BRIEF FOR PLAINTIFF

BACON vs. SHAKESPEARE

EDWIN REED

Truth is like a Torch: The more it's Shook, it Shines.

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BY

EDWIN REED

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TO THE REPUBLICS OF

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THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR

INTRODUCTORY.

In the following Brief for the Plaintiff, Bacon *vs.* Shakespeare, in an action of ejectment, now on trial, it is intended to cite such facts only as are generally agreed upon by both parties or can be easily verified, and in the main to let those facts, trumpet-tongued, speak for themselves. Like the lines that mark the sea-coast on our maps, each separate proof shades off in a thousand fine corroborating circumstances, which are often very interesting, as well as important for a full knowledge of the subject. Mr. Donnelly's cipher is, for the present purpose at least, clearly beyond soundings. For further information, the reader is respectfully referred to the works of Delia Bacon, Mrs. Pott, Richard Grant White, Dr. Rolfe, Judge Holmes, Appleton Morgan, and last, but not least, Ignatius Donnelly; not to mention numerous others which the world, it is to be feared, will soon be too small to contain.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

We may say of improbabilities, as we do of evils, choose the least.

It is antecedently improbable that the Shakespeare Plays, for which the whole domain of human knowledge was laid under contribution, were written by William Shakespeare, for he was uneducated.

It is also antecedently improbable that Francis Bacon, whose name for nearly three hundred years has been a synonym for all that is philosophical and profound, who was so great in another and widely different field of labor that he gave a new direction for all future time to the course of human thought, was the author of them.

And yet, to one or the other of these two men we must give our suffrage for the crowning honors of humanity.

In the claim for Shakespeare, the improbability is so overwhelming that it involves very nearly a violation of the

laws of nature. No man ever did, and, it is safe to say, no man ever can, acquire knowledge intuitively. One may be a genius like Burns, and the world be hushed to silence while he sings; but the injunction, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread," is as true of intellectual as it is of physical life, everywhere. The fruit of the tree of knowledge can be reached only by hard climbing, the sole instance on record in which it was plucked and handed down to the waiting recipient having proved a failure.

In the case of Bacon, however, the improbability is one of degree only. It is, in fact, not entirely without precedent. Fortune has more than once emptied a whole cornucopia of gifts at a single birth. What diversity, what beauty, what grandeur in the personality of Leonardo da Vinci! He was author, painter, sculptor, architect, musician, civil engineer, inventor—and in each capacity, almost without exception, eminent above his contemporaries. His great painting, the Last Supper, ranks the third among the products in this branch of modern art, Raphael's Madonna di San Sisto and Michael Angelo's Last Judgment being respectively, perhaps, first and second. At the same time, he was the pioneer in the study of the anatomy and structural classification of plants; he founded the science of hydraulics; he invented the camera obscura; he proclaimed

the undulatory theory of light and heat; he investigated the properties of steam, and anticipated by four centuries its use in the propulsion of boats; and he barely missed the great discovery which immortalized Newton. Indeed, we see in Leonardo da Vinci, not a mountain only, but a whole range of sky-piercing peaks!

Another illustrious example is Goethe, scarcely inferior to Bacon, whatever the claims made for the latter, in the brilliancy and scope of his powers. As a poet, Goethe was a star of the first magnitude, a blaze of light in the literary heavens. His Faust is one of the six great epic poems of the world. As a writer of prose fiction he stands in the front rank, his "Wilhelm Meister" a classic side by side with "Ivanhoe," "Middlemarch," and "The Scarlet Letter." By a singular coincidence, also, as compared with Bacon, he was one of the master spirits of his age in the sphere of the sciences. An evolutionist before Darwin, he beheld, as in a vision, what is now becoming clear, the application of law to all the phenomena of nature and life. In botany, he made notable additions to the then existing stock of knowledge; and throughout the vast realm of biology he not only developed new methods of inquiry, but he spread over it the glow of imagination, without which the path of discovery is always doubly difficult to tread. In the light of precedents, therefore, the claim made in

behalf of Bacon to the authorship of the Plays cannot be discredited.

The reader is now asked to measure the relative improbabilities in question for himself.

E. R.

ANDOVER, MASS., September 1, 1890.

PREFACE TO FOURTH EDITION.

NOTHING is more tenacious of life than an old popular belief. It has the force of habit which the pressure of enlightened opinion through successive generations alone can overcome. "O Lord, thou hast taught us," once prayed a good deacon, "that as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined"—a truth drawn from the Book of Nature, and as indubitable as though the writings of Pope were a part of the sacred canon. Trees that have unnatural and uncomely twists in their branches, even if growing on Mount Zion, must die of old age, or be cut down, before the errors of arboriculture will cease to torment us. Intelligent and conscientious scholars among us are still defending the historical accuracy of the first chapter of Genesis. A personal devil is almost as potent in the minds of men to-day as he was when Martin Luther hurled the inkstand at his head. In Germany, how often one hears the polite ejaculation *Gesundheit*, uttered when a person sneezes!

Who does not turn, almost instinctively, to see in which part of the heavens the moon quarters, for a forecast of the weather, though that luminary is as innocent of any intermeddling with that branch of our local affairs as is the most distant star which the Lick telescope has revealed to us!

And the worst of it is, these old beliefs linger in the noblest minds to the last. The shadow of a solar eclipse, sweeping over the earth, lets the just and the unjust, the wise and the foolish, emerge into the light behind it indiscriminately. Evil spirits do not always beg the privilege, when they find themselves about to be exorcised, of taking refuge in a herd of swine and leaping over a precipice into the sea. The horrible butcheries of the Salem Witchcraft, marking the close of that delusion, were perpetrated by those to whom the love of God was the chief end of man. One of the last judges in England to send a witch to the gallows was Time's noblest offspring, Sir Matthew Hale. The last in that country to manumit their slaves were the clergy. The Garrison mob in Boston wore broadcloth on their backs and all the current virtues in their hearts. It is, therefore, no criterion of a good cause that men of acknowledged abilities and culture support it, nor of a bad cause that such men denounce it.

Indeed, truth has a modest way of entering the world

like a mendicant, at the back door. Such a guest is seldom admitted, on his first arrival, at the other end of the house. Poor Copernicus stood there shivering in the cold thirteen years before he dared even to lift the knocker. Every great religion has sprung up among the poor. Every great reform owes its origin to the oppressed. Every great invention has had, like the founders of Rome, a wolf for a nurse. It is not to be expected that rebellion against a king of poets will find favor among the nobility that surround his throne. The high-priests who, with unsandaled feet, minister in a sacred temple will not be the first to despoil the idol they worship. No captain in that "fleet of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers" to which Carlyle, in the most eloquent sentence he ever wrote, refers, will strike his colors or change his outfit so long as the products of his industry under the old régime are bringing him wealth. And what to him are winds and waves, or any storm of criticism, whose barque is anchored to the theory of Inspiration! Showers of verbal aerolites on the mimic stage, only a product of untaught Nature!

Amid the turmoil of our daily life, if we listen reverently, we may hear voices crying in the wilderness, perhaps the voice of a woman, alone and forsaken, in a strange city.

> "No accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world hath ever lost."

From the banks of the Missouri, from the wheat-fields of Minnesota, from far-off Melbourne at the antipodes, out of the heart of humanity somewhere, a response in due time is sure to come.

E. R.

ANDOVER, MASS., January 1, 1891.

IN THE TRIBUNAL OF HISTORY.

Bacon
vs.
Shakespeare.
} BRIEF FOR PLAINTIFF.

I.

THE AUTHOR OF THE SHAKESPEARE PLAYS.

IT is conceded by all that the author of the Shakespeare Plays was the greatest genius of his age, perhaps of any age, and, with nearly equal unanimity, that he was a man of profound and varied scholarship.

1. He was a linguist, many of the Plays being based on Greek, Spanish, and Italian productions which had not then been translated into English. Latin and French were seemingly as familiar to him as a mother tongue. It is thus apparent that not less than five foreign languages, living and dead, were included in his repertory.

LATIN.—The *Comedy of Errors* was founded upon the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, a comic poet, who wrote about 200 B.C. The first translation of the Latin work into English, so far as known, was made in 1595, subsequently to the appearance of the Shake-

speare play, and without any resemblance to it "in any peculiarity of language, of names, or of any other matter, however slight." —*Verplanck.*

"His frequent use of Latin derivatives in their radical sense shows a somewhat thoughtful and observant study of that language."—*Richard Grant White.*

GREEK.—*Timon of Athens* was drawn partly from Plutarch and partly from Lucian, the latter author not having been translated into English earlier than 1638 (White), fifteen years after the publication of the play.

Helena's pathetic lament over a lost friendship in *Midsummer-Night's Dream* (III., 2) had its prototype in an untranslated Greek poem by St. Gregory of Nazianzus, published at Venice in 1504. —*Gibbon's Decline and Fall,* Chap. xxvii.

ITALIAN.—An Italian novel, written by Giraldi Cinthio and first printed in 1565, furnished the incidents for the story of *Othello.* The author of the play "read it probably in the original, for no English translation of his time is known."—*Gervinus.*

"He was, without doubt, quite able to read Italian."—*Richard Grant White.*

FRENCH.—One entire scene and parts of others in *Henry V.* are in French.

Plowden's French Commentaries, containing the celebrated case of Hales *vs.* Petit, which was satirized by the grave-diggers, were translated into English for the first time more than half a century after Hamlet was written.

SPANISH.—The poet drew some of his materials for the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* from the Spanish romance of Montemayor, en-

titled the *Diana*, which was translated into English in 1582, the translation, however, not being printed till 1598. "The resemblances are too minute to be accidental." (Halliwell-Phillipps.) As the play was produced previously to 1593, it follows that the author read either the translation in manuscript or the Spanish original. The latter supposition, particularly in view of his other linguistic acquirements, is more probable.

An unknown play, based on the same story and played before the Queen in 1585, was doubtless the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in an earlier form.

The Merchant of Venice and *Cymbeline* were also indebted, not only for much of their respective plots, but, in some instances, for identical passages, to works not then in English dress.

Gervinus, one of the ablest of the Shakespearean critics, calls attention to two of the Comedies in which Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian words and sentences abound, and ventures to suggest a desire, on the part of the author, *to exhibit in them his knowledge of foreign languages*.

2. He had intimate acquaintance with ancient and modern literature, numerous authors, from the age of Plato down to his own, being drawn upon for illustration and imagery in the composition of these works.

"The writer was a classical scholar. Rowe found traces in him of the *Electra* of Sophocles; Colman, of Ovid; Pope, of Dares Phrygius and other Greek authors; Farmer, of Horace and Virgil; Malone, of Lucretius, Statius, Catullus, Seneca, Sophocles, and

Euripides; Steevens, of Plautus; Knight, of the *Antigone* of Sophocles; White, of the *Alcestis* of Euripides."—*Nathaniel Holmes.*

"The early plays exhibit the poet not far removed from school and its pursuits; in none of his later dramas does he plunge so deeply into the remembrances of antiquity, his head overflowing with its images, legends, and characters. The *Taming of the Shrew*, especially, may be compared with the *First Part of Henry VI.* 'in the manifold ostentation of book-learning.'"—*Gervinus.*

Stapfer, a distinguished French critic, intimates that, in his judgment, some of the plays are "over-cumbered with learning, not to say pedantic."*

3. He was a jurist, with

"a deep technical knowledge of the law,"

and an easy familiarity with

"some of the most abstruse proceedings in English jurisprudence."—*Lord Chief Justice Campbell.*

His fondness for legal phrases is remarkable, but it is still more remarkable that,

"whenever he indulges this propensity, he uniformly lays down good law."—*Idem.*

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* It may be well to remark that Stapfer and White are unfriendly witnesses, and that Gervinus and Verplanck wrote before this controversy began. Judge Holmes is our senior counsel, but we claim the right at this hearing to put him also on the witness stand. His work on the *Authorship of Shakespeare* is as temperate in its judgments as it is philosophical and profound in general treatment of the subject.

One of the sonnets (46) is so intensely technical in its phraseology that,

"without a considerable knowledge of English forensic procedure, it cannot be fully understood."—*Idem.*

"Among these [legal terms], there are some which few but a lawyer would, and some even which none but a lawyer could, have written."—*Franklin Fiske Heard.*

4. He was a philosopher.

"In the constructing of Shakespeare's Dramas, there is an understanding manifested equal to that in Bacon's *Novum Organum.*" —*Carlyle.*

"He is inconceivably wise; the others conceivably."—*Emerson.*

"From his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence."—*Dr. Johnson.*

"He was not only a great poet, but a great philosopher."— *Coleridge.*

Thus was the author's mind not only a fountain of inspiration from its own illimitable depths, but enriched in large measure with the stores of knowledge which the world had then accumulated.

"An amazing genius which could pervade all nature at a glance, and to whom nothing within the limits of the universe appeared to be unknown."—*Whalley.*

II.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

1. The family of William Shakespeare was grossly illiterate. His father and mother made their signatures with a cross. His daughter Judith, also, at the age of twenty-seven, could not write her name. The little we know of his own youth and early manhood affords presumptive proof of the strongest kind that he was uneducated.

"His learning was very little."— *Thomas Fuller's Worthies*, 1662.

"In him we find all arts and sciences, all moral and natural philosophy, without knowing that he ever studied them."— *Dryden.*

2. The Shakespeare family had no settled or uniform method of spelling their name. More than thirty different forms have been found among their papers, on their tombstones, and in contemporaneous public records. William wrote it *Shakspere;* his brother Gilbert, *Shakespeir.* In a mortgage deed given by the corporation of London, it is *Shaksper* The indorsement on an indenture between Shakespeare and two of his neighbors in Stratford spells it

Shackspeare. Among other forms discovered in the records of the family are the following: *Shaxpur*, *Chacksper*, *Schakespeire*, *Shagspere*, *Shakaspeare*, *Shaykspere*, and *Schakespayr*. Patronymics often varied at that time, as they do now, in different families and in different sections of the country, but here the variations in the same household were numerous and, apparently, at hap-hazard. Nevertheless, it is a singular circumstance, that in all the forms tabulated by Wise, nineteen hundred and six in number, the one appearing on the title-pages of the Plays and Poems, *Shakespeare*, is unique. No member of the family in any part of the kingdom wrote the name in that way. Literature had an absolute monopoly of it.*

3. Shakespeare's handwriting, of which we have five specimens in his signatures to legal documents, was not only almost illegible, but singularly uncultivated and grotesque, wholly at variance with the description given of the manuscripts of the Plays in the preface to the folio edition of 1623. The editorial encomium was in these words:

"His mind and hand went together; and what he thought, he uttered with that *easiness*, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

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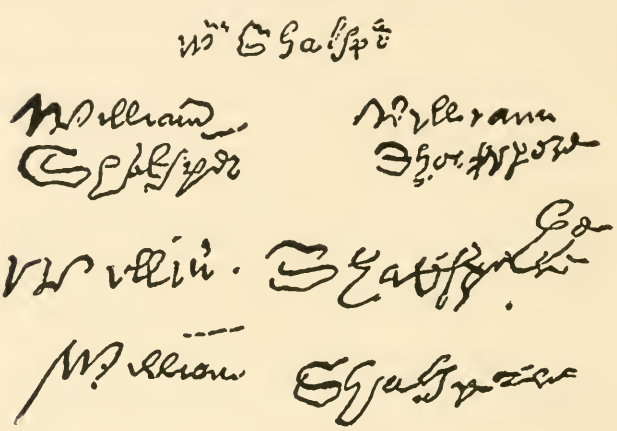
* It is significant, also, that in some of the quartos first published the name appears with a hyphen, thus, *Shake-speare*, as though to distinguish it in another slight respect from that of the actor.

In this connection, we reproduce the five autographs of Shakespeare, the only acknowledged specimens of his penmanship in existence, in *fac-simile:*



4. Shakespeare made no mention of any literary property in his will. He was careful to specify, among other bequests, his "second-best bed," but not a book, not a copy of one of his own books, not even a manuscript, though such immortal dramas as Macbeth, Tempest, and Julius Cæsar were unpublished at the time of his death.*

* Counsel on the other side attempt to meet this point by saying that Shakespeare had sold his manuscripts to the theatre company before leaving London. They have so long assumed this to be true that they now state it unqualifiedly, though without proof. They should issue instructions, however, to the cicerone at Stratford, who informs visitors that the wicked manuscripts were destroyed, after Shakespeare's death, by his puritanical children!

5. No letter written by him has come down to us, and but two addressed to him, and those make no reference to literature. An inspection of his autograph is alone sufficient to explain the paucity of his correspondence, if not its absolute non-existence.

6. In the dedication of the *Venus and Adonis*, published in 1593, Shakespeare calls that poem the first heir of his invention. This makes it ante-date the Plays. Accordingly, Richard Grant White sets it down as written in 1584–5, before Shakespeare left Stratford. Furnivall, also, assigns it to the same early date.

The *Venus and Adonis* is a product of the highest culture. It is prefixed with a Latin quotation from Ovid, and is written throughout in the purest, most elegant and scholarly English of that day. Hazlitt compares it to an ice-house, "almost as hard, as glittering, and as cold." Is it possible that in a town where seven only of the nineteen aldermen could write their names, where the habits of the people were so inconceivably filthy that John Shakespeare, father of William, was publicly prosecuted on two occasions for defiling the street in front of his house, where the common speech was a *patois* rude to the verge of barbarism, and where, probably, outside of the schools and churches, not a half dozen books, as White admits, were to be found among the whole population,—is it possible

that in such a town a lad of twenty composed this beautiful epic?

7. It is believed that Shakespeare left his home in Stratford and went to London some time between 1585 and 1587. He was then twenty-one to twenty-three years of age. One of the first of the Shakespeare Plays to be produced on the stage was Hamlet, and the date not later than 1589. It was founded on a foreign tragedy of which no translation then existed in English. As first presented, it was probably in an imperfect form, having been subsequently rewritten and enlarged into what is now, perhaps, the greatest individual work of genius the human mind has produced. To assume that Shakespeare, under the circumstances in which he was then placed, at so early an age, fresh from a country town where there were few or no books, and from a family circle whose members could not read or write, was the author of this play, would seem to involve a miracle as great as that imputed to Joshua—in other words, a suspension of the laws of cause and effect.*

* It has been suggested that the original Hamlet was by another author. This supposition, however, encounters an improbability of its own, not so great as the one mentioned in the text, but still fatal, viz.: that a playwright would adopt for the title of his masterpiece a name already familiar to the public, and identified in the same age with the same subject. No absurd hypothesis stands in Bacon's way, for he was nearly thirty years of age when Hamlet was first played, had been highly educated at home and abroad, and was then a briefless barrister at Gray's Inn.

8. The end of his career was as remarkable as the beginning. His residence in London extended over a period of twenty-five years, during which time, according to popular belief, he wrote thirty-seven dramas, one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, and two or three minor poems, besides accumulating a fortune the income of which has been estimated at £1,000 (equivalent in our time and in our money to $25,000) per annum. Such an instance of mental fecundity the world has never seen, before or since.

In 1610 or thereabouts, while he was still comparatively young (at the age of forty-six), he retired from London and passed the remainder of his days among his old neighbors in Stratford, loaning money and brewing beer for sale. His intellectual life seems to have terminated as abruptly as it had begun. The most careful scrutiny fails to show that he took the slightest interest in the fate of the plays left behind him, or in his own reputation as the author of them. Some of these productions were still in manuscript, unknown even to the stage, and not given to the public, either for fame or profit, till thirteen years after his retirement. Such indifference to the children of his brain and such utter seclusion in the prime of his manhood from the refinements of life present to us a picture, not only painful to contemplate, but one that stultifies human nature itself.

9. Our surprises do not cease at his death. On the heavy stone slab that marks his grave in the old church at Stratford, visitors read the following inscription:

> "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here:
> Blest be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones."

These lines are evidently his own, for the imprecation contained in them prevented his wife, who survived him, from being laid at rest by his side.

10. So far as we know, Shakespeare never claimed the authorship of the Plays. He simply permitted his name to be used, doubtless for good and sufficient reasons, and in accordance with a not unusual custom at that period, on the title-pages of fourteen of them printed in his life-time, though they all (thirty-seven in number) were ascribed to him unmistakably in the collected editions that appeared after his death. His reticence on the subject, especially after his retirement to Stratford, is itself a presumptive proof of his integrity and honor. His fellow-townsmen, it is probable, never witnessed one of his productions on the stage. Neither his local fame (if he had any) as a dramatist, nor the influence of his wealth and position (if exerted by him) overcame their repugnance to theatrical representations, for in 1602 the board of aldermen prohibited

any performance of the kind in the town under a penalty of ten shillings. In 1612, when Shakespeare's reputation among his neighbors should have been at its zenith, the penalty was increased to ten pounds. The key to the situation lies in his stolidity, or in his sense of honor.

11. The references to Shakespeare, direct and indirect, in contemporaneous literature (1592–1616) have been carefully collated and published. They number one hundred and twenty-five, and may be classified as follows: those made to him as a reputed author or to his works, one hundred and twenty; those made to him as a man, five. The citations in the first class are, of course, irrelevant to our purpose. In the second, we find statements from the following named persons: Robert Greene and Henry Chettle, 1592; John Manningham, 1601; an anonymous writer, 1605; and Thomas Heywood, 1612. Greene denounces Shakespeare as an impostor; Chettle disclaims the honor of a personal acquaintance with him; Manningham makes him the hero of an amour; the anonymous writer (after the manner of such writers) calls attention to his penurious habits, his chronic disregard of obligations, and his wealth; and Heywood is indignant because two of his own poems had been published by a piratical printer as Shakespeare's, but (he affirms) without the latter's consent.

Excepting Ben Jonson,* and apart from the official records of baptism, marriage and death, of transfers of property and suits at law, these obscure writers tell us all we know, and more than we can believe to be true, of William Shakespeare, the man. Not a word, not the remotest hint from friend or foe within the circle of his acquaintance, of a transcendent genius, or, indeed, of any literary ability whatever.

"I cannot marry this fact to his verse."—*Emerson.*

"A mere fabulous story, a blind and extravagant error."—*Schlegel.*

"What! are we to have miracles in sport? * * * Does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?"—*Coleridge.*

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* For Jonson's testimony, see supra, p. 43.

III.

FRANCIS BACON.

1. Setting aside Shakespeare, Bacon was the most original, the most imaginative, and the most learned man of his time.

"The most exquisitely constructed intellect that has ever been bestowed on any of the children of men."—*Macaulay.*

"The great glory of literature in this island, during the reign of James, was my Lord Bacon."—*Hume.*

"Lord Bacon was the greatest genius that England, or perhaps any other country, ever produced."—*Pope.*

"The glory of the human intellect."—*De Quincey.*

"Crown of all modern authors."—*Geo. Sandys.*

"He possessed at once all those extraordinary talents which were divided amongst the greatest authors of antiquity. He had the sound, distinct, comprehensive knowledge of Aristotle, with all the beautiful lights, graces, and embellishments of Cicero. One does not know which to admire most in his writings, the strength of reason, force of style, or brightness of imagination." —*Addison.*

"His imagination was fruitful and vivid; a temperament of the most delicate sensibility."—*Montagu.*

"He belongs to the realm of the imagination, of eloquence, of jurisprudence, of ethics, of metaphysics; his writings have the gravity of prose, with the fervor and vividness of poetry."—*Welsh.*

"Who is there that, hearing the name of Bacon, does not instantly recognize everything of genius the most profound, of literature the most extensive, of discovery the most penetrating, of observation of human life the most distinguishing and refined?" —*Edmund Burke.*

"Shakespeare and the seers do not contain more expressive or vigorous condensations, more resembling inspiration; in Bacon, they are to be found everywhere."—*Taine.*

Addison, referring to a prayer composed by Bacon, says that "for elevation of thought and greatness of expression it seems rather the devotion of an angel than a man."

The critics all concur in ascribing to Bacon a particularly powerful poetic faculty. No man ever had an imagination, says Macaulay, "at once so strong and so thoroughly subjugated. In truth, much of Bacon's life was passed *in a visionary world, amidst things as strange as any that are described in the Arabian tales.*"

2. Bacon came of a family eminent for learning. His father, Nicholas Bacon, was Lord Chancellor and Keeper of the Great Seal under Elizabeth; his mother, daughter of Sir Anthony Coke, tutor of the king.

Of Bacon's mother, Macaulay writes:

"She was distinguished both as a linguist and a theologian. She corresponded in Greek with Bishop Jewell, and translated his *Apologia* from the Latin so correctly that neither he nor Archbishop Parker could suggest a single alteration. She also translated a series of sermons on fate and free-will from the Tuscan of Bernardo Ochino. Her sister, Katherine, wrote Latin hexameters and pentameters which would appear with credit in the *Musæ Etonenses*. Mildred, another sister, was described by Roger Ascham as the best Greek scholar among the young women of England, Lady Jane Grey always excepted."

3. Bacon had a strong desire for public employment, due, it is fair to infer, to the consciousness that he possessed exceptional powers for the service of the state. It was a creditable ambition, though the methods then in vogue to gratify it would, according to modern standards, hardly be deemed consistent with personal honor. It is certain that the reputation of being a poet, and particularly a dramatic poet, writing for pay, would have compromised him at court. In those days play-acting and play-writing were considered scarcely respectable. The first theatre was erected in London in 1575, ten or twelve years only before the earliest production of Hamlet. The Government, in the interest of public morals, frowned upon the performances. The Lord Mayor, in 1597, at the very time when the greatest of the Shakespeare Plays were coming out,

denounced the theatre as a "place for vagrants, thieves, horse-stealers, contrivers of treason, and other idle and dangerous persons." Taine speaks of the stage in Shakespeare's day as "degraded by the brutalities of the crowd, who not seldom would stone the actors, and by the severities of the magistrates, who would sometimes condemn them to lose their ears." He thus describes the play-house as it then existed:

"On a dirty site on the banks of the Thames rose the principal theatre, the Globe, a sort of hexagonal tower, surrounded by a muddy ditch, on which was hoisted a red flag. The common people could enter as well as the rich; there were six-penny, two-penny, even penny seats; but they could not see it without money. If it rained, and it often rains in London, the people in the pit—butchers, mercers, bakers, sailors, apprentices—received the streaming rain upon their heads. I suppose they did not trouble themselves about it; it was not so long since that they began to pave the streets of London, and when men like these have had experience of sewers and puddles, they are not afraid of catching cold.

"While waiting for the piece, they amuse themselves after their fashion—drink beer, crack nuts, eat fruits, howl, and now and then resort to their fists; they have been known to fall upon the actors and turn the theatre upside down. At other times, when they were dissatisfied, they went to the tavern to give the poet a hiding, or toss him in a blanket. When the beer took effect, there was a great upturned barrel in the pit, a peculiar receptacle for general use. The smell rises, and then comes the

cry, 'Burn the juniper!' They burn some in a plate on the stage, and the heavy smoke fills the air. Certainly, the folk there assembled could scarcely get disgusted at anything, and cannot have had sensitive noses."

It may easily be imagined that Bacon, considering his high birth, aristocratic connections, and aspirancy for official honors, and already projecting a vast philosophical reform for the human race, would have shrunk from open alliance with an institution like this.

4. To his confidential friend, Sir Toby Matthew, Bacon was in the habit of sending copies of his books as they came from the press. On one of these occasions he forwards, with an air of mystery and half apologetically, certain works which he describes as the product of his "recreation," called by him, also, curiously, "works of the alphabet," upon which not even Mrs. Pott's critical acumen has been able to throw, from sources other than conjecture, any light. In a letter addressed to Bacon by Matthew while abroad, in acknowledgment of some "great and noble token of favor," we find this sentence:

"The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation and of this side of the sea, is of your Lordship's name, though he be known by another."

It has been suggested, not without reason, that the "token of favor" sent to Matthew was the folio edition

of the Shakespeare Plays, published in 1623. It is certain that Matthew's letter was written subsequently to January 27, 1621.*

5. Bacon kept a commonplace book which he called a Promus, now in the archives of the British Museum. It consisted of several large sheets, on which from time to time he jotted down all kinds of suggestive and striking phrases, proverbs, aphorisms, metaphors, and quaint turns of expression, found in the course of his reading, and available for future use. With the exception of the proverbs from the French, the entries, one thousand six hundred and fifty-five in number, are in his own handwriting. These verbal treasures are scattered, as thick as the leaves of Vallombrosa, throughout the Plays. Mrs. Pott finds, by actual count, four thousand four hundred and four instances in which they are reproduced there—some of them, in more or less covert or modified form, over and over again. We

* Various attempts have been made to break the force of this testimony. It has been urged that, as Bacon had been raised to the peerage, he had acquired another name under which to publish his works. This seems too frivolous for serious remark. It has also been conjectured that Matthew may have been in Madrid, where a certain Francisco de Quevedo was writing under a pseudonym. Unfortunately for this theory, the Spaniard (who has never become distinguished, so far as we know, for "prodigious wit") retained the name of Francisco, the only part that suggested Bacon's, in his pseudonym. The simple truth is, Matthew's description exactly fits the Shakespeare Plays and Bacon's literary alias. Indeed, on this ground alone we might ask, if it were legally permissible, that the court instruct the jury to find for plaintiff.

can almost see the architect at work, imbedding these gems of beauty and wisdom in the wonderful structures to which, according to Matthew, he gave the name of another. While they appear to a limited extent in Bacon's prose works, they seem to have constituted a store-house of materials for particular use in the composition of the Plays.

Two of these entries reappear in a single sentence in Romeo and Juliet. One is the unusual phrase, "golden sleep;" and the second, the new word, "uproused," then added for the first time, like hundreds of others in the Plays, out of the same mint, to the verbal coinage of the realm.

> "But where unbruisèd youth with unstuffed brain
> Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign;
> Therefore, thy earliness doth me assure,
> Thou art uproused by some distemperature."—ii., 3.

To one familiar with the laws of chance, these coincidences will fall little short of a mathematical demonstration.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the Promus is the group of salutatory phrases it contains, such as *good-morning*, *good-day*, and *good-night*, which had not then come into use in England, but which occur four hundred and nineteen times in the Plays. These salutations, however, were common at that time in France, where Bacon.

as attaché of the British Embassy, had spent three years in the early part of his life. To him we are doubtless indebted for these little amenities of speech.*

6. Other internal evidences also point unmistakably to Bacon's pen. Peculiarities of thought, style, and diction are more important in a contested case of authorship than the name on the title-page, for there we find the author's own signature in the very fibre of his work. We have only to hold the Plays, as it were, up to the light, to see the water-mark imprinted in them. To elucidate this point, we venture to spring upon our readers the deadly parallel:

FROM SHAKESPEARE.	FROM BACON.
"There is a tide in the affairs of men Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; * * * * * * And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures." *Julius Cæsar*, iv., 3.	"In the third place, I set down reputation, because of the peremptory tides and currents it hath, which, if they be not taken in their due time, are seldom recovered." — *Advancement of Learning.*

* One or two specimens have been found in earlier literature, but the statement in the text is substantially correct. These salutations did not take root in English speech till they were implanted there by the author of the Plays.

R. M. Theobald, Esq., Secretary of the Bacon Society of London, sends us the following very pertinent suggestion on this subject: "The real significance of the Promus consists in the enormous proportion of notes which Bacon could not possibly have used in his acknowledged writings; the colloquialisms, dramatic repartees, turns of expression, proverbs, etc. Any biographer of Bacon, whatever his notions as to the Shakespearean authorship, may be reasonably expected to offer some explanation of this queer assortment of oddments, and to find out, if possible, what use Bacon made of them; and then our case becomes urgent."

FROM SHAKESPEARE.	FROM BACON.
"To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."—*Hamlet*, i., 3.	"Be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others."—*Essay of Wisdom.*
"That strain again;—it had a dying fall; O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south, That breathes upon a bank of violets, Stealing and giving odor." *Twelfth Night*, i., 1.	"The breath of flowers . . . comes and goes like the warbling of music."—*Essay of Gardens.*
"This majestical roof fretted with golden fire."—*Hamlet*, ii., 2.	"For if that great work-master had been of a human disposition, he would have cast the stars into some pleasant and beautiful works and orders, like the frets in the roofs of houses."—*Advancement of Learning.*
"By a divine instinct, men's minds mistrust Ensuing danger; as, by proof, we see The waters swell before a boist'rous storm."—*Richard III.*, ii., 3.	"As there are . . . secret swellings of seas before a tempest, so there are in States."—*Essay of Sedition.*
"Who having unto truth, by telling of it, Made such a sinner of his memory, To credit his own lie." *Tempest*, i., 2.	"With long and continual counterfeiting and with oft telling a lie, he was turned by habit almost into the thing he seemed to be; and from a liar to a believer."—*Hist. Henry VII.*
"Losers will have leave To ease their stomachs with their bitter tongues." *Titus Andronicus*, iii, 1.	"Always let losers have their words."—*The Promus.*
"The ivy which had hid my princely trunk, And sucked my verdure out on't." *Tempest*, i., 2.	"It was ordained that this winding-ivy of a Plantagenet should kill the tree itself."—*Hist. Henry VII.*

FROM SHAKESPEARE.	FROM BACON.
"I shall show the cinders of my spirits Through the ashes of my chance." *Antony and Cleopatra*, v., 2.	"The sparks of my affection shall ever rest quick under the ashes of my fortune."—*Letter to Falkland.*
"Lo! as at English feasts, so I regreet The daintiest last, to make the end most sweet." *Richard II.*, i., 3.	"Let not this Parliament end like a Dutch feast in salt meats, but like an English feast in sweet meats." *Speech in Parliament*, 1604.
"He gives the bastinado with his tongue; Our ears are cudgelled." *King John*, ii., 1.	"No man loves one the better for giving him a bastinado with a little cudgel."—*Advice to Queen.*
"Nothing almost sees miracles But misery." *King Lear*, ii., 2.	"Certainly, if miracles be the control over nature, they appear most in adversity."—*Essay of Adversity.*
"Advantage is a better soldier than rashness."—*Henry V.*, iii., 6.	"If time give his Majesty the advantage, what need precipitation to extreme remedies?"—*Letter to Villiers.*
"With taper light To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish, Is wasteful and ridiculous excess." *King John*, iv., 2.	"But this work, shining in itself, needs no taper."—*Amendment of Laws.*
"The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees Is left."—*Macbeth*, ii., 1.	"The memory of King Richard lay, like lees, in the bottom of men's hearts."—*Hist. Henry VII.*
"Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you, Which better fits a lion than a man." *Troilus and Cressida*, v., 3.	"For of lions it is a received belief that their fury ceaseth toward anything that yieldeth and prostrateth itself." *—*Of Charity.*

*In this instance, as in many others, it requires Bacon's prose to explain Shakespeare's poetry.

FROM SHAKESPEARE.	FROM BACON.
"As the mournful crocodile With sorrow snares relenting passengers.' *Second Henry VI.*, iii., 2.	"It is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour." —*Essay of Wisdom.*
"*Soothsayer:* "Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side: Thy daemon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable, Where Cæsar is not; but near him thy angel Becomes a Fear, as being overpowered: therefore, Make space enough between you." *Antony and Cleopatra*, v., 2.	"There was an Egyptian soothsayer that made Antonius believe that his genius, which otherwise was brave and confident, was, in the presence of Octavius Cæsar, poor and cowardly; and therefore he advised him to absent himself as much as he could, and remove far from him."*—*Nat. Hist.*

The foregoing list might be extended almost indefinitely, but enough is given to show that on these two minds (if there were two) fell the light of intelligence, in repeated flashes, at the same exact angle. The cumulative force of these examples, taken in connection with the solid prejudice against which, in some instances, they break in vain, reminds us of the charge of the Old Guard at Waterloo, the "irresistible meeting the immovable."

7. Bacon's love of flowers perfumed his whole life. It

*The Natural History was not printed till eleven years after Shakespeare's death. It is clear, then, that Shakespeare did not take the story from Bacon. It is almost equally clear that Bacon did not take it from Shakespeare, for he adds a particular which is not in the play, viz.: "The soothsayer was thought to be suborned by Cleopatra to make Antony live in Egypt and other places remote from Rome."

was to him, as he said, "the purest of human pleasures." Of the thirty-five species of garden plants mentioned in the Plays, he enumerates thirty-two in his prose works, bending over them, as it were, lovingly and, like the dramatist, noting the seasons in which they bloom. In both authors, taste and knowledge go hand in hand.

This point will bear elaboration, for the two methods of treatment seem to be mutually related, like the foliage of a plant and the exquisite blossom. Bacon says: "I do hold it, in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months of the year, in which severally things of beauty may be then in season;" and with this end in view, he proceeds to classify plants according to their periods of blooming.

Shakespeare, on his part, introduces to us a beautiful shepherdess distributing flowers among her friends; to the young, the flowers of spring; to the middle-aged, those of summer; while the flowers that bloom on the edge of winter are given to the old. What is still more remarkable, however, the groupings in both are substantially the same. One commentator has even proved the correctness of a disputed reading in the play by reference to the corresponding passage in Bacon.

We present the two lists, side by side, for comparison, as follows:

FROM SHAKESPEARE.

"Now, my fair'st friend,
I would I had some flowers o' th' spring, that might
Become your time of day; and yours; and yours; *Daffodils*,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; *violets*, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath; pale *primroses*,
That die unmarried ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids; bold *ox-lips* and
The crown imperial; *lilies of all kinds*,
The *flower-de-luce* being one.

"Sir, the year growing ancient—
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter—the fairest flowers o' th' season
Are our *carnations* and streaked *gilliflower*.
* * * * * *
Hot *lavender*, mint, savory, marjoram;
The *marigold*, that goes to bed with th' sun,
And with him rises, weeping: these are flowers
Of middle summer, and I think they're given
To men of middle age.

"Reverend sirs,
For you there's *rosemary* and rue; these keep
Seeming and savor all the winter long."—*Winter's Tale*, iv., 3.

FROM BACON.

"There followeth, for the latter part of January and February, the mazereon-tree, which then blossoms; . . . *primroses*, anemones, the early tulip. For March, there come *violets*, especially the single blue, which are the earliest. In April, follow the double white *violet*, . . . the pale *daffodil*, the *cowslip*, *flower-de-luces*, and *lilies of all natures*."

"In May and June come *pinks* of all sorts, specially the blush pink; roses of all kinds, except the musk rose, which comes later; . . . the French *marigold*, . . . *lavender* in flowers. In July come *gilliflowers* of all varieties."

"For December and January and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter, . . . fir-trees, *rosemary*, lavender."—*Essay of Gardens*.

The essay was first printed in 1625, nine years after Shakespeare's death. It follows that Bacon, who had made a study of gardens all his life, either borrowed from Shakespeare or wrote the play.

8. In 1867, there was discovered in a private library in London, a box of old papers, among which were some manuscripts of Francis Bacon, bound together in the form of a volume. In the table of contents on the title-page, among the names of other compositions known to be Bacon's, appear those of two of the Shakespeare Plays, Richard II. and Richard III., though the Plays themselves have been abstracted from the book. Judge Holmes adds the following piece of information in regard to this discovery:

"The blank space at the side and between the titles is scribbled all over with various words, letters, phrases, and scraps of verse in English and Latin, as if the copyist were merely trying his pen and writing down whatever first came into his head. Among these scribblings, beside the name of Francis Bacon several times, the name of William Shakespeare is written eight or nine times over."

It is also at least a singular coincidence that the extraordinary word "honorificabilitudino," found here, occurs with a slight change of ending in Love's Labor's Lost.

9. At the death of Queen Elizabeth, John Davis, the poet and courtier, went to Scotland to meet James I. To him while on the journey northward, Bacon addressed a letter, asking kind intercession in his behalf with the King, and expressing the hope, in closing, that he (Davis) would be "good to concealed poets."

10. Stratford, the home of Shakespeare, is not referred to in any of the Plays, nor the beautiful river Avon, on which it is situated; but St. Albans, the residence of Bacon, is mentioned twenty-three times. Tender memories of Yorke Place, where Bacon was born,* and of the County of Kent, the home of his father's ancestry, are conspicuous in more than one of the Historical Plays.

11. Bacon was remarkably painstaking in preparing his works for the press. He rewrote the *Novum Organum* twelve times, and the Essays thirty times, before he deemed them fit for publication. No wonder the editors of the Plays remarked upon the beauty and neatness of the copy.

12. With the exception of a brief but brilliant career in Parliament, and an occasional service in unimportant causes

* "Francis Bacon, the glory of his age and nation, the adorner and ornament of learning, was born in York House, or York Place, in the Strand, on the two and twentieth day of January, in the year of our Lord, 1560."—*Life of Bacon, published in 1657, by Rawley, his Lordship's Chaplain, and subsequently Chaplain to the King.*

as attorney for the crown, Bacon seems to have been without employment from 1579, when he returned from France at the age of eighteen, to 1597, when he published his first volume of Essays. Here were nearly twenty of the best years of his life apparently run to waste. The volume of Essays was a small 12mo, containing but ten out of the fifty-eight sparkling gems which subsequent editions gave to the admiration and delight of posterity. His philosophical works, excepting a slight sketch in 1585, did not begin to appear till several years later. From 1597 to 1607, when he was appointed Solicitor General, he was again, so far as we know, substantially unemployed—a period of ten years, contemporaneous with the appearance of the great tragedies of Hamlet (rewritten), Julius Cæsar, King Lear, and Macbeth. In the meanwhile, he was hard pressed for money, and failing to get relief (unhappily, before the days of Samuel Weller) in a vain effort to marry a wealthy widow, he was actually thrown into prison for debt.*

That he was idle all this time, under great pecuniary pressure, his mind teeming with the richest fancy, it is

* On one of these occasions, the debt was due to a Jewish money-lender, and was paid by Anthony, brother of Francis. At about that time appeared the great play, *The Merchant of Venice*, in which a money-lending Jew is pilloried for all time, and the friend of the debtor is *Antonio*.

impossible to admit. Such a hypothesis is utterly inconsistent with the possession of those fixed, almost phenomenal, habits of industry with which he afterward achieved magnificent results. On this point, indeed, we have interesting testimony from his mother. A woman of deep piety, mindful of the proprieties of her station in life, she evidently became alarmed over some mystery connected with her son. Probably she had a suspicion of its nature, for not even the genius that created Hamlet could subdue maternal instincts. In a letter to Anthony, the brother of Francis, under date of May 24, 1592, she expresses her solicitude, as follows:

"I verily think your brother's weak stomach to digest hath been much caused and confirmed by untimely going to bed, and then musing *nescio quid** when he should sleep."

At another time, when the two brothers were together at Gray's Inn, and full of enthusiasm, as she knew, for the wicked drama, she wrote, begging them

"Not to mum nor mask, nor sinfully revel."

In these recreations, of which, according to Chamberlain (who wrote in 1613), Bacon "was the chief contriver," he gained that practical knowledge of stage machinery which afterward served him so well, and which we find

* I know not what.

displayed with so much particularity in his Essay of Masques.*

It may be added that with his appointment to high office and advent into public life the production of the Shakespeare Plays suddenly ceased.†

* It is interesting to note that Bacon regarded the drama as an educational instrumentality of the highest value. He says of it:

"Although in modern states play-acting is esteemed but as a ludicrous thing, except when it is too satirical and biting, yet among the ancients it became a means of forming the souls of men to virtue. Even the wise and prudent, and great philosophers, considered it to be, as it were, the *plectrum* of the mind. And most certainly, what is one of the secrets of nature, the minds of men, when assembled together, are more open to affections and impressions than when they are alone."—*De Augmentis.*

† What a crushing argument our friends on the other side would have made against Scott's authorship of the Waverly novels, had a kind Providence sent them into the world fifty years earlier! Scott was a great poet, and previous to the publication of *Waverly*, in the forty-third year of his age, he had never written a romance in prose. In 1814, when *Waverly* made its mysterious appearance, Scott published in two volumes a work on *Border Antiquities*, contributed articles on *Chivalry* and the *Drama* to the Encyclopædia Britannica, and edited the *Life and Works of Dean Swift*. The latter publication, comprising nineteen volumes, was issued in the same week with *Waverly*. In the following year *Guy Mannering* appeared; and also, from Scott, the two poems, *Lord of the Isles* and *Field of Waterloo*. In 1816, came in quick succession from the Great Unknown the *Antiquary*, *Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality*, and *Tales of My Landlord*, first series; and in the same year from Scott's pen, *Paul's Letters to His Kinsfolk* and the *Edinburgh Annual Register*. The poem, *Harold the Dauntless*, was published in January, 1817, preceded within thirty days by three of the above-named works of fiction.

During all this time Scott was keeping "open house at Abbotsford in the old feudal fashion, and was seldom without visitors, entirely occupied to all outward appearance with local and domestic business and sport, building and planting, adding wing to wing, acre to acre, plantation to plantation, with just

13. Ben Jonson was Bacon's private secretary, and presumably in the secret, if there were any, of his employer's literary undertakings. In this fact we find the key to the exquisite satire of the inscription, composed by him and printed opposite Shakespeare's portrait in the folio of 1623, of which the following, in reference to the engraver's art, is an extract:

> "O, could he but have drawn his wit
> As well in brasse as he hath hit
> His face, the print would then surpass
> All that was ever writ in brasse."

It is a straw, but one carrying with it, perhaps, "the wisdom of the fathers," that in this invocation Jonson speaks of the Plays as superior to

> "All that insolent Greece or haughty Rome sent forth;"

while in a subsequent book of his own, he uses exactly the same language in describing Bacon's genius:

> "He performed that in our tongue which may be compared or preferred either to insolent Greece or haughty Rome."

Ben Jonson and Sir Toby Matthew made lists of the great wits of their time and of the preceding century;

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leisure enough for the free-hearted entertainment of his guests and the cultivation of friendly relations with his humble neighbors."

He even mystified some of his most intimate friends by reviewing one of his own novels in the *Quarterly*.

both placed Bacon at the head; neither of them mentioned Shakespeare. The reasonable explanation is that they were *in the secret.*

Jonson pronounced Bacon "the mark and acme of our age." Matthew wrote of him:

"A man so rare in knowledge, of so many several kinds, indued with the facility and felicity of expressing it all, in so elegant, significant, so abundant and yet so choice and ravishing a way of words, of metaphors and allusions, as perhaps the world has not seen since it was a world."

14. Bacon's authorship of the Plays was not unsuspected during his life-time. When he was appointed by the Queen to join in the prosecution of Essex for treason, and was assigned to that count of the indictment which charged connivance with the play-actors in producing the play of Richard II., he protested, on the ground that his name was already bruited about in that connection, and it would now be said of him, in derision, that he gave in evidence *his own tales.** These rumors could have originated only in the recognized inadequacy of the reputed authorship.

* Bacon's exact language, applying primarily to Hayward's pamphlet, but with a deeper significance, as we may infer from the Queen's wrath over the performance of the play, was as follows:

"Whereupon I replied to that allotment, and said to their Lordships, that it was an old matter, and had no manner of coherence with the rest of the charges, being matters of Ireland, and thereupon that I having been wronged

15. With the exception of the isolated play of King John, the series depicting English history extends from the deposition of Richard II. to the birth of Elizabeth, in the reign of Henry VIII. In this long chain, there is one break and one only—the important period of Henry VII., when the foundations of social order, as we now have them, were firmly laid. The omission, on any but the Baconian theory of authorship, is inexplicable, for the dramatist could hardly have failed, except for personal considerations, to drop his plummet into the richest and most instructive experiences of political life that lay in his path. The truth is, Bacon wrote a history of the missing reign in prose,

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by bruits before, this would expose me to them more: and it would be said I gave in evidence mine own tales."

It is certainly remarkable that Bacon was able to preserve his *incognito* as well as he did, considering that in Sonnet LXXVI. we find the following:

> "Why write I still all one, ever the same,
> And keep invention in a noted weed,
> That every word doth almost tell my name,
> Showing their birth and where they do proceed?"

Here is a plain statement that the author of this sonnet was writing under a disguise.

The same remarkable admission appears in Bacon's prayer:

"The state and bread of the poor and oppressed have been precious in mine eyes: I have hated all cruelty and hardness of heart; I have, though in a despised weed, sought the good of all men."

In the sonnets, he had assumed a popular literary dress; but here, on his knees before God, he confesses to a higher kind of composition that was "despised."

which exactly fills the gap; the one is tongued and grooved, as it were, into the other.

16. *Troilus and Cressida* was published for the first time, without reservation, in 1609. A writer in the preface claims special credit for the work on the ground that it had not been produced on the public stage, or (to use his own words) "never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar," or "sullied with the smoky breath of the multitude." Then he thanks fortune that a copy of the play had escaped from "grand possessors."

Three inferences seem to be justifiable, viz.: 1. The author was indifferent to pecuniary reward;* 2. He was not a member of the theatrical profession; 3. He was of high social rank.

17. The Plays, as they came out, were first published anonymously. Several of them had been in the hands of the public for years before the name of Shakespeare appeared on the title-page. Other plays, not belonging to the Shakespearean canon, and most of them of very inferior merit, were also given to the world as Shakespeare's. We have fifteen of these heterogeneous compositions attributed to the same "divine" authorship,—geese and

* At this time, Bacon was in easy circumstances. By the death of his brother he had come into possession of Gorhambury and other remnants of the family estate; and he was in receipt of a salary from the government.

eagles coming helter-skelter from a single nest,—at a time when Coke, the law officer of the government, declared poetasters and playwrights to be "fit subjects for the grand jury as vagrants." It was enough for the impecunious authors of these plays that Shakespeare, manager and part proprietor of two theatres, and amassing a large fortune in the business, was willing, apparently, to adopt every child of the drama laid on his door-step. This accounts for the venomous shaft which Greene in his envy aimed at him. Greene was a writer for the stage, and took occasion one time, in a little squib addressed to his professional brethren, to refer to one "Shake-scene" as "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers." It is evident, nevertheless, that Shakespeare was a favorite *nom de plume* with the dramatic wits of his time.

18. The first complete edition of the Plays, substantially as we now have them, was the famous folio, from the author's manuscripts, of 1623. Its titles number thirty-six, and may be classified, for our present purpose, as follows: Plays, previously printed, in various quartos, at dates ranging from 1597 to 1609, eighteen; those not previously printed, but known to have been produced on the stage, twelve; lastly, those, so far as we know, entirely new, six. Of the Plays in the first class, it is found, by comparison, that several had been rewritten, and in some cases greatly

enlarged, during the fourteen years or more subsequent to their first appearance. The same is probably true of some in the second class, though on this point we are, naturally enough, without means of verification. In any event, however, it is certain that the compositions which were new, together with those which, by changes and accretions, had been made new, constitute no inconsiderable part of the book.* Who did this work? Who prepared it for the press? Shakespeare died in 1616, seven years before the folio was published, and for six years before his death he had lived in Stratford, without facilities for such a task, and in a social atmosphere in the highest degree unfavorable for it. On the other hand, Bacon retired to private life in 1621, at the age of sixty, in the plenitude of his powers, and under circumstances that would naturally

* The most noteworthy examples under this head are the *Second* and *Third Parts of Henry VI.* These plays were first published in 1594 and '95, under the titles, respectively, of the *First Part of the Contention between the Two Famous Houses, York and Lancaster*, and the *True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York.* They were republished in 1600, and again in 1619 (three years after Shakespeare's death), under the same general title and in other respects, also, substantially as first printed. In the folio of 1623, however, they appear under new titles and largely rewritten. The *Second Part* (for instance), containing three thousand and fifty-seven lines, suddenly comes out with fifteen hundred and seventy-eight lines entirely new, and with about one half of the remainder altered or expanded from passages in the old.

The Plays were revised and collected for final publication at the same time that Bacon revised and collected his prose works, for the same purpose, 1621-6. The coincidence is worthy of mention.

cause him to roll this apple of discord, refined into the purest gold, down the ages.

19. Other mysteries cluster around this edition. The ostensible editors were two playwrights, named Heminge and Condell, formerly connected with the company of which Shakespeare was a member. Heminge appears, also, to have been a grocer. In the dedication of the book, they characterize the Plays, with singular, not to say suspicious, infelicity, as "trifles." They astonish us still more by the use they make of Pliny's epistle to Vespasian, prefixed to his *Natural History*, and not translated into English till 1635. Not only are the thoughts of the Latin author most happily introduced, but they are amplified and fitted to the purpose with consummate literary skill.

Then follows a pithy address to the public, in which the editors seek to justify their revolutionary work, undertaken so long after Shakespeare's death, on the ground that all previous publications of the Plays had been made from stolen copies and were, therefore, inaccurate as well as fraudulent. A comparison of the two sets, however, discloses a state of things quite inconsistent with the sincerity of Messrs. Heminge and Condell. Some of the finest passages, given in the quartos, are omitted in the Folio, one particularly in Hamlet, in which the genius of the author, as Swinburne asserts, "soars up to the very highest of its

height and strikes down to the very deepest of its depth." In *King Lear*, also, but for the "stolen copies," the following description of Cordelia's sorrow, together with the whole scene containing it, would have been lost forever:

> "You have seen
> Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears
> Were like a better May; those happy smilets,
> That play'd on her ripe lip, seemed not to know
> What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
> As pearls from diamonds dropp'd."

And who is not shocked at the statement in the Folio that Desdemona, at one of her first interviews with the swarthy Moor, received the story of his life "with a world," not of sighs, but—"of kisses"!

The truth is, the quartos are precisely what we should have expected them to be, early but authentic drafts, brought into final shape by the author, under extraordinary mental distractions, in the folio. The strata may be tilted and broken, but they tell us of the great forces of nature, the elemental fires that seethed beneath them.

Ben Jonson's contribution is, also, clearly susceptible of a double meaning. In the verses opposite the portrait, he draws a sharp distinction (as well he might) between the lineaments there presented and those of the mighty intellect which the printed page sets before us.

"Look,
Not on his picture, but his book."

In these well-known lines, he paraphrases a Latin inscription found under Bacon's own portrait, converting it into one of the brightest flashes in this symposium of wit.

On the subject of Shakespeare's art, Jonson's mind was apparently in a state of hopeless confusion. In his conversations with Drummond, he declared unqualifiedly that Shakespeare had no art. In his metrical introduction to the Folio, he declares, just as unqualifiedly, that Shakespeare had art, and that of the most pronounced and toilsome character. He goes so far as to liken the author of the Plays to a blacksmith sweating over an anvil. Riding two horses, even if one were Pegasus, was evidently an ungracious task for Rare Old Ben.

20. It would be well-nigh miraculous if in all these works, dealing as they do with every kind and degree of human vicissitude, we could not find somewhere in them a trace of the author's own personality. Indeed, editors have been constantly searching for it, even at the risk of converting exegesis into biography. Two of them, for instance, have surmised that the dramatist was educated at Oxford or Cambridge and afterwards trained to law at one of the Inns of Court, because Justice Shallow recommends such a

course of study (actually pursued by Bacon) in *Henry IV.* It is not surprising, therefore, that, on the supposition of Bacon's authorship, we should discover in two of the plays unmistakable marks of a great crisis in his life. These two are *Timon of Athens* and *Henry VIII.* They seemed to be filled, like ocean shells, with the dash and roar of waves. They were both printed for the first time in the Folio of 1623, the *Timon* never having been heard of before, and the other also, almost as certainly, a new production. An older play, entitled *All is True*, based on unknown incidents of the same reign, was on the boards of the Globe Theatre on the night of the fire in 1613, but we have no reason to believe that it was the magnificent Shakespearean drama of *Henry VIII.*, at least in the form in which it was printed in the Folio ten years later.

The catastrophe that overwhelmed Bacon in 1621 was one of the saddest in the annals of our race. No wonder Timon hurls invectives at his false friends, and Cardinal Wolsey utters his grand, but pathetic, lament over fallen greatness! Such storms of feeling, sweeping over a human soul, must have gathered their force among the mountains and valleys of a mighty personal experience.

The most astonishing feature of this controversy is the light it has thrown on the literature of the Elizabethan age.

Among the great men who made that age famous, no one, with the exception of Jonson, seems to have taken any notice either of Shakespeare or of the sublime creations which bear his name. Bacon's silence, itself very significant, and Jonson's doubtful panegyrics are explained; but what shall we say of Raleigh, Drake, Herbert, Pym, and the rest? Imagine the inhabitants of Lilliput paying no attention to Gulliver!

"Since the constellation of great men who appeared in Greece in the time of Pericles, there was never any such society; yet their genius failed them to find out the best head in the universe." —*Emerson.*

The popular prejudice against the drama, behind which, as an almost impenetrable veil, the Shakespeare Plays were once hid, is only now passing away. Josiah Quincy tells us that, as late as in 1820, as whispered among the boys fitting for college at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., a professor in the neighboring theological seminary had among his books, to the evident jeopardy of his soul, the works of a playwright, named Shakespeare!

If Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare Plays, as it now appears probable that he was, it is difficult to exaggerate, in a literary point of view, the importance of the discovery. To our own countrywoman, Delia Bacon, belongs the everlasting honor, and also, alas! in the long line of the world's benefactors, the crown of martyrdom.

IV.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

As counsel for defendant may be disposed at this point to demur to the evidence and thus take the case from the jury, we feel obliged to file a statement of facts and objections on the other side, arranged seriatim in the inverse order of their importance, as follows:

1. *From* 1598, *when the publication of the Plays ceased to be anonymous, to* 1848, *when Joseph C. Hart, an American, publicly initiated the doubt concerning their authorship, a period of two hundred and fifty years, the whole world, nem. con., attributed them to William Shakespeare.*

The Plays came into existence in obscurity. No person appears to have taken the slightest interest in their putative author. His very insignificance saved him from prosecution when the play of Richard II. was used by Essex for

treasonable ends. And the same indifference to him continued for a long time after his death. The critics were as blind to the character of these great works as they were, in the early part of the present century, to the merits of Wordsworth, whom the most eminent of them at one time flatly denounced as little better than an idiot. Wordsworth now ranks as third in the list of British poets.

Mr. Appleton Morgan, in his brilliant contribution to the literature of this subject, reminds us of the general contempt in which the Plays were buried for about two hundred years. In 1661, Evelyn reports that they "begin to disgust this refined age." Pepys preferred Hudibras to Shakespeare, pronouncing Midsummer Night's Dream "the most insipid, ridiculous play" he had ever seen. In 1681, Tate, a poet who afterward wore the laurel, could find no epithet sufficiently opprobrious to express his opinion of "King Lear," and so he called it simply "a thing." In Hume's condemnation, Shakespeare and Bacon were yoked together as wanting in "simplicity and purity of diction." Addison styled the Plays "very faulty," and Johnson asserted, with his usual emphasis, that Shakespeare never wrote six consecutive lines "without making an ass of himself." Dryden, though not without lucid intervals of high appreciation, still regarded Shakespeare and Fletcher as "below the dullest writers of our own or any preceding

age," full of "solecisms of speech," "flaws of sense," and "ridiculous and incoherent stories meanly written." He disapproved altogether of Shakespeare's style, describing it as "pestered with figurative expressions," "affected" and "obscure." John Dennis thought himself competent to rewrite the Plays, and he actually put one or two of them, "revised and improved," on the boards in London, apparently without the least suspicion, on the part of the audiences that witnessed them, of any sacrilege. Another astonishing critic was Rymer, who comes to us indorsed by Pope as "learned and strict." He says of Desdemona: "There is nothing in her which is not below any country kitchen-maid; no woman, bred out of a pig-sty, could talk so meanly." The "Troilus and Cressida" he called a "heap of rubbish."

On the other side, we have a stock quotation from Milton, as follows:

> "Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild,"

requiring a considerable stretch of the imagination to apply to the Plays. Milton was a Puritan, and probably never soiled his fingers with a copy of them. He had some knowledge of their character, to be sure, for he accused Charles I. of making them and "other stuff of this sort" his daily reading. Evidently, in Milton's opinion, a king

who read and admired Hamlet or Othello deserved to lose his head.

With such sentiments as these in vogue regarding the Plays themselves, how much value should we attach to the concurrent belief in the authorship of them? Why should men look upward for a star, when they are content to see it reflected in the dirty puddles of the streets? And how natural, under a law of moral mechanics, the swinging of public opinion, from blind detraction at one time to equally blind idolatry at another!

2. *It is hardly conceivable that Bacon, if the author of these works, would not have claimed the credit of them before he died, or, at least, left posthumous proofs that would have established his title to them.*

Bacon had one great aim in life, an aim that, it seems to us, gave a fine consistency to all that he did. He sought to instruct in better ways of thinking, not his own generation alone, but those that were to come after. "I feel myself born," he says in one of his letters, "for the service of mankind." Accordingly, we find him in his will bequeathing sets of his philosophical works and his essays to the chief public libraries of the kingdom. He even translated them into Latin, for the avowed reason that our modern languages are ephemeral, while Latin will last as

long as human speech. In his will, also, with the sublime confidence that is inseparable from genius, he left his name and memory to the "next ages."

At the same time, he showed no anxiety for personal credit. His mind was bent on grander results. In the introduction to one of his books, unpublished at the time of his death, he asks his executors to leave some parts of it unprinted, in order that they might be passed in manuscript "from hand to hand." He had the curious conception that in this impersonal way certain truths might take deeper root. Then follow these noble words:

"For myself, my heart is not set upon any of those things which depend on external accidents. I am not hunting for fame. I have no desire to found a sect, after the fashion of the heresiarchs; and to look for any private gain from such an undertaking as this, I should consider both ridiculous and base. Enough for me the consciousness of well-deserving, and those real and effectual results with which fortune itself cannot interfere."

The ring of these words three centuries have not dulled. They will ring through all time, for they are of pure gold.

It should be remembered, too, that Bacon had an ambition to occupy his father's seat on the woolsack, and that to be known as a writer of plays for money would have been fatal to his advancement. After his downfall, he had not the heart, if he had the will, for the exposure. He

may well have hesitated to make another invidious confession in the face of a frowning world.*

"The question why Bacon, if he were the composer of the Plays, did not acknowledge the authorship, is not difficult to answer. His birth, his position and his ambition forbade him, the nephew of Lord Burleigh, the future Lord Chancellor of England, to put his name on a play-bill. In the interest of his family and of his political career, the secret must be so strictly preserved that mere anonymity would not be sufficient. A live man-of-straw, a responsible official representative known to every one, was required. No person could be better fitted for such a purpose than an actor, wise enough to understand and appreciate what was to his own advantage. Perhaps this 'Johannes Factotum' of Greene's did not know the name of his benefactor. But even if he did know the name, it was obviously to his interest to keep from the world, and particularly from his gossiping companions, a secret which brought him money and fame."—*Allgemeine Zeitung.*

3. *The Plays contain anachronisms and other errors which Bacon, "who took all knowledge for his province," could not have committed.*

Chief among the errors in question, of sufficient importance to be noted here, are the following:

* A French critic has conjectured that Bacon may have left instructions to his executors to divulge the secret at some opportune time after his death, but that the alarming growth of Puritanism, culminating in its complete ascendency under Cromwell twenty-five years later, rendered such a step inexpedient. Holding his reputation in trust and knowing what a fierce popular storm the announcement would cause, they may have deemed it their duty to let the Plays remain as "Mr. William Shakespeare's," until such time as these writings might reveal by their own light the name and genius of the author.

1. The famous one in the quotation from Aristotle:

"Young men whom Aristotle thought unfit to hear moral philosophy."—*Troilus and Cressida*, ii., 3.

It was *political* philosophy that Aristotle referred to; but Bacon makes the same mistake. He quotes the Greek as saying:

"Young men are no fit auditors of moral philosophy."

Even in their blunders, our two authors were not divided.

2. The curious conception of heat in its "mode of motion," one flame pushing another by force out of its place.

Shakespeare:

"Even as one heat another heat expels, or as one nail by strength drives out another.—*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ii., 4.

"One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail."—*Coriolanus*, iv., 7.

Bacon:

"Flame doth not mingle with flame, but remaineth contiguous."—*Advancement of Learning.*

"Clavum clavo pellere." [To drive out a nail with a nail.]—*Promus.*

The materiality of heat was a dogma of the ancients. It held almost absolute sway over mankind till long after the time of Francis Bacon; but this nail illustration, found in Bacon's intellectual work-shop and reproduced in the

Plays, is startling. It may fairly be said to clinch the argument.

3. Mark Antony tells the Romans that he comes

"To bury Cæsar, not to praise him,"

knowing that the Romans did not bury the bodies of their dead.

The play was written for an English stage, and for an audience to whom cremation was practically unknown. The reference to burial indicates the art, rather than the ignorance, of the dramatist. What would our critics say of a famous actor of modern times who always armed the Roman guard in the play with Springfield muskets!

"Shakespeare turns his Romans into Englishmen, and he does right, for otherwise his nation would not have understood him."—*Goethe.*

4. A Trojan hero quotes Aristotle, Cleopatra plays billiards, and a clock strikes the hours in Ancient Rome.

Historical perspective is not necessary to the drama. The poet sees the world reflected on a retina that ignores time and place. He idealizes facts. Egypt, Greece, Rome, Pericles, Cæsar, are so many stars set in his firmament and shining apparently in one plane. This illusion extended even to the accessories of the stage in Shakespeare's day. There was no scenery to help the

spectators.* Imagination was left to its own unaided wings, with nothing but the atmosphere of the play to sustain it. At the call of the magical flute piping through the universe, billiards, clocks, Ilium, all local and temporary objects of sense, "shot madly from their spheres," in blind obedience to the melody.

"Poesy is feigned history, which, being not tied to the laws of matter, may at pleasure join that which nature hath severed, and sever that which nature hath joined, and so make unlawful matches and divorces of things." *—*Bacon.*

"There is no reason why an hour should not be a century in the calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field."—*Dr. Johnson.*

Numerous other errors of a minor character are found in the Plays, though, like the spots on the sun's disk, they are lost to all but professional observers in the radiance that envelops them. Paradoxical as it may seem, however, these very blemishes are a distinct indication of Bacon's authorship. We find the same in his prose works. The

* The want of scenic effects is thus portrayed by Sir Philip Sydney:

"You shall have Asia of the one side and Africa of the other, and so many other under kingdoms that the player when he comes in must ever begin with telling where he is. . . . Now, you shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then you must believe the stage to be a garden; by and by, we have news of a shipwreck in the same place, and we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes a hideous monster, with fire and smoke, and the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while, in the meantime, two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?"

great philosopher, notwithstanding his industry and his learning, was singularly careless in some of the minutiæ of his work. The sublime confidence with which he employed his mental powers often made a "sinner of his memory." It was simply impossible, in the multiplicity and magnitude of his productions, particularly if the Plays be superadded, to prevent unimportant errors from creeping in. In no other way can we account for the false quotation from Solomon in the Essay of Revenge, or that from Tacitus in the Essay of Traditions. The grammatical mistakes in the Latin entries of the Promus, written with his own hand, would send a school-boy to the bottom of his class, but they put a tongue in every wound of syntax found in the Plays.

In this connection, it may be not be amiss to quote a few of Bacon's Apothegms, with Devey's notes (Bohn's standard edition) appended to them, as follows:

"Michael Angelo, the famous painter, made one of the damned souls in his portraiture of hell so like a cardinal, his enemy, as everybody at first sight knew it. Whereupon the cardinal complained to the Pope, humbly praying it might be effaced. The Pope said to him, 'Why, you know very well I have power to deliver a soul out of purgatory, but not out of hell.'"

The victim was not a cardinal, but the Pope's master of ceremonies.

"A king of Hungary took a bishop in battle, and kept him prisoner. Whereupon, the Pope writ a monitory to him, for that he had broken the privilege of holy church and taken his son. The king, in reply, sent the armor wherein the bishop was taken, and this only in writing: 'Know now whether this be thy son's coat?'"

It was Richard Cœur de Lion who did this, and not a king of Hungary.

"Antigonus, when it was told him that the enemy had such a volley of arrows that they did hide the sun, said: 'That falls out well, for it is hot weather, and so we shall fight in the shade.'"

This was a speech, not of Antigonus, but of a Spartan, previous to the battle of Thermopylæ.

"One of the seven was wont to say that laws are like cob-webs, where small flies are caught, but the great break through."

This was said, not by a Greek, but by Anacharsis, the Scythian.

"An orator of Athens said to Demosthenes: 'The Athenians will kill you if they wax mad.' Demosthenes replied: 'And they will kill you if they be in good sense.'"

This retort was made to Demosthenes by Phocion.

"Demetrius, king of Macedon, had a petition offered him divers times by an old woman, and answered he had no leisure. Whereupon the woman said aloud: 'Why, then, give over to be king.'"

This happened, not to Demetrius, but to Philip.

"A philosopher disputed with Adrian, the emperor, and did it but weakly. One of his friends, that stood by, afterward said to him: 'Methinks you were not like yourself in argument with the emperor. I could have answered better myself.' 'Why,' said the philosopher, 'would you have me contend with him that commands thirty legions?'"

This took place, not under Adrian, but under Augustus Cæsar.

"Chilon said that kings' friends and favorites are like counters, that sometimes stand for one, sometimes for ten, and sometimes for an hundred."

This was the saying of Orontes.

"Alexander, after the battle of Granicum, had very great offers made to him by Darius; consulting with his captains concerning them, Parmenio said: 'Sure, I would accept these offers, if I were Alexander.' Alexander answered: 'So would I, if I were Parmenio.'"

This happened after the battle of Issus.

The above are gross blunders, far more astonishing than any found in the works of Shakespeare. Abbott testifies on this point as follows:

"We have abundant proof that he [Bacon] was eminently inattentive to details. His scientific works are full of inaccuracies. King James found in this defect of his Chancellor the matter for a witticism: '*De minimis non curat lex.*'" *

* The law takes no notice of trifles.

4. *Shakespeare and Bacon were of essentially different types of mind, the Novum Organum and the conception of Falstaff being respectively at opposite poles, and wholly beyond the range of one man's powers.*

Bacon's mind had as many facets as a diamond; turn it whichever way you will, it gives a flash. No feature of it was more conspicuous, in the eyes of his contemporaries, than his wit. It was simply prodigious. Ben Jonson says that, even on solemn occasions, Bacon could with difficulty "spare or pass by a jest." Macaulay asserts that in this respect he "never had an equal."

"He possessed this faculty, or this faculty possessed him, in a morbid degree. When he abandoned himself to it without reserve, as he did in *Sapientia Veterum*, or at the end of the second book of *De Augmentis*, the feats which he performed were not only admirable, but portentous and almost shocking. On those occasions, we marvel at him as clowns on a fair-day marvel at a juggler, and can hardly help thinking that the devil must be in him."—*Macaulay.*

It seems like piling Ossa on Pelion to add that the world's most famous jest-book we owe to Francis Bacon, dictated by him from a sick-bed, entirely from memory, in one day. No wonder the portly Falstaff sprang, full-grown, from such a brain!

5. *The author of the Essay on Love could not have written Romeo and Juliet.*

The two productions are certainly widely dissimilar. In one, the tender passion is a flower in bloom, exquisitely sweet and beautiful; in the other, it is torn up by the roots and analyzed scientifically, not to say contemptuously. Indeed, Bacon quotes with approval an old saying that a man cannot love and be wise.

We have no direct evidence to show that the author of the essay did not possess a susceptible heart. To be sure, he was married late (at the age of forty-five), and was unfortunate in losing the affections of his wife before he died. It may be worthy of note, also, that the play was written several years before, and the essay several years after, his marriage. We cannot admit, however, in any view of his matrimonial adventure, that he was disqualified to write the garden scene in Romeo and Juliet. It is not necessary to possess a trait in order to depict it. We instinctively see and appreciate what is exactly opposite to us in mental aptitudes. Human nature makes an unconscious effort in this way to round itself out into the complete and perfect. The theory of complementary colors is based on this tendency. Unity in diversity is the ideal of married life. Tom Hood was the wittiest of men and, at the same time, one of the most melancholy. The President

of a New England Theological Seminary, who was very penurious, preached the ablest sermon of his life on charity. The people of Scotland are notoriously intemperate every Saturday night; it is said that forty thousand persons get drunk at that time in the city of Glasgow alone; and yet the finest idyl in our language, consecrated to the domestic peace and religious sanctity of that season, we owe to a Scottish poet, himself in full accord with the habits of his countrymen.*

6. *Among Bacon's known works, we find some fragments of verse which show him utterly wanting in the fine phrensy of the poet.*

Bacon's acknowledged poetry, it is safe to say, would not have made him immortal. We know that he wrote a sonnet to the Queen, but unless it be included in the Shakespeare collection, it is lost. In the year before he died, and while incapacitated by illness for good work, he paraphrased a few of the Psalms, which he afterward published, and which would seem to be, at first sight, only so many nails driven into the coffin of his poetic aspirations. It is manifestly unfair, however, to judge of his capabilities in this line by a sick-bed effort. He was necessarily

* "A New View of the Temperance Question," 2d ed., p. 17.

hampered, too, by the restrictions that always attend the transplanting of an exotic in full bloom, lest the little tendrils of speech that give the flower its beauty and fragrance be broken. The President of a New England college once made a similar adventure with the Psalms, but, when the book appeared, the author's friends bought up the entire edition and suppressed it.

Fortunately, we have a specimen of Bacon's poetry for which we need not apologize. This is also a translation, but, being in the precincts of profane literature, it justified a freer hand. We give it entire, as follows:

" The world's a bubble, and the life of man
Less than a span;
In his conception wretched, from the womb
So to the tomb;
Cursed from his cradle and brought up to years
With cares and fears;
Who, then, to frail mortality shall trust
But limns the water, or but writes in dust.

" Yet whilst with sorrow here we live oppressed,
What life is best?
Courts are only superficial schools,
To dandle fools.
The rural parts are turned into a den
Of savage men:
And where's the city from foul vice so free
But may be termed the worst of all the three?

" Domestic cares afflict the husband's bed,
Or pain his head.
Those that live single take it for a curse,
Or do things worse.
Some would have children; those that have them moan,
Or wish them gone.
What is it, then, to have or have no wife,
But single thralldom, or a double strife?

" Our own affections still at home to please
Is a disease;
To cross the seas to any foreign soil,
Perils and toil.
Wars with their noise affright us; when they cease,
We're worse in peace.
What then remains, but that we still should cry
Not to be born, or, being born, to die?"

It is not known when the above was written. We find it for the first time in a volume of Greek epigrams, published in 1629, three years after Bacon's death. All that is claimed for it is a high degree of skill in versification, the opportunity not admitting a flight of genius. The original is a dull, placid stream flowing through a meadow, not a cataract from a mountain height.

To know Bacon as a "concealed poet," we must study his prose. The critics, before the shadow of this controversy fell upon them, thus described it:

"In this band of scholars, dreamers, and inquirers appears the most comprehensive, sensitive, originative of the minds of the age, Francis Bacon; a great and luminous intellect, one of the finest of this poetic progeny."—*Taine.*

"Like the poets, he peoples nature with instincts and desires; attributes to bodies an actual voracity; to the atmosphere, a thirst for light, sounds, odors, vapors, which it drinks in; to metals, a sort of haste to be incorporated with acids."—*Idem.*

"In his style there is the same quality which is applauded in Shakespeare, a combination of the intellectual and the imaginative, the closest reasoning in the boldest metaphor."—*Shaw.*

"The utmost splendor of imagery."—*Mackintosh.*

"Like unto Shakespeare, he takes good note of any deficiency of syllabic pulsations, and imparts the value of but one syllable to the dissyllables *heaven*, *many*, *even*, *goeth;* and to *glittering* and *chariot* but the value of two, precisely as Shakespeare would."—*Prof. J. W. Tavener.*

"The style is quaint, original, abounding in allusions and witticisms, and rich, even to gorgeousness, with piled-up analogies and metaphors."—*Encyc. Brit.*

"It is as an inspired seer, the prose-poet of modern science, that I reverence Lord Bacon."—*Sir Alexander Grant.*

"Lord 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 with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy.

"Plato exhibits the rare union of close and subtle logic with

the Pythian enthusiasm of poetry, melted by the splendor and harmony of his periods, which hurry the persuasions onward as in a breathless career. His language is that of an immortal spirit rather than a man. Lord Bacon is perhaps the only writer who in these particulars can be compared with him."*—*Shelley.*

"No man ever had an imagination at once so strong and so thoroughly subjugated. In truth, much of Bacon's life was passed in a visionary world, amidst things as strange as any that are described in the Arabian Tales."—*Macaulay.*

"He seems to have written his essays with the pen of Shakespeare."—*Alexander Smith.*

It is admitted, then, that Bacon was at least a prose-poet. No man ever caught more quickly or aptly the resemblances of things or had a finer ear for the melody of speech. His metaphors trooped, as it were, to the sound of music. Professor Tavener compares his cadences to the swinging of a pendulum beating seconds. We know he was abnormally sensitive to the moods of nature, for he had fainting spells at every eclipse of the moon. We know he had a passion for the drama, shown by the part he took in devising stage performances before the court and in the

* Our attention was called to this remarkable testimony of the poet Shelley by Mr. R. M Theobald, who makes the following comment: "The truth is, that while the critics have their eye on the Baconian theory, they call Bacon prosy, unimaginative, and incapable of poetry. When they sincerely describe him, they one and all assign to him Shakespearean attributes; so that if you cull the eulogies passed on Bacon, you have a portrait of the author of Shakespeare."

revels at Gray's Inn. We know, also, he had an inexhaustible fund of humor, that poured from his tongue with the ripple of laughing waters, and needed only the constraints of a written dialogue to tumble and foam.

These considerations, however, leave still a wide chasm between Bacon's prose and the Shakespeare poetry. The two sets of works seem at first sight to differ, not in degree only, but in kind. They are, indeed, as unlike as the caterpillar and the butterfly, one walking the earth and the other mounting on wings into the air. And yet, it is diversity of conditions, rather than that of personal types, that impresses us in them. They imply two states of existence, not incompatible in one person. Goethe's fine instinct suspected depths of meaning, unknown in his calmer moments to himself, in the second part of Faust. Natural orators have sometimes wondered, in the midst of their highest flights, what strange power had taken possession of their mental faculties. St. Peter protested on the day of Pentecost that he was not drunken with wine, though the same exaltation of spirit gave Spinoza the title of "God-intoxicated."

Here, then, are two spheres in which every human soul, divinely gifted, may have a dual being. In the higher, destined perhaps to be the ultimate for all, we find the seers of our race. No Kepler has yet discovered the laws

of their celestial orbits, but Plato and Emerson, Beethoven and Angelo, Dante and Goethe, give us some knowledge of their mighty sweep. We may wait centuries before a plummet, like Bessel's, dropped into these depths, shall strike bottom.

Of men eminent at once in both, Milton, Goethe, and Poe are conspicuous examples. Milton's Areopagitica is a "cloth of gold," worthy of the author of Paradise Lost, or better still, according to some critics, of Paradise Regained. Goethe's mind worked analytically or synthetically with equal power. He could detect a vertebra in the formation of a skull as readily as he could compress, into the experiences of one man subject to the personal guidance of Satan, the history of the human race. Poe's lyric genius was the greatest America ever produced, but it did not prevent him from giving us, in feats of analytical legerdemain, most extraordinary and enduring effects in prose.

The question arises, was Bacon also one of these rare spirits? To determine it, why not bring him to the test of the rule of three? Why indulge in vague generalities, however learned or brilliant, when standards of comparison are within reach? One commentator, for instance, sets the "dry light of intellect" in Bacon over against the "warm sunshine" of Shakespeare; another sees radical differences

between the two minds, the powers of one being analytical and the powers of the other synthetical. Let us apply these theories mathematically, taking two of the three known terms of our proportion from Milton. The ratios may be stated thus:

Milton's prose : Paradise Lost :: Bacon's prose : Hamlet.

For comparison, we select, in each instance, the finest passage the genius of the author affords, as follows:

MILTON.—"Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them, to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve, as in a vial, the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively and as vigorously productive as those fabulous dragons' teeth; and, being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature—God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself—kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."—*Areopagitica.*

"Thus far these, beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed

Their great commander; he, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower; his form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess
Of glory obscured; as when the sun, new-risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all the Arch-angel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek; but under brows
Of dauntless courage and considerate pride,
Waiting revenge." *Paradise Lost.*

BACON.—"Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground: judge, therefore,

of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice; but adversity doth best discover virtue."—*Essay of Adversity.*

"To be, or not to be: that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
* * * * * * *
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear the ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action." *Hamlet.*

Here is a nice literary problem. In Milton, we have an eloquent eulogy of good books, and, following this, the grandest, most terrible figure the eye of imagination ever beheld. Boldness, originality, sublimity characterize both. The image of God shining upon us through the clear light of knowledge, and that of the ruined archangel like the sun seen through a mist, are metaphors so striking and at the same time so similar that under any circumstances, it would seem, we might have suspected their common origin. Certainly the two specimens are pitched in the same lofty key.

Turning to the couplet from Bacon, what do we find? An intellect of a wholly different type, at once incisive and profound, grasping principles as firmly as Jupiter grasped thunder-bolts, and wielding them with a brilliancy that is almost dazzling. The two passages, from the Essay and from Hamlet, illustrate almost precisely the same mental qualities. They are both philosophical. They deal analytically, one with the joys and sorrows of this world, and the other with doubts and misgivings on the perilous edge of the next. There is no spiritual rift, and conse-

quently no "warm sunshine" pouring down through the clouds, in either.

"The truth is that Bacon was not without the fine frenzy of the poet."—*Spedding.*

7. *Bacon's want of natural sympathy, as shown in his treatment of Essex, fails to satisfy our ideal, derived from the dramas themselves, of their great author; for the world has bestowed upon Shakespeare not only its reverence, but its love.*

It cannot be denied that the author of the Plays possessed a heart of the most tender sensibilities. Like the tides of the ocean, his sympathies were "poured round all," penetrating every bay, creek, and river of human experience. The voyager o'er the mighty current of his thought always feels embarked on the bosom of the unbounded deep. It is not enough, therefore, that Bacon was a man of lofty aims; that he devoted his great powers with tireless assiduity to the interests of mankind; was he also of that rare type of character that, with greatness of intellect, glows and scintillates at every touch of feeling?

This brings us to a most important test, the personality of Lord Bacon himself. Time has scarcely dimmed his figure; we know him almost as intimately as though he were walking our streets. We see him gathering violets in his garden, stringing pearls of thought in his essays, swaying the House of Commons with his eloquence, holding the scales of justice in the courts, marking the trend of

social progress in his histories, and breaking the chains that had bound the human intellect from the days of Aristotle. His mind and heart were in touch with every interest of mankind. He was poet, orator, naturalist, physician, historian, essayist, philosopher, statesman, and judge. No man ever filled more completely the ideal of the Roman poet:

"*Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto.*"

"The small, fine mind of Labruyère had not a more delicate tact than the large intellect of Bacon. His understanding resembled the tent which the fairy Parabanon gave to Prince Ahmed. Fold it, and it seemed a toy in the hand of a lady; spread it, and the armies of powerful sultans might repose beneath its shade."—*Macaulay.*

"A soft voice, a laughing lip, a melting heart, made him hosts of friends. No child could resist the spell of his sweet speech, of his tender smile, of his grace without study, his frankness without guile."—*Hepworth Dixon.*

He is accused of ingratitude toward his friend Essex, because, first, he appeared against the accused at the trial; and, secondly, because by superior tactics he was the means of insuring conviction.

On the first point, it is sufficient to say that Bacon was present as an officer of the crown at the express command of the Queen, having repeatedly forewarned the Earl of the result of his evil courses, and duly notified him that,

on any breach of the peace, he himself would support the government. On the second, he was prominent in the proceedings because his mental stature made him prominent. As well attempt to force an oak back into its acorn as to bring Francis Bacon on any occasion down to the level of ordinary men.*

In the matter of the bribes, he suffered for the sins of society. So far as he was personally culpable, it is manifest from his subsequent demeanor that chronic carelessness in money matters, and not any guile, was at the bottom of the difficulty.†

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* That Bacon felt himself compromised in public estimation we know very well, for in a letter to the Queen he says:

"My life has been threatened and my name libeled."

We find the same lament in one of his sonnets, as follows:

"Then hate me if thou wilt; if ever, now,
Now while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune." Sonnet XC.

In another sonnet, the author expresses fear of assassination, anticipating

"The coward conquest of a wretch's knife." LXX.

† Bacon's want of attention to his personal finances (a not uncommon failing in great men, due to a sort of instinct that the matter is beneath them) caused his mother the most lively concern. She even interfered at one time to protect him from his own servants. Spedding tells the following story in point:

"In the year 1655, a book-seller's boy heard some gentlemen talking in his master's shop; one of them, a gray-headed man, was describing a scene which he had himself witnessed at Gorhambury. He had gone to see the lord chancellor on business, who received him in his study and, having occasion to go out,

"No one mistook the condemnation for a moral censure; no one treated Lord St. Albans as a convicted judge. The House of Commons had refused to adopt the charge of bribery; the House of Lords had rejected the attempt to brand him with a personal shame; and society treated the event as one of those struggles for place which may hurt a man's fortunes without hurting his fame. The most noble and most generous men, the best scholars, the most pious clergymen, gathered round him in his adversity, more loving, more observant, more reverential, than they had ever been in his days of splendor.

"Such was also the reading of these transactions by the most eminent of foreign ministers and travelers. The French Marquis

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left him there for awhile alone. 'Whilst his lordship was gone, there comes,' he said, 'into the study one of his lordship's gentlemen, and opens my lord's chest of drawers wherein his money was, takes it out in handfuls, fills his pockets, and goes away without saying a word to me. He was no sooner gone but comes another gentleman, opens the same drawers, fills both his pockets with money, and goes away as the former did, without speaking a word.' Bacon, being told when he came back what had passed in his absence, merely shook his head, and all he said was, 'Sir, I cannot help myself.'"

Montagu relates another incident to the same effect:

One day, immediately after Bacon's removal from the chancellorship, he happened to enter his servants' hall while they were at dinner. On their rising (about one hundred in number) to receive him, he said: "Be seated; your rise has been my fall."

"His principal fault seems to have been the excess of that virtue which covers a multitude of sins. This betrayed him to so great an indulgence toward his servants, who made a corrupt use of it, that it stripped him of all those riches and honors which a long series of merits had heaped upon him."—*Addison.*

"Bacon was generous, easy, good natured, and naturally just; but he had the misfortune to be beset by domestic harpies who, in a manner, farmed out his office."—*Guthrie.*

d'Effiat, the Spanish Conde de Gondomar, expressed for him in his fallen fortunes the most exalted veneration. That the judges on the bench, that the members of both Houses of Parliament, even those who, at Buckingham's bidding, had passed against him that abominable sentence, concurred with the most eminent of their contemporaries, native and alien, is apparent in the failure of every attempt made to disturb his judicial decisions. These efforts failed because there was no injustice to overthrow, and there was no injustice to overthrow because there had been no corruption on the bench."—*Dixon.*

History presents to us no more pathetic figure than that of the great Lord Bacon beseeching in vain that he might not be compelled to close his career—a career of unexampled usefulness to the world—in ignominy. The authorities that condemned him remind us of a pack of wolves, turning upon and rending a wounded comrade.

V.

Let us now examine the internal evidences, presented in the Plays themselves, of Bacon's authorship.

a. A prominent characteristic of Bacon in his literary work was the frequency with which he invented new words. It is safe to say that no other writer, with possibly one exception, ever did so much to diversify and enrich our English tongue. We find many of these words actually taking shape before our eyes in the Promus, perhaps a bright nucleus from the Latin in a nebulous envelope of prefixes and suffixes, preparing to shine forever, with a radiance of its own, in human speech.

In this business of word-building, however, Bacon had a strange double. It is estimated that Shakespeare gave five thousand new words, inclusive of old words with new meanings, to our language. And these additions were also, like Bacon's, derived chiefly from the Latin. They were such as only a scholar could impose upon the king's vernacular.*

* Hallam calls attention to Shakespeare's fondness for words in their primitive meanings. He sees a student's instinct in this attempt, contrary in

b. Bacon had also a wonderful variety at his command in manner of writing. In this respect, he was a literary chameleon. Abbott says of him:

"His style varied almost as much as his handwriting; but it was influenced more by the subject matter than by youth or old age. Few men have shown equal versatility in adapting their language to the slightest change of circumstance and purpose. His style depended upon whether he was addressing a king, or a great nobleman, or a philosopher, or a friend; whether he was composing a state paper, magnifying the prerogative, extolling truth, discussing studies, exhorting a judge, sending a New Year's present, or sounding a trumpet to prepare the way for the kingdom of man over nature."

It does not follow, of course, that because he had this "wonderful ductility," as Hallam calls it, therefore he wrote the Plays. The converse of the proposition, however, is worth noting, viz.: without it, he would have been disqualified for the task.

c. Again, Bacon was constantly making alterations in his writings, even after they had gone to press. Of the ten essays which he published in 1597, nearly all were more

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many cases to popular usage, to keep our language true to its Latin roots. The following are a few examples: "Things base and vile, holding no *quantity*" (for value); "rivers, that have overborn their *continents*" (the *continente ripa* of Horace); "imagination all *compact*"; "something of great *constancy*" (for *consistency*); "sweet Pyramus *translated* there"; "the law of Athens, which by no means we may *extenuate*."

or less changed and enlarged for the edition of 1612. Those of 1612, including the ten before mentioned, were again enlarged for publication in 1625. It seems to have been almost impossible for an essay to get to the types a second time without passing through his reforming hand, in one instance actually losing identity in the transition.

This was precisely the fate of the Plays. Some of them underwent complete transformation between the quartos and the folio, becoming practically new compositions, and, what is very singular, working away from the requirements of the stage into forms more purely artistic and literary.

If there were two workshops, it is certain that one set of rules governed both.

d. Bacon's sense of humor, as has already been shown, was phenomenal, and yet it had one curb which it always obeyed. In his Essay of Discourse, he lays down the rule, among others, that religion should never be the butt of a jest. Accordingly, it is impossible to find, in all the wild, rollicking fun of the Plays, even a flippancy at the expense of the Church.

e. Bacon was very fond of puns. He not only handed down to posterity numerous specimens found in his reading, but he immortalized some of his own in the Apothegms. The Spanish Ambassador, a Jew, happening to leave England Easter morning, paid his parting respects to Bacon,

wishing him a good Easter. Bacon replied, wishing his friend a good *pass-over*. The Plays also abound in this species of wit. A remarkable instance may be quoted from the Merry Wives of Windsor, thus:

"Evans: *Accusativo, hing, hang, hog.*
Quick: Hang hog is Latin for bacon, I warrant you."
Act iv., 1.

This refers to a pun perpetrated by Sir Nicholas Bacon, father of Francis. One day a culprit, named Hog, appealed to Judge Bacon's mercy on the ground that they were of the same family. "Aye," replied the Judge, "you and I cannot be kindred except you be hanged; for hog is not bacon until it be well hanged."

The appearance of this family pun in the Plays is significant.

f. Bacon's prose works overflow with citations from classical literature. They are filled to saturation with ancient lore. This is true also of the Plays. They make us breathe the very air of Greece and Rome. The following is only a partial list of the classical authors, the influence of whose writings has been traced in them: Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Euripides, Æschylus, Lucian, Galen, Ovid, Lucretius, Tacitus, Horace, Virgil, Plutarch, Seneca, Catullus, Livy, and Plautus, all of whom were known to Bacon. A curious instance is the following:

"Thy promises are like Adonis' gardens,
That one day bloomed and fruitful were the next."
First Henry VI., i., 6.

This reference puzzled all the commentators for nearly three hundred years, Richard Grant White declaring that "no mention of any such gardens in the classic writings of Greece or Rome is known to scholars." It has recently been found, however, in Plato's *Phædrus*, a work that had not been translated into English in Shakespeare's time.

"It is the ease and naturalness with which the classical allusions are introduced to which it is the most important that we should attend. They are not purple patches sewed on to a piece of plain homespun; they are inwoven in the web."

"He [Farmer] leaves us at full liberty, for anything he has advanced, to regard Shakespeare as having had a mind richly furnished with the mythology and history of the times of antiquity, an intimate and inwrought acquaintance, such as perhaps few profound scholars possess."—*Hunter.*

g. Bacon's paramount aspiration was to possess and impart wisdom. He was indefatigable in his search for it, analyzing motives and turning the light of his genius upon the most hidden springs of conduct. Nothing was too remote or recondite for his use. It was inevitable, then, that his mind should fall easily and naturally into those channels of thought which the "wit of one and the wisdom of

many" have worn deep in human experience. The Promus fairly sparkles with proverbs. Nearly every known language appears to have been ransacked for them. From the Promus they were poured copiously into the Plays. Mrs. Pott finds nearly two thousand instances in which they beautify and enrich these wonderful works.

"In Bacon's works we find a multitude of moral sayings and maxims of experience, from which the most striking mottoes might be drawn for every play of Shakespeare, aye, for every one of his principal characters . . . testifying to a remarkable harmony in their mutual comprehension of human nature."—*Gervinus.*

h. Bacon's whole life was passed in the atmosphere of the court. At the age of ten, he was patted on the head by Queen Elizabeth and called her "young lord keeper." When sixteen, he went to Paris in the suite of the British Ambassador, and lived three years in that gay capital and its vicinity, studying not only the arts of diplomacy, but all the penetralia of court life. On his return he was freely admitted to the presence of royalty, was the friend of princes, and, filling the highest offices in the gift of the King, was elevated to the peerage. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Plays, almost without exception, have their movement in the highest circles of society. The common people are kept in the background, and are referred to in terms, often bordering on contempt, that show the author not to be one of them.

"Shakespeare despised the million, and Bacon feared with Phocion the applause of the multitude."—*Gervinus.*

i. Bacon was continually hiding his personality under disguises. One of the first acts of his public career was to invent a cipher for letter-writing. He even invented a cipher within a cipher, so that, if the first should by any chance be disclosed, the other, imbedded in it, would escape detection. At one time, he carried on a fictitious correspondence, intended for the eye of the Queen, between his brother Anthony and the Earl of Essex, composing the letters on both sides and referring to himself in the third person. He published one of his philosophical works under a pseudonym, and another, as though it were the wisdom of the ancients stored in fables. Ben Jonson, in a poem addressed to Bacon on one of his birthdays, says:

"In the midst
Thou stand'st as though a mystery thou didst."

j. Early in life, Bacon determined to make all knowledge his province. He became fired with this ambition at college, when he discovered that the authority of Aristotle, then supreme over the minds of men, was based on erroneous postulates. Accordingly, he resolved, single-handed, to demolish the whole structure of philosophy as it then existed, and to rebuild it upon foundations laid by himself.

To accomplish this, he knew he must compass all the knowledge of his time, as the great Stagirite had done before him. How well and faithfully he fulfilled his task, let the gratitude and veneration of mankind make answer. Among the names of the five most illustrious men of all the world, Bacon's has a place, and that place at or near the head.

Of the various arts and sciences into which he pushed his investigations, we may specify the following:

Philosophy.—Bacon has been called the father of inductive philosophy, because he, more than any other, taught the natural method of searching for truth. Before his time, men had conceived certain principles to be true, and from them had reasoned down to facts. The consequence was that facts became more or less warped to fit theories, and the discovery of new facts, out of harmony with the theories, a matter of regret, and even of condemnation. Under this system, obviously, the world could make but slow progress.

Bacon started at the other end. He hitched his wagon not to a star, but to nature. He taught men to reason upward, and, if he did not himself soar into the empyrean, it was because the work of collating what is known must always precede those

great generalizations which are the final object of human thought.

It is in this domain of practical experience that we find the secret of the immortality of the Plays. They illustrate the same kind of philosophy that Bacon expounded in his prose works. How unerring the instinct with which the dramatist analyzes the human heart! In both authors, analysis precedes synthesis, as the foundations of the temple must be laid before the dome can spring into the sky.

"A similar combination of different mental powers was at work in them; as Shakespeare was often philosophical in his profoundness, Bacon was not seldom surprised into the imagination of the poet."—*Gervinus.*

Bacon's contempt for his predecessors in this branch of learning is well reflected in the Plays. Note the following:

"There was never yet philosopher
That could endure the tooth-ache patiently."

Much Ado about Nothing, v., 1.

"I am not mad I would to heaven I were;
For then 'tis like I should forget myself;
O, if I could, what grief should I forget!—
Preach some philosophy to make me mad."

King John, iii., 4.

Sir Hugh Evans, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, contends that lips are a part of the mouth, and claims to be supported in that view by "divers philosophers."

Into what a terrible abyss does the stream of philosophy plunge in the only play located at Athens!

History.—Historical literature had a special charm for Bacon. His history of the reign of Henry VII. is an English classic; his portraiture of Julius Cæsar, an epitome of one of the world's most interesting and important epochs.

Shakespeare's mind ran in the same channels. Nearly half the Plays are historical. And they deal with those periods to which Bacon gave particular attention, the English Henries and the career of Rome.

"'Where have you learned the history of England?' it was asked of the greatest statesman of the last century. Lord Chatham replied: 'In the plays of Shakespeare.'"—*Dean Stanley.*

"The marvelous accuracy, the real, substantial learning of the three Roman plays of Shakespeare, present the most complete evidence to our minds that they were the result of a profound study of the whole range of Roman history."—*Knight.*

Law.—Bacon began the study of law at nineteen, several years before the appearance of the first of the

Shakespeare Plays. His mastery of the subject was prompt and thorough. At fifty, he was the leading jurist of the age.

The use of legal terms in the Plays, always in their exact significance, and sometimes showing profound insight into the principles on which they rest, has long excited the wonder of the world. On this point we have already given the opinion of Chief Justice Campbell; we will add the testimony of Richard Grant White, a witness on the other side, and now speaking, as it were, under cross-examination, as follows:

"No dramatist of the time, not even Beaumont, who was a younger son of a judge of the Common Pleas, and who, after studying in the inns of court, abandoned law for the drama, used legal phrases with Shakespeare's readiness and exactness. And the significance of this fact is heightened by another, that it is only to the language of the law that he exhibits this inclination. The phrases peculiar to other occupations serve him on rare occasions, generally when something in the scene suggests them; but legal phrases flow from his pen as part of his vocabulary and parcel of his thought. . . . And besides, Shakespeare uses his law just as freely in his early plays, written in his first London years, as in those produced at a later period. Just as exactly, too; for the correctness and propriety with which these terms are in-

troduced have compelled the admiration of a chief justice and a lord chancellor."

The conclusion is well-nigh irresistible that a trained lawyer was the author of the Plays. The only possible escape from it is through Portia's unprecedented rulings in the trial scene in Merchant of Venice; as though a beautiful damsel, sitting as judge on the bench, and in love with one of the parties interested in the suit, were expected to follow legal precedents! We shall next be told that the delicious absurdities of Pinafore came from one ignorant of discipline on a man-of-war. "My gallant crew, good-morning," says Captain Corcoran, boarding his ship. "Good-morning, sir," is the cheery reply from all hands. What dunces Gilbert and Sullivan must be!

Medicine.—Upon the theory and practice of medicine, Bacon lavished, at times, all his powers. The study seems to have had a special fascination for him. He was puddering in physic, he says, all his life. He even kept an apothecary among his personal retainers, seldom retiring to bed without a dose.

Physicians tell us that the writer of the Plays was a medical expert. Dr. Bucknill has written a book of three hundred pages, and Dr. Chesney one of

two hundred, to prove this. We know that the names of Galen and Paracelsus roll from the tongues of the *dramatis personæ* like household words. Bacon's mother was afflicted, in the latter part of her life, with insanity. The portrayal of that dreaded disease in Hamlet and King Lear is to this day a psychological marvel.

"We confess, almost with shame, that although nearly two centuries and a half have passed since Shakespeare wrote King Lear, we have very little to add to his method of treating the insane, as there pointed out."—*Dr. Brigham.*

Natural History.—No department of science was more thoroughly explored by Bacon than natural history. If he had anticipated a general deluge of ignorance, he could not have gathered into an ark a more complete menagerie than the one we find in his *Silva Silvarum.* Nearly every living species in the four quarters of the earth is represented there.

In one other author alone, not professedly technical, do we find equally accurate and copious references to animals and plants. That author is Shakespeare. The books that have been written to show his knowledge on this subject constitute a small library. We have one by Harting on the

Ornithology of Shakespeare; another by Phipson on his Animal Lore; three by Ellacombe, Beisly, and Grindon on his Plant Lore; and an elaborate treatise by Patterson on the Insects mentioned in the Plays.

Religion.—The Bacon family was Catholic under Mary and Protestant under Elizabeth. As a consequence, Francis had no strong predilections in favor of either sect. In religion as in philosophy, he abhorred sects and sought only what was universal. The sincerity of his faith in an over-ruling Providence we have no reason to doubt, though his own statement, that "a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion," may have been, intentionally or unintentionally, autobiographical, indicating some laxity of opinions on this subject in the early part of his life. The anxieties and constant admonitions of his mother, culminating in the dethronement of her reason, as well as the subsequent battles of religious controversialists over his *status*, would seem to justify this inference.

"He was in power at the time of the Synod of Dort, and must for months have been deafened with talk about election, reprobation and final perseverance. Yet we do

not remember a line in his works from which it can be inferred that he was either a Calvinist or an Arminian." —*Macaulay.*

Shakespeare's religion was also an anomaly. Several books have been written on it, but they might have been compressed into the dimensions of Horrebow's famous chapter on snakes in Iceland. Some infer, from his toleration amid the fierce resentments of his time, that he was a Catholic; others, from the defiance hurled at the Pope in King John and from the panegyric on Cranmer in Henry VIII., that he was a Protestant; while others still, finding no consolations from belief in a future life in the Plays, proclaim him an infidel. Indeed, pious commentators always approach this subject walking backward and holding a mantle before them. They know instinctively that the great poet was also a great philosopher, building solidly on human reason, and from the summit of his magnificent structures allowing not even a vine to shoot upward.

"No church can claim him."—*Richard Grant White.*

"Both have an equal hatred of sects and parties: Bacon, of sophists and dogmatic philosophers; Shake-

speare, of Puritans and zealots. . . . Just as Bacon banished religion from science, so did Shakespeare from art. . . . In both, this has been equally misconstrued, Le Maistre proving Bacon's lack of Christianity, as Birch has done that of Shakespeare."—*Gervinus.*

Music.—Both authors took great delight in music. Bacon devoted a long chapter of his Natural History to the consideration of sounds and the laws of melody. In the Plays, we find nothing sweeter than the strains that "creep in our ears" as we read them.

"Shakespeare seems to have been proficient in the art."—*Richard Grant White.*

"He seems also to have possessed, in an unusual degree, the power of judging and understanding the theory of music, that upon which the performance and execution of music depends. In the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (i. 1), where the heroine of the play is conversing with her maid, there is a passage which enters so fully into the manner of how a song should be sung, that it seems to have been inserted intentionally to exhibit the young poet's knowledge in this branch of art. And Burney draws attention to the fact that the critic, who, in the scene referred to, is teaching Lucetta Julia's song, makes use of no expressions but such as were employed by the English as *termini technici* in the profession of music."—*Ulrici.*

Oratory.—Bacon was a natural orator. Ben Jonson says of him:

> "There happened in my time one noble speaker, who was full of gravity in his speaking. . . . His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss. He commanded where he spoke, and had his judges angry and pleased at his will. No man had their affections more in his power. The fear of every man who heard him was, lest he should make an end."

Another contemporary pronounced him "the eloquentest man that was born in this island."

Turning to the Plays, we find there the most wonderful speech that ever passed, or was supposed to pass, human lips. In power of sarcasm, in pathos, in sublimity of utterance, and, above all, in rhetorical subtlety, Mark Antony's oration over the body of Cæsar has no equal in forensic literature.

> "Every line of this speech deserves an eulogium; . . . neither Demosthenes, nor Cicero, nor their glorious rival, the immortal Chatham, ever made a better."—*Sherlock.*

Printing.—Bacon's knowledge of the printer's art extended to the minutest details. His first book was published when he was twenty-four, but under so heavy a title, *The Greatest Birth of Time*, that it sank at once into the sea of oblivion. The mys-

teries of the craft, however, became finally very familiar to him. In the *Novum Organum* he announced his intention of writing a treatise on the subject, going so far as to include ink, pens, paper, parchment and seals in his prospectus for it.

The encyclopedic Shakespeare was also at home in the composing and press rooms. "He could not have been more so," says Mr. Appleton Morgan,* "if he had passed his days as a journeyman printer." We have the same high authority for the following statement:

> "A small type, called *nonpareil*, was introduced in English printing houses from Holland about the year 1560, and became admired and preferred beyond the others in common use. It seems to have become a favorite with Shakespeare, who calls many of his lady characters 'nonpareils.'"

Navigation.—Among the subjects investigated by Bacon, that which surprises us most to find is, perhaps, the art of navigation. He went into it so thoroughly, however, that one of his editors feels compelled, by way of illustration, to give the picture of a full-rigged ship as a frontispiece to the book.

We are still more astonished, or should be if we

* President of the New York Shakespeare Society.

were not prepared for it, to find that Shakespeare had the same unusual knowledge. He not only "knows the ropes," but he knows exactly what to do on shipboard in a storm. Even the dialect of the forecastle is familiar to him.

Bacon's studies, it is evident, furnished the warp and woof of the Plays. Unravel any of these great compositions, and you will find the same threads that are woven into his prose.

VI.

Here, then, is our Shakespeare. A man born into the highest culture of his time, the consummate flower of a long line of illustrious ancestry; of transcendent abilities, dominated by a genius for hard work; of aims in life, at once the boldest and the most inspiring which the heart of man ever conceived; in originality and power of thought, in learning, in eloquence, in wit, and in marvelous insight into character, the acknowledged peer of the greatest of the human race. "Surely," says Holmes, "we may exclaim with Coleridge, not without amazement still: 'Merciful, wonder-making Heaven! what a man was this Shakespeare! Myriad-minded, indeed, he was.'"

Ours is an age of disillusion. Heroes whose names have kindled the flame of devotion to duty in the hearts of millions are fading into myths. The majestic form of William Tell is found to be but a lengthened shadow thrown across the page of history. Even the faithful dog Gelert, over whose fate so many children have shed tears, has become as purely symbolic as the one that fol-

lowed Yudhishthira to the holy mount, and was thence for his virtues translated into heaven. Why should the world longer worship at the shrine of a man of whose life it knows, almost literally, in a mass of disgusting fiction, but one significant fact, viz.: that in his will, disposing of a large property, he left to the wife of his youth and the mother of his children nothing but his "second-best bed!"

The conclusion of the whole matter may be stated thus:

The Sonnets will lose none of their sweetness, and the Plays none of their magnificence, by a change in the ascription of authorship. The world, however, will gain much. It will learn that effects are always commensurate with their causes, and that industry is the path to greatness.

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