messenger. He went to the French Court with Lord Herbert and was made

Gentleman of the Privy Chamber by Charles I who presented him with an estate at Sunninghill.

Thomas May is correctly described as Mercurius Civicus. He applied for the post of Chronologer to the City of London and James I wrote to the Lord Mayor (unsuccessfully) in his favour.

Josuah Sylvester is correctly described as The Writer of Diurnals. He translated Du Bartas "Divine Weekes," describing day by day, that is "Diurnally," the creation of the world.

Georges Sandes [Sandys] is The Intelligencer. He travelled all over the world and his book of travels was one of the popular works of the period.

Michael Drayton is The Writer of Occurrences. Besides the "Poly-Olbion," he wrote "England's Heroicall Epistles" and "The Barron's Wars."

Francis Beaumont is The Writer of Passages. This exactly describes him as he is known as writing in conjunction with Fletcher. "Beamount and Fletcher make one poet, they single dare not adventure on a play."

William Shakespeere is "The writer of weekely accounts." This exactly describes him, for the only literature for which he was responsible was the accounts sent out by his clerk or attorney.

Turning over the pages of the little book on page 9 the cryer calls out "Then Sylvester, Sands, Drayton, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger, Shakespeare (sic) and Heywood, Poets good and true." This statement seems to be contradicted so far as Shakespeare is concerned by the defendant who says on page 31 "Shakespear's (sic) a mimicke" (that is a mere actor not a poet).

"Beamount and Fletcher make one poet, they
Single, dare not adventure on a play."

Each of these statements seems to be true. And on Page 33 Apollo[4] says

"We should to thy exception give consent
But since we are assur'd, 'tis thy intent,
By this refusall, onely to deferre
That censure, which our justice must conferre
Upon thy merits; we must needs decline
From approbation of these pleas of thine."

That is, Apollo *admits* that Shakespeare is not a poet but a "mimic," the word to which I called your attention in the "Return from Parnassus" in relation to "this mimick apes." In this little book Shakespeare's name occurs three times, and on each occasion is spelled differently.

This clear statement that the actor Shakespeare was not a poet but only a tradesman who sent out his "weekly accounts" is, I think, here for the first time pointed out. It seems very difficult to conceive of a much higher testimony to Bacon's pre-eminence in poetry than the fact that he is placed as "Chancellor of Parnassus" under Apollo. But a still higher position is accorded to him when it is suggested that Apollo feared that he himself should lose his crown which would be placed on Bacon's head.

Walter Begbie in "Is it Shakespeare?" 1903, p. 274, tells us: – That Thomas Randolf, in Latin verses published in 1640 but probably written some 14 years earlier says that Phoebus was accessory to Bacon's death because he was afraid lest Bacon should some day come to be crowned King of poetry or the Muses. Farther on the same writer declares that as Bacon "was himself a singer" he did not need to be celebrated in song by others, and that George Herbert calls Bacon the colleague of Sol [Phoebus Apollo].

George Herbert was himself a dramatic poet and Bacon dedicated his "Translation of the Psalms" to him "who has overlooked so many of my works."

Mr. Begbie also tells us that Thomas Campion addresses Bacon thus "Whether the thorny volume of the Law or the Schools or the *Sweet Muse* allure thee."

It may be worth while here to quote the similar testimony which is borne by John Davies of Hereford who in his "Scourge of Folly" published about 1610, writes

"To the royall, ingenious, and all-learned
Knight, —

Sr Francis Bacon.

Thy *bounty* and the *Beauty* of thy Witt
Comprisd in Lists of *Law* and learned *Arts*,
Each making thee for great *Imployment* fitt
Which now thou hast, (though short of thy
deserts)
Compells my pen to let fall shining *Inke*
And to bedew the *Baies* that *deck* thy *Front*; —
And to thy health in *Helicon* to drinke
As to her *Bellamour* the *Muse* is wont:

[4] The words attriuted to Apollo, are of course spoken by his Chancellor Bacon. See note on the number 33 on page 112.

For thou dost her embozom; and dost vse
Her company for sport twixt grave affaires;
So vtterst Law the liuelyer through thy *Muse*.
And for that all thy *Notes* are sweetest *Aires*;
My Muse thus notes thy worth in eu'ry Line,
With yncke which thus she sugers; so, to shine."

But nothing can much exceed in value the testimony of Ben Jonson who in his "Discoveries," 1641, says "But his learned, and able (though unfortunate) *Successor* [Bacon in margin] is he, who hath fill'd up all numbers, and perform'd that in our tongue, which may be compar'd or preferr'd either to insolent *Greece*, or haughty *Rome*."

"He who hath filled up all numbers" means unquestionably "He that hath written every kind of poetry."[5]

Alexander Pope the poet declares that he himself "lisped in numbers for the numbers came." Ben Jonson therefore bears testimony to the fact that Bacon was so great a poet that he had in poetry written that "which may be compar'd or preferr'd either to insolent *Greece* or haughty *Rome*."

But in 1623 Ben Jonson had said of the AUTHOR of the plays

"Or when thy sockes were on Leaue thee alone, for the comparison Of all, that insolent Greece *or haughtie* Rome *Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come."*

Surely the statements in the "Discoveries" were intended to tell us who was the AUTHOR of the plays.

After perusing these contemporary evidences, and they might be multiplied, it is difficult to understand how anyone can venture to dispute Bacon's position as pre-eminent in poetry. But it may be of interest to those who doubt whether Bacon (irrespective of any claim to the authorship of the plays) could be deemed to be a great poet, to quote here the words of Percy Bysshe Shelley, who in his "Defence of Poetry" says

"Bacon was a poet. His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm, which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect. It is a strain which distends and then bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy."

The immortal plays are the "Greatest Birth of Time," and contain a short summary of the wisdom of the world from ancient times, and they exhibit an extent and depth of knowledge in every branch which has never been equalled at any period of the world's history. In classic lore, as the late Mr. Churton Collins recently pointed out, they evince the ripest scholarship. And this is confirmed by classical scholars all the world over.

None but the profoundest lawyers can realise the extent of the knowledge not only of the theory but of the practice of Law which is displayed. Lord Campbell says that Lord Eldon [supposed to have been the most learned of judges] need not have been ashamed of the law of Shakespeare. And as an

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[5] While I am perfectly satisfied that the above explanation of the meaning of the expression "All numbers" is the correct one; I am not unaware that at the date at which the Discoveries appeared "All numbers" would be generally understood in its classical sense; Jonson of course not being permitted to speak too plainly. He was foreman of Bacon's good pens and one of his "left-hands"; as any visitor to Westminster Abbey may learn, the attendants there being careful to point out that the sculptor has "accidentally" clothed Jonson's Bust in a left-handed coat. (With respect to the meaning of this the reader is referred to Plate 33, page 131.) Thus far was written and in print when the writer's attention was called to the Rev. George O Neill's little brochure, "Could Bacon have written the plays?" in which in a note to page 14 we find "Numeri" in Latin, "numbers" in English, applied to literature mean nothing else than verse, and even seem to exclude prose. Thus Tibullus writes, "*Numeris ille hic pede libero scribit*" (one writes in verse another in prose), and Shakespeare has the same antithesis in "Love's Labour Lost" (iv., 3), "These numbers I will tear and write in prose." Yet all this does not settle the matter, for "Numeri" is also used in the sense merely of "parts". Pliny speaks of a prose work as perfect in all its parts, "*Omnibus numeris absolutus*," and Cicero says of a plan of life, "*Omnes numeros virtutis continet*" (it contains every element of virtue). So that Jonson may have merely meant to say in slightly pedantic phrase that Bacon had passed away all parts fulfilled.

instance of the way in which the members of the legal profession look up to the mighty author I may mention that some years ago, at a banquet of a Shakespeare Society at which Mr. Sidney Lee and the writer were present, the late Mr. Crump, Q.C., editor of the *Law Times*, who probably possessed as much knowledge of law as any man in this country, declared that to tell him that the plays were not written by the greatest lawyer the world has ever seen, or ever would see, was to tell him what he had sufficient knowledge of law to know to be nonsense. He said also that he was not ashamed to confess that he himself, though he had some reputation for knowledge of law, did not possess sufficient legal knowledge to realise one quarter of the law that was contained in the Shakespeare plays.

It requires a philologist to fully appreciate what the enormous vocabulary employed in the plays implies.

Max Muller in his "Science of Language," Vol. I, 1899, p. 379, says

"A well-educated person in England, who has been at a public school and at the University … seldom uses more than about 3,000 or 4,000 words. … The Hebrew Testament says all that it has to say with 5,642 words, Milton's poetry is built up with 8,000; and Shakespeare, who probably displayed a greater variety of expression than any writer in any language … produced all his plays with about 15,000 words."

Shakspeare the householder of Stratford could not have known so many as one thousand words.

But Bacon declared that we must make our English language capable of conveying the highest thoughts, and by the plays he has very largely created what we now call the English language. The plays and the sonnets also reveal their author's life.

In the play of "Hamlet" especially, Bacon seems to tell us a good deal concerning himself, for the auto-biographical character of that play is clearly apparent to those who have eyes to see. I will, however, refer only to a single instance in that play. In the Quarto of 1603, which is the first known edition of the play of "Hamlet," we are told, in the scene at the grave, that Yorick has been dead a dozen years; but in the 1604 Quarto, which was printed in the following year, Yorick is stated to have been dead twenty-three years. This corrected number, twenty-three, looks therefore like a real date of the death of a real person. The words in the Quarto of 1604 are as follows: —

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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