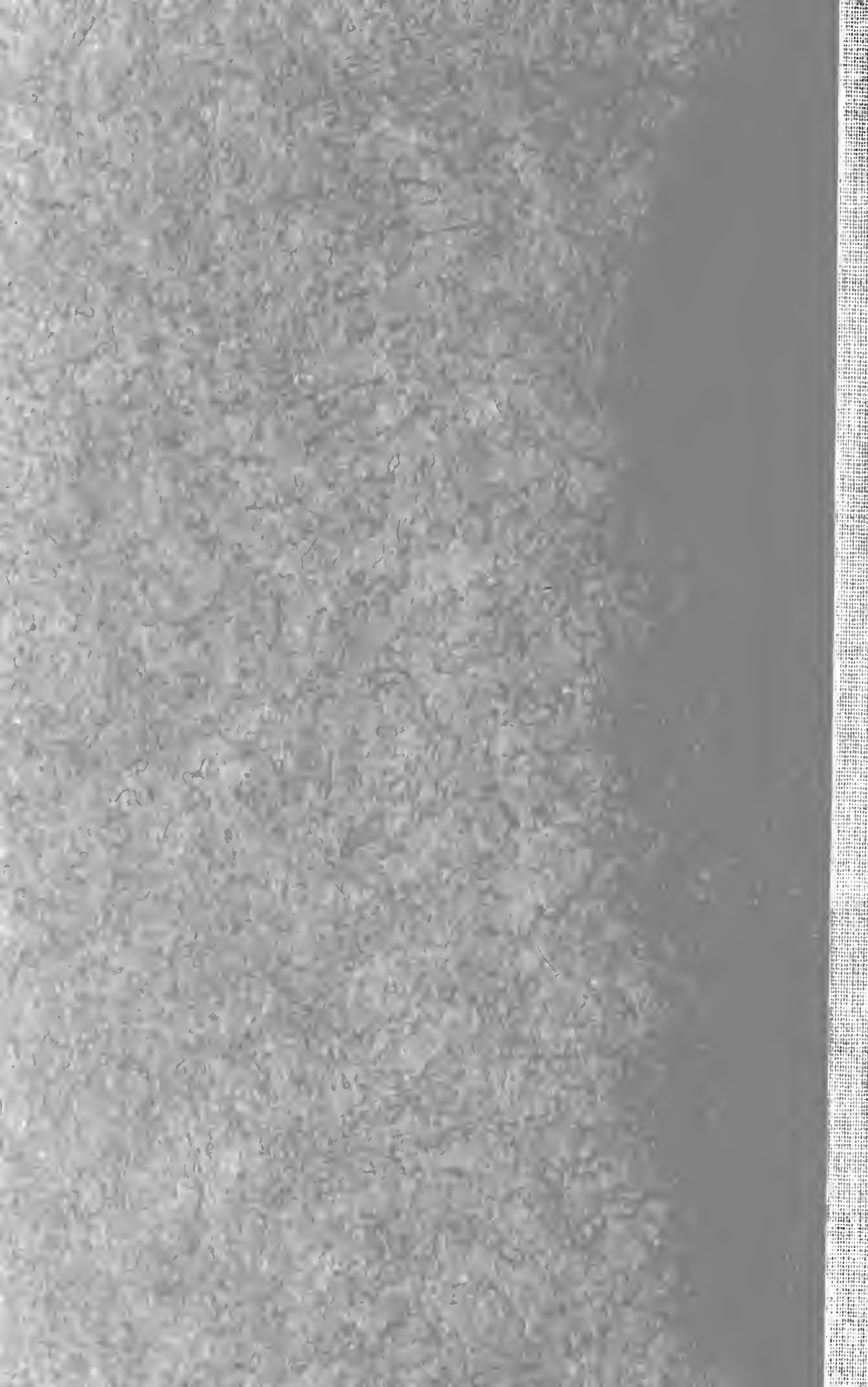
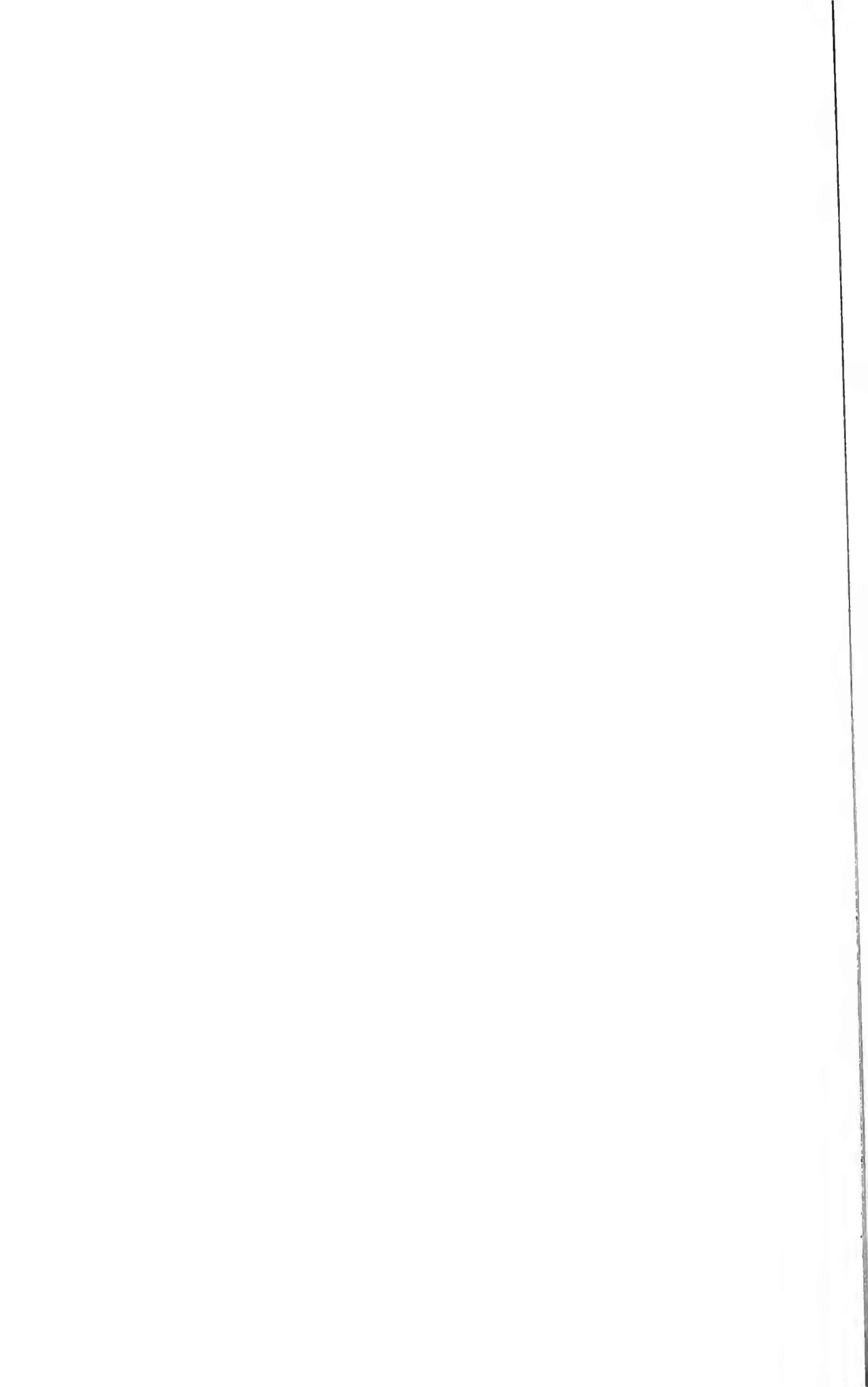
PR
2944
H21





A BACONIAN SUMMARY.

BY

EDWARD HARDING.

WITH PREFACE BY MRS. HENRY POTT.

LONDON:
ROBERT BANKS & SON, RACQUET COURT,
FLEET STREET, E.C.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/baconiansummary00hard

PREFACE.

I HAVE been asked to write a few words by way of Preface to this excellent sketch of the Bacon-Shakespeare question, and although such expressions of private opinion can have but little weight where the matter concerns Truth and Evidence rather than Theory or Conjecture, yet the feeling of fellowship which springs from collaboration in any worthy undertaking impels me to comply with this request. It is a true pleasure to find the cause for which we have so long striven, winning the day, and fresh champions entering the field from all quarters. Such works as the present do much to spread information and dispel error. They seem continually to repeat the well-known words of our Poet:

"*Before you judge, be pleased to understand;*"

they are "Seeds and weak beginnings which Time shall bring to ripeness." Let me heartily commend this *brochure* to all; but especially to new students and to busy men, who will find it a most helpful handbook. It is a safe starting-point for those who would penetrate to the centre of that marvellous Labyrinth in which all paths lead ultimately to the discovery of the great Inventor, Francis St. Alban, better known as Bacon.

CONSTANCE M. POTT

A BACONIAN SUMMARY.

"Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere."

1 *Hen. IV.* iv. 65.

In this little book the writer aims at the accomplishment of two objects: (1) to collect and present to his readers, in orderly arrangement, the evidences in favour of the Baconian belief which appear to his mind the most powerful; and (2) to secure a satisfactory character for these evidences, by quoting only from the best and safest authorities, and, as far as possible, from Shaksperians. He is fully conscious that to many his theme must be unpopular, disturbing not only rooted beliefs, but cherished affections. If, however, he can satisfactorily demonstrate that this is a problem rightfully demanding investigation—one which now occupies such a position upon the list of problems awaiting elucidation, that, in the nature of scientific progress, it must be dealt with and determined in the near future, and one which will become more and more fascinating the more fully the light of enquiry bears upon it—if he can do so much, and he hopes and believes that he can, he thinks that he may fairly claim the interest and attention of all classes of readers.

The arguments which shall be offered in favour of the Baconian theory may be divided into the following group of six: 1. The argument of the life of Shakspere; 2. The argument of the life of Bacon; 3. The argument of the literary remains of Shakspere and Bacon; 4. The argument of identity of reading, writing, and opinion; 5. The argument of the testimony of Ben Jonson; and, 6. The argument of the anagram; and, from the outset, special attention is invited to the fact that the strength of the

Baconian case especially lies in the cumulative force of the large number of the different evidences, under the above and other heads, which may be put forward in its favour.

I.

In presenting the argument of the life of Shakspere, the writer employs only the most reliable authority, by confining his illustration of it to the biographies of Halliwell Phillipps and Mr. Sidney Lee. The work entitled, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, by J. O. Halliwell Phillipps, F.R.S., F.S.A., Hon. M.R.S.L., Hon. M.R.I.A., etc., must be admitted to be the standard life of Shakspere. The second edition of 1882 is used in preference to the seventh and last edition of 1889, because of its greater simplicity and conciseness. In the preface to this book, Halliwell Phillipps evidences the industry and care which he devoted to the collection of the scant particulars of Shakspere's life now obtainable by the following striking sentence: "The collection of materials used, or to be used, in the progress of my embarrassing task, is the product of anxious researches now extending over a period of more than a quarter of a century." * And he clears his work from the dangers which have minimized the value of many lesser biographies, by explaining in the same preface that he had especially taken care "to avoid the temptation of endeavouring to decipher the inner life and character of Shakespeare through the media of his works;" † adding, "In the present life of Shakespeare it is proposed to construct a sketch of his personal history, strictly out of evidences and deductions from those evidences." ‡ Mr. Sidney Lee, in his recent *Life of William Shakespeare*, London, 1899, testifies to the merit of Halliwell Phillipps' work in the following words: "Of all Malone's successors (he speaks of Edward Malone, end of 18th century) Halliwell Phillipps has made the most important additions to our knowledge of Shakespeare's biography," § and a still stronger testimony is found in the fact that Mr. Lee so far builds his own biography upon the work of his predecessor as to refer to him no less than twenty-five times. Both writers share the traditional belief in the authorship of the plays. Halliwell Phillipps has not, throughout his book, mentioned the name of Francis Bacon, and Mr. Sidney Lee, in

* p. xiv. † p. vi. ‡ p. xiii. § p. 333.

a chapter of his appendix, entitled, "The Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy," makes a feeble attempt, practically confined to one sentence, to discredit the Baconian theory.

To commence with the parentage of Shakspere, we learn from Halliwell Phillipps that his father, "Mr. John Shakysper" was "a humble tradesman at Stratford-on-Avon" at the time of his marriage, in 1557, with Mary, the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a substantial yeoman farmer in the neighbourhood." Upon the twenty-second day of April, 1564, William Shakspere was born. "Both parents," Halliwell Phillips states, "were absolutely illiterate." * He goes on to say:—"The best authorities unite in telling us that the poet imbibed a certain amount of Latin at school, but that his acquaintance with that language was, throughout his life, of a very limited character. It is not probable that scholastic learning was ever congenial to his tastes, and it should be recollected that books, in most parts of the country, were then of very rare occurrence." † And he informs us later on that the poet "was removed from school long before the usual age, his father requiring his assistance in carrying on the Henley Street business," and that "some time afterwards, most likely in 1579, when he was in his sixteenth year, he was apprenticed by his father to a butcher." ‡

And now we arrive at that period in Shakspere's personal history which generally proves so supremely important in the life of man. We shall ask Mr. Sidney Lee to tell us the story of his marriage:—

"At the end of 1582," he says, "Shakespeare, when little more than eighteen and a half years old, took a step which was little calculated to lighten his father's anxieties. He married. His wife, according to the inscription on her tombstone, was his senior by eight years." § "The wedding," he continues, "probably took place without the consent of the bridegroom's parents—and it may be without their knowledge." "Within six months—in May, 1583—a daughter was born to the poet" ‖ and then he vouchsafes the opinion: "Anne Hathaway's greater burden of years, and the likelihood that the poet was forced into marrying her by her friends, were not circumstances of happy augury." ¶

As we shall not again have occasion to refer to the wife of Shakspere, it seems desirable that we should here

* p. 24. † p. 41. ‡ p. 43. § p. 18. ‖ p. 22. ¶ p. 25.

examine such particulars, as Mr. Lee gives us, of Shakspere's later relations with her. His references to her are few and meagre, but they are full of meaning. To quote his words: "The only contemporary mention made of the poet's wife between her marriage in 1582, and her husband's death in 1616, is as the borrower, at an unascertained date (evidently before 1595), of forty shillings from Thomas Whittington, who had formerly been her father's shepherd. The money was unpaid when Whittington died in 1601, and he directed his executor to recover the sum from the poet, and distribute it among the poor of Stratford." * And later, he says, "However plausible the theory that the poet's relations with his wife were from first to last wanting in sympathy, it is improbable that either the slender mention of her in the will, or the barring of her dower, was designed by Shakespeare to make public his indifference or dislike." † How many times have we read exquisite poetic pictures of Shakspere's love story, drawn from the warm or kindly imaginations of their writers, and wanting but the one requisite—truth. It is sadly to be feared that we have no refuge from the conclusion that not only at the beginning of Shakspere's relations with the maid whom he wooed and wed, but also throughout the course and at the end of their association in this life, his conduct towards her was certainly not creditable to him.

It appears advisable also at this point to call attention to a natural prejudice which, although perhaps even meritorious in its possessors, tends, it can hardly be doubted, to impede enquiry, and therefore stifle the development of a right understanding of the entire question. It was said at the beginning of this *brochure* that it would disturb cherished affections. Lovers of the Shakespeare plays, influenced by the imaginative power that builds up from a man's writings a conception of the man himself, insensibly become lovers of the actor Shakspere. He obtains a place in their hearts. They call him "sweet Will Shakspere," "glorious Will Shakspere," "divine Will Shakspere." Even where the works are indisputably those of the reputed writer the unchecked indulgence of such imaginative deduction may be misleading. In this case, where a devoted industry has obtained for us a considerable history of the man, it may become even blinding. It is not only in what has been already shown of the personal character

* p. 187. † p. 275.

of William Shakspere, but also in the traits that will become apparent in the course of this paper, and especially in the testimony of Ben Jonson, who had an intimate personal knowledge both of Shakspere and Bacon, that the writer would request his readers to look into their minds and to ask themselves, should they credit the authorship of the plays to William Shakspere the actor, whether they will not be always obliged to feel that the writer of these immortal works is one who is personally not worthy of their admiration or esteem? It is in relation to these indubitable evidences of the personal character of Shakspere that the eminent Shaksperian, Richard Grant White, writes:—"The biographer must record these facts, because the literary antiquaries have unearthed, produced, and pitilessly printed them as new particulars in the life of Shakespeare. We hunger and we receive these husks; we open our mouths for food, and we break our teeth against these stones." * And now we shall allow Halliwell Phillipps to take up once more the thread of the narrative.

"Early marriages," he tells us, "are not, at least with men, invariably preceded by a dispersion of the wild oats; and it appears that Shakespeare had neglected to complete that desirable operation. Three or four years after his union with Anne Hathaway, 'he had,' observes Rowe, 'by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and amongst them some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlicot, near Stratford.'" † For this offence, according to Halliwell Phillipps, Shakspere was prosecuted by Sir Thomas, and in revenge, wrote a ballad upon him. This ballad, he tells us, is lost, but in Halliwell Phillipps' words, "It is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London." The date of his departure from Stratford, Halliwell Phillipps assigns to the year 1585, "after the birth of his youngest children, the twin Hamnet and Judith." ‡ And then this most faithful of biographers sums up in one startling sentence the scholastic history of William Shakspere up to his twenty-first year:—

"Removed prematurely from school, residing with illiterate relatives in a bookless neighbourhood, thrown

* *Memoirs of Shakespeare*, p. 88. † p. 46. ‡ p. 46.

into the midst of occupations adverse to scholastic progress, it is difficult to believe that, when the poet first left Stratford, he was not all but destitute of polished accomplishments." *

So closed the early Stratford life of Shakspere, and, in view of the above conclusive opinion of Halliwell Phillipps, we must look for the period of his studies to some date antecedent to his arrival in London in 1585—in 1586, according to Mr. Lee. Let us learn all that Halliwell Phillipps can tell us concerning the years that followed. "At that time," he says, "any reputable kind of employment was obtained with considerable difficulty." † He goes on to state that, according to tradition, Shakspere was "also nearly, if not quite, moneyless." And he adds: "Johnson no doubt accurately reported the tradition of his day, when, in 1765, he stated that Shakespeare 'came to London, a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments.'" ‡ Passing on to the later period when Shakspere would have been likely to obtain a footing upon the metropolitan boards, he says:—"Shakespeare's early theatrical life must have been an era of pecuniary struggles. There were his wife and children to support, at all events partially, even if some kind of assistance were tendered by the Hathaways, while his father had been in difficulties for several years past," § and he describes the stage of the period in these words:—"The actors of those days were as a rule individual wanderers, spending a large portion of their time at a distance from their families; and there is every reason for believing that this was the case with Shakespeare." ‖

The above is about the total stock of the information that Halliwell Phillipps can offer us, except that he ventures the opinion that on the occasion of some legal arrangements made with a certain family named Lambert, for the purpose of releasing Shakspere's father from an imprisonment for debt there is "a substantial reason for believing that the poet would be found again at Stratford-on-Avon in 1587," two years, or, according to Mr. Lee, one year, after Shakspere's arrival in London. Of the period immediately following, Halliwell Phillipps says:—"There is not a single particle of evidence respecting his career during the next five years, that is to say, from the time of the Lambert negociation in 1587 until he is discovered as a rising actor and dramatist in 1592." ¶ Now in

* p. 63. † p. 47. ‡ p. 47. § p. 59. ‖ p. 62. ¶ p. 62.

this year 1592, according to Halliwell Phillipps, were produced no less than three of the Shaksperean plays, and the long classical poem of *Venus and Adonis*, styled by more than one critic, "one of the finest poems in the language." The new drama, entitled, *Henry*, or *Harry the Sixth*, he tells us, "was brought out by Lord Strange's servants, then acting at Newington or Southwark, on the third of March, 1592." * "The second part of *Henry the Sixth*," he says, "must have appeared soon afterwards." And later on he evidences by a quotation from "Robert Greene, a distinguished prose writer and dramatist, who died on the third of September, 1592," that the third part of *Henry the Sixth* must have been written previous to that date. These three plays have their scenes laid in many parts of England and France—their *dramatis personæ* number about sixty prominent historical characters, including the King and Queen of England, King of France, Dukes and Duchesses, Earls, Baronets, Mayors, Governors, Seamen, Representatives of the Church, the Law, and the Army, besides a host of minor persons of all classes and conditions of life—all of whom, it is hardly necessary to say, speak to the manner born.

Now, Mr. Sidney Lee, while agreeing with Halliwell Phillipps regarding the date of the production of the plays of *King Henry the Sixth*, ascribes to the previous year (1591) the composition of the three plays, *Love's Labour's Lost*, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the *Comedy of Errors*. We shall not needlessly occupy time by reviewing the character or contents of these plays. Students of Shakespeare can quickly recall them to their minds, with their marvellous variety, excellence, and fidelity to nature and life. Nor shall we further refer to the poem of *Venus and Adonis*, which Halliwell Phillipps characterises as "a highly finished epic," and which Mr. Lee tells us was founded upon Ovid's "Amores," first printed in English "probably about 1597." † To accept the belief that this literary achievement—be the plays three or six—was accomplished by the William Shakspere whose career we have been reviewing, is an effort of faith which the writer, for one, confesses himself unable to make; and it should be borne in mind that these plays, if written by Shakspere, must not only have been created within the short period defined—according to Halliwell Phillipps seven years, and according to Mr. Sidney Lee five—but

* p 64. † p. 75.

that the acquirement exhibited in their composition, the wide erudition, embracing so many subjects, the knowledge of languages, the extensive and accurate historical information, the close acquaintance with the feelings and habits of so many varying personages of all ranks, professions, and conditions of life, must have been all amassed by him previous to their composition. And it should be further held in mind that this Titanic performance must have been accomplished concurrently with the menial employments, monetary struggles, family cares, and subsequent theatrical labours, which Halliwell Phillipps has described.

It is interesting, also, to note that some of the most eminent Shakespereans have expressed the opinion that these first plays of Shakespeare offer in themselves evidence that their writer was a university student. Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke say in their preface to the *Leicester Square Edition of Shakespeare's Works:* "The earlier written plays mark the production of a young collegian," * and add "Shakespeare's familiar acquaintance with college terms and usages makes for the conclusion that he enjoyed the privileges of a university education;" while of the poems they declare: "the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Lucrece* bear palpable tokens of college elegance and predilection, both in story and in treatment. The air of niceness and stiffness, peculiar to the schools, invests these efforts of the youthful genius with almost unmistakable signs of having been written by a schoolman." † Richard Grant White describes him as, "A mind fresh from academic studies" ‡ and Coleridge says, in his *Lectures on Shakespeare:* "His habits had been scholastic and those of a student. A young author's first work almost always bespeaks his recent pursuits" § Mark the words "his habits had been scholastic." And yet it is but now that we have noted the opinion of Halliwell Phillipps regarding William Shakspere: "It is not probable that scholastic learning was ever congenial to his tastes." And Matthew Arnold says, in his celebrated *Sonnet to Shakespeare:* "And thou, who did'st the stars and sunbeams know, self-school'd." Some Shakespereans have a playful habit of dubbing all Baconians "fools," or "lunatics." It would be interesting to hear one of this particular genus endeavouring to reconcile the above inconsistencies.

* p. v. † p. iv. ‡ *Essay on Shakespear's Genius*, p. 224. § p. 287.

It is unnecessary for the purposes of the present writing to give any detailed account of the other Shakesperean plays, as they were either produced or published during the years which followed 1592. Up to about 1610 every year witnessed the production of one or more of the plays, by whomever written. It is essential to observe, however, that during the entire period which elapsed between the date of his first appearance as an actor and the time of his final departure from London in 1611, William Shakspere never seems to have interrupted the exercise of his theatrical profession. Mr. Lee tells us that "an efficient actor received in 1635 as large a regular salary as £180 a year," and that Shakspere's emoluments as an actor before 1599 are not likely to have fallen below £100, equal to £800 or £1,000 of to-day.* The gains of a writer were inconsiderable in comparison. Mr. Lee also states: "The highest price known to have been paid before 1599 to an author for a play by the manager of an acting company was £11." † Both he and Halliwell Phillipps enumerate the gradual purchase of property which we know that Shakspere made both in London and at Stratford beginning about the year 1597 and Halliwell Phillipps expresses surprise that Shakspere should "have remained an actor years and years after any real necessity for such a course had expired. By the spring of 1602," he continues, "at the latest, if not previously he had acquired a secure and definite competence, independently of his emoluments as a dramatist, and yet, eight years afterwards, in 1610, he is discovered playing in company with Burbage and Heminges at the Blackfriars Theatre." ‡

To persevere, therefore, in holding that the actor was the author of the Shakespeare plays is to be constrained to the belief that he deliberately abated his literary activity in order to find time for his apparently continuous appearances upon the stage, which, with his provincial journeyings, the study of the various parts he must have represented, his family duties—if performed at all—and the management of his several properties, would have, one might fairly imagine, fully occupied the time of any man, and left but a scant fragment for literary avocation of any kind. And even when Shakspere retired from the stage, in or about 1611, he does not seem to have employed the leisure thus obtained in the writing of fresh plays or in the revising or editing of the plays then already written. It is not easy

* p. 199. † p. 196 ‡ p. 111.

to conceive the author of the Shakespearean dramas, the master mind of the world of letters, then only forty-seven years of age, and one would imagine at the zenith of his power, virtually abandoning the great purpose, pre-eminently announced and displayed in his works, and spending the last years of his life in a listless and profitless obscurity. Yet Halliwell Phillipps and Mr. Lee agree in expressing the opinion that Shakspere abandoned literary occupation when he left London for Stratford-on-Avon, in 1611.* About the only other records of Shakspere's life which have been preserved and discovered are those of his legal proceedings. These were of two classes—purchases and prosecutions. Mr. Lee tells us of law-suits, some of them protracted, against John Clayton, Philip Rogers, John Addenbroke and Thomas Horneby, and adds: "Shakespeare inherited his father's love of litigation, and stood rigorously by his rights in all his business relations." † There is a remarkable contradiction between this picture of Shakspere and a previous one, also drawn by Mr. Lee. Speaking then of the earlier years of Shakspere's dramatic productions, he says: "Shakespeare made no effort to publish any of his works, and he uncomplainingly submitted to the wholesale piracies of his plays." ‡ This contradiction certainly affords some ground for the Baconian contention that the works in question were not his own. Upon the subject of the publication of the Shakesperean plays, it is also noteworthy that none of the first plays published bore their author's name. This fact, too, is not easily explainable if we credit their composition to William Shakspere. Why should he not increase his popularity as an actor by announcing their authorship? No less than seven of the plays had been published anonymously, from 1594 to 1597, when in 1598, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Richard the Second*, and *Richard the Third*, exhibited an author's name upon the title page for the first time, and that name was not the name of the actor, but rather a parody upon it. Mr Lee has given us photographs of the five autographs of Shakspere extant, and these, as well as one can decipher them — for the handwriting is not of the best — are spelled in the real name of the actor, S-h-a-k-s-p-e-r-e. Halliwell Phillips, in his "Life-time Editions," gives us copies of the title pages of the above three plays, and the name in all three is spelled S-h-a-k-e—s-p-e-a-r-e. In the name similarly spelled and divided the Sonnets were pub-

* H. P., p. 154, and Mr. S. L., p. 257. † p. 206. ‡ p. 90.

lished in 1609, and the appearance of parody or travesty is further borne out by the jest upon the woodcut of the title page to the famous folio of 1623, which shows Folly peeping from behind the mask of Momus, shaking his spear at Ignorance. It is, also, a curious and significant fact that even to this day the library of the British Museum marks the distinction between the actor and the writer. In its catalogue the name is spelled Shakspere, but on the title pages of the plays the name of their author is necessarily spelled as it was on the original productions, Shakespeare. We may here note, also, before closing the history of Shakspere's life, the impressions of his ability which, according to his biographers, appear to have been held by himself, and by his fellow-actors, the Burbages. Mr. Lee says: "Shakespeare seemed unconscious of his marvellous superiority to his professional comrades;" * and Halliwell Phillipps relates: "The Burbages had no conception of his intellectual supremacy. In their estimation he was merely, to use their own words, a 'deserving man.'" †

So we come to the period of Shakspere's death, which occurred on April 23rd, 1616. In the February of that year his youngest daughter, Judith, married at Stratford Parish Church; and, as Mr. Lee tells us, "without public asking of the banns and before a license was procured." The strangest fact, however, concerning the marriage was that the bride signed her name with a mark. In his work, *Bacon versus Shakspere*, published in Boston in 1897, Mr. Edwin Reed gives us a facsimile of Judith Shakspere's marriage mark-signature. When we view this condition of things side by side with the words of Shakespeare in the second part of *Henry the Sixth*: "And seeing ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wings wherewith we fly to heaven," it is difficult to understand how the writer should have doomed his own daughter to the adverse fate he so powerfully describes. The circumstances of the death of Shakspere were also remarkable. They shall be given in Halliwell Phillipps' words:—"In the early part of 1616," he says, "Shakespeare and his two friends, Drayton and Ben Jonson, regaled themselves at an entertainment in one of the taverns at Stratford-on-Avon. It is recorded that the party was a jovial one, and, according to a somewhat late but apparently reliable tradition, when the great dramatist was returning to New Place in the evening, he had taken more wine than was conducive to pedestrian

* p. 278. † p. ix, Preface.

accuracy. Shortly, or immediately afterwards, he was seized by the lamentable fever which terminated fatally." *

Shakspere was buried in Stratford, and over his tomb were inscribed the following lines, which Halliwell Phillipps styles a "poor monumental quatrain," but which he tells us a "well-supported tradition" ascribes to Shakspere's pen :—

> "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."

Such is the history of Shakspere's life, which the writer has been able to extract from the works of those learned and devoted biographers. Is it wonderful that Ralph Waldo Emerson, himself a great poet, should have written of it?—"I cannot marry the facts of this man's life to his verse; other admirable men have led lives in some sort of keeping with their thought, but this man in wide contrast."

II.

In presenting the argument of the life of Bacon, the plan of quoting only from the most reliable authorities shall be continued. The standard life of Bacon is the biography by James Spedding; perhaps the most popular is that contributed to the series entitled, *English Men of Letters*, by Dr. Church, Dean of St. Paul's, and Honorary Fellow of Oriel College. These two shall be used. Both biographers, similarly with Halliwell Phillipps and Mr. Sidney Lee, attribute the authorship of the plays to William Shakspere. Unfortunately a false impression of the character of the great Lord Chancellor had been created by some less able and industrious writers, and of these Dr. Church says: "Bacon has been judged with merciless severity, but he has also been defended by an advocate whose name alone is almost a guarantee of the justness of the cause which he takes up, and the innocency of the client for whom he argues. Mr. Spedding devoted nearly a lifetime and all the resources of a fine intellect and an earnest conviction to make us revere as well as admire Bacon. But it is in vain." † And he gives his own view of Bacon in the following words:—"With all his greatness, his splendid genius, his magnificent ideas, his

* p. 170. † p. 2.

enthusiasm for truth, his passion to be the benefactor of his kind, with all the charm that made him loved by good and worthy friends, amiable, courteous, patient, delightful as a companion, ready to take any trouble—there was in Bacon's self 'a deep and fatal flaw.' He was a pleaser of men." * Which of their estimates of Bacon is the more accurate we need not now argue. Later on we shall consider the opinions of those who knew Bacon most intimately, and thus be enabled to judge for ourselves. For the present we may not only rest satisfied with the opinion of Dr. Church, but even mainly select his words in which to develop this argument.

"Francis Bacon," he says, "was born on the 22nd of January, 1561," just three years and three months before Shakspere. His father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, was "Queen Elizabeth's first Lord Keeper," and his mother, the daughter of Sir Anthony Cook, was, he tells us, upon contemporary authority, "exquisitely skilled in the Greek and Latin tongues." † Macaulay writes of her: "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." He goes on to say that at the age of twelve Bacon was sent to Cambridge, and, when sixteen years old, went in the train of Sir Amyas Poulet, Queen's Ambassador, to France. At that time it is said that he had learned all that Cambridge had to teach, and he had even then shaped out much of the "new principles" which were later to entitle him to be called "the Father of Modern Philosophy." In France Bacon perfected his knowledge of French, Italian and Spanish. In this context it is interesting to bear in mind that the writer of the Shakespeare plays must necessarily have possessed a knowledge not only of the Latin but of the French, Italian, Spanish and Greek languages. Sidney Lee says:—"Several of the books in French and Italian whence Shakespeare derived the plots of his dramas were not accessible to him in English translations" ‡ Halliwell Phillipps tells us that some of the materials for the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (produced, according to Sidney Lee, in 1591) were drawn from the Spanish romance of Montemayor, not printed until 1598. He adds: "The resemblances are too minute to be accidental." And Richard Grant White

* p. 3. † p. 4. ‡ p. 14.

declares : "A passage in *Troilus and Cressida* is inexplicable except on the supposition that Shakespeare was acquainted with what Plato wrote."

In 1579, the death of his father recalled Bacon to England, and we are informed by Dr. Church that he was left "only a younger son's narrow portion," "and that he entered upon life with" "his very livelihood to gain"* "In 1579 or '80," Dean Church further informs us, "he took up his abode at Gray's Inn, and went through the various steps of the legal profession." † Here again it is important to enquire what degree of legal acquirement must have been the possession of the writer of the plays? We have an excellent authority to answer the question, Lord Campbell, Lord Chancellor of England. The Rev. William A. Sutton, S.J., an eminent Baconian writer, quotes for us in a recent number of the *New Ireland Review* Lord Campbell's words as follows :—"Having concluded my examination of Shakespeare's judicial phrases and forensic allusions, on the retrospect I am amazed, not only by the number, but by the accuracy and propriety with which they are uniformly introduced. There is nothing so dangerous as for one not of the craft to tamper with our freemasonry. . . . Whilst novelists and dramatists are continually making mistakes as to the law of marriage, of wills, and of inheritance, to Shakespeare's law, lavishly as he propounded it, there can be neither demurer, nor bill of exceptions, nor writ of error." ‡ With this trenchant verdict staring us in the face it is difficult to see how Shaksperians can claim that William Shakspere the actor, whose life we have but just reviewed, could have written the plays.

Dr. Church goes on to say :—"These early years, we know, were busy ones. In them Bacon laid the foundation of his observations and judgments on men and affairs." "In 1584 he entered Parliament." § This was the commencement of a period of long suffering, and of hopes deferred. For more than twenty years afterwards Bacon was a constant suppliant to Queen Elizabeth, King James, and their advisers, for the position of one of the law officers to the crown, which, as Dr. Church tells us, would "provide the means of living" and "as the ultimate and real end of his life" give him freedom for "the pursuit in a way unattempted before, of all possible human knowledge, and of the methods to improve it and make

*p. 7. † p. 8. ‡ *New Ireland Review*, April, 1901. § p. 8.

it sure and fruitful."* In 1592, the year that the three plays of *Henry the Sixth* were produced his friend, Lord Essex, made a strenuous effort to obtain for him the post of Attorney General, then vacant—it was just twenty years later when he entered into possession of that place. During the entire intervening time he was hard at work. That he was engaged upon his philosophical works we know, but what else he wrote no one can tell. Dr. Church says: "These years of place withheld were busy and useful ones." And again; "What he was most intent upon, and what occupied his deepest and most serious thought, was unknown to the world around him."† Before entering upon the question of his probable authorship of the plays, we must, as a preliminary, obtain reasonable proof that he possessed the power to write them. His legal and linguistic ability is, as we have already seen, undoubted. Let us see what Dr. Church says of his other qualifications:—

"Besides his affluence in topics," he assures us, "Bacon had the liveliest fancy and most active imagination. But that he wanted the sense of poetic fitness and melody, he might almost be supposed, with his reach and play of thought, to have been capable, as is maintained in some eccentric modern theories, of writing Shakespeare's plays. No man had a more imaginative power of illustration, drawn from the most remote and most unlikely analogies; analogies often of the quaintest and most unexpected kind, but often also not only felicitous in application but profound and true."‡ Is it not really difficult, when listening to these last words, to avoid applying them to the author of the Shakespeare plays? Nor is this the only occasion upon which Dr. Church seems constrained to bring Bacon and Shakespeare close together. After describing the close of Bacon's life, he says: "So he died: the brightest, richest, largest mind but one, in the age which had seen Shakespeare and his fellows; so bright and rich and large, that there be those who identify him with the writer of *Hamlet* and *Othello*."§ This is all strange testimony. Can we make it more perfect? We have seen that the only necessary qualification which Dr. Church denies Bacon is "the sense of poetic fitness and melody." Let us see what other good judges have to say upon that point. If we find that those best qualified to offer opinion —distinguished poets and eminent literary critics—unani-

* p. 18. † p. 21. ‡ p. 12. § p. 171.

mously testify to Bacon's possession of the faculty denied to him by Dr. Church, our case will be complete. We shall begin with the opinion of his other biographer, James Spedding. Writing of Bacon's metrical version of some of the Psalms, which had been mainly written upon a sick bed, and which some Shaksperians hold up as evidences of Bacon's want of the poetic faculty, he says ; "I infer from this sample that Bacon had all the natural faculties which a poet wants : a fine ear for metre, a fine feeling for imaginative effect in words, and a vein of poetic passion. . . . The thoughts could not well be fitted with imagery words, and rhythm, more apt and imaginative ; and there is a tenderness of expression which comes manifestly out of a heart in sensitive sympathy with nature." Macaulay, whose picture of Bacon's character is, in some other respects, notoriously unfair, and which he is said to have lived to regret, says of him : "The poetical faculty was powerful in Bacon's mind." Campbell says : "Few poets deal in finer imagery than is to be found in Bacon." Shelley writes : "Lord Bacon was a poet. His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm which satisfies the senses." Sir E. L. Bulwer, in an issue of the *Edinburgh Review* of 1836, writing of the *Advancement of Learning*, says: "Poetry pervaded the thoughts, it inspired the similies, it hymned in the majestic sentences of the wisest of mankind." And the French literary critic, M. Taine, says : "Among this band of scholars, philosophers and dreamers, is Francis Bacon, a great and luminous intellect, one of the finest of this poetic progeny. . . . He has thought in the manner of artists and poets, and he speaks after the manner of prophets and seers."

Do we need to seek any other examples ? It is probable that the reason why so many think Bacon incapable of writing poetry is because they judge overmuch from the necessarily weighty character of so much of his prose, forgetting that, as he, himself, has written : "The matter of any piece of writing should determine the style." Although we have dwelt overlong upon this point, it may be interesting to quote a verse of Bacon's poetry, as an actual illustration of his power in this department of writing :—

> "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 indust."

Nor can it be argued of Bacon that ignorance of stage accessories denies him claim to the authorship of the plays. On February the 8th, 1587, before any of the Shakespeare dramas were produced, he performed before Queen Elizabeth in a play called *The Misfortunes of Arthur.* Mr. Spedding writes a long account of a masque which he tells us, was written by Bacon and played in Gray's Inn on January 3, 1595. And Chamberlain, writing in 1613, states that Bacon was the "chief contriver" of dramatic revels held at various times "at the Inns and before the Court."

But, if Bacon wrote the Shakespeare plays, why should he not have acknowledged their authorship, and how should the literary world have rested under a mistaken belief for three centuries? That is the crucial question, and it is essentially important to examine the Baconian reply to it. Dr. Church has already told us that for above twenty years Bacon was waiting for preferment. Halliwell Phillipps says: "The vocation of a dramatic writer was considered scarcely respectable." * Bacon's greatest hopes, as is evidenced by his letters, rested upon the good offices of Queen Elizabeth's Prime Minister, Lord Burghley, whose wife was sister to his mother, Lady Anne Bacon—and Lady Anne was a strict Puritan, and would not countenance even the most innocent association with playhouses or plays. A letter of hers, written, Spedding tells us, on December 5, 1594, two years after Bacon's brother, Anthony, had returned from Italy, and when the two brothers were residing together at Gray's Inn, says: "I trust you will not mum, nor mask, nor sinfully revel at Gray's Inn, Who were sometime counted first, God grant that they wane not daily, and deserved to be named last." † These conditions go some distance to explain the mystery. Spedding says of this very period, the beginning of the year 1595: "It is easier to understand why Bacon was resolved not to devote his life to the ordinary practice of a lawyer, than what plan he had to clear himself of the difficulties which were now accumulating upon him, and to obtain means of living and working. What course he betook himself to at the crisis at which we have now arrived, I cannot possibly say. I presume, however, that he betook himself to his studies. One

* p. vi. Preface. † Vol. I., p. 138.

of the loose sheets which I have printed under the title of *Formularies and Elegancies* is dated January 27, 1595." * Now it is this book, *The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies*, which—as we shall see later on—has such a remarkable and intimate connection with the Shakespeare plays. We have obtained proof that Bacon possessed both the learning and the genius which would enable him to write the plays. He must have known of the ready-money value of such wares. Is it not reasonable to suppose that he utilized the knowledge? And it can be shown that he appreciated the advantages of dramatic composition for the furtherance of the great object of his life, for we find in his *De Augmentis* the following words: "Dramatic poesy, which has the theatre for its world, would be of excellent use if well directed. For the stage is capable of no small influence both of discipline and corruption. Now, of corruptions of this kind we have enough; but the discipline has, in our times, been sadly neglected." . . . "The stage has been regarded by learned men and great philosophers as a kind of musician's bow, by which men's minds may be played upon. And certainly it is most true, and one of the greatest secrets of nature, that the minds of men are more open to impressions and affections when they are gathered together, than when they are alone."

And we can go a step further by extracting from another work of Bacon's one or two sentences which make it clear enough that Bacon did actually propose to employ some such vehicle. In the October number of the *New Ireland Review*, there is another paper written by Father Sutton, which contains a remarkable paragraph, translated by himself from one of Bacon's "Opuscula Philosophica" in which Bacon says: "We have to adopt a new method that we may insinuate ourselves into minds the most darkened." And, again, "Would our method have the vigorous and innate force of not only attracting confidence, but also of overcoming the vicissitudes of time, so that science, thus communicated and handed on, should every day spread and strengthen, like a vigorous and thriving plant?" And Father Sutton adds to the paragraph, of which the above is but a fragment: "No wonder that the greatest minds have been baffled in trying to solve the question which Spedding says, neither he nor his fellow workman, Mr. Ellis, could make anything of. The answer to the riddle seems to lie in a direction quite different from any

* I., p. 174.

path these distinguished students of Bacon's works ever tried."

We can go even still further by evidencing from Bacon's own words that he actually did compose concealed poems or plays. In a letter which he wrote to Sir John Davis, himself a poet, then gone to meet the King at his first entrance from Scotland on March 28th, 1603, begging Sir John to give him his good word at Court, he concludes by saying: "So, desiring you to be good to *concealed poets*, I continue, etc." The two pregnant words are in italics. Spedding, in commenting upon this letter, says: "the allusion to 'concealed poets' I cannot explain." And in Bacon's most beautiful and pathetic prayer written after his fall in 1621, and given in full by Dr. Church, he uses the following memorable words: "I have, though in a despised weed, procured the good of all men." It would be simply absurd to think that in such a term as a "despised weed," Bacon could have referred to his prose, nobly composed, and mainly published in Latin.

It is curious, too, that this word "weed" is found both in Bacon's prose and in one of the plays, expressing exactly such meaning as is given to it here—that is indicating disguise. Mr. Reed points out that in Bacon's *History of Henry the Seventh*, he writes: "This fellow clad himself like a hermit, and in that weed wandered about the country until he was discovered and taken." And, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* Julia says:

> "Gentle Lucetta, fit we with such weeds,
> As may beseem some well-reputed page."

The story of Lord Bacon's advance to the exalted position of Lord Chancellor of England, and of his great fall therefrom, is, of course, an important factor in our enquiry. Even though we should have succeeded in assuring ourselves that in genius and in learning Bacon indisputably possessed the powers exhibited by the writer of the Shakespeare plays, our case would still be incomplete until we had also seen that his character was not incompatible with that which we would naturally ascribe to that writer. Happily both Dr. Church and James Spedding are at one upon this point and decide it so emphatically, and so conclusively as to set it at rest for ever. How the Lord Chancellor was accused of receiving presents from suitors, as was the practice of most, if not all, of the English judges of the time—how the agitation, originally directed against others, suddenly turned against him, this

unexpected diversion being potently influenced by his great life-long rival, Sir Edward Coke—how at first he did not realize the gravity of the situation, and how when its full import fell upon him he was prostrated and became unable to rise from his bed—how he freely and fully admitted having accepted presents from suitors whose cases had been decided, and even in some instances from those whose cases had unfortunately afterwards recurred, but how he throughout protested that he had never received presents during the hearing of a case, or been in any way influenced to decide unjustly—this asseveration being borne out by the fact that the latest instance of bribery alleged against him was then above two years old —how he was fined £40,000, condemned to imprisonment in the Tower during the King's pleasure, and to exile from Court—how the fine was never imposed, the imprisonment limited to three or four days, and permission to return to London soon afterwards obtained—all these things Dr. Church and Spedding tell us, the latter in full detail. We shall endeavour to verify this statement of their verdict in the matter without quoting from them at too great length.

To begin from the time when Bacon, four years before his fall, first took his seat in the Court of Chancery, we find Dr. Church saying:—"Bacon entered on his office with the full purpose of doing its work better than it had ever been done. The performance was splendid, and there is no reason to think that the work so rapidly done was not well done. We are assured that Bacon's decisions were unquestioned and were not complained of." * And later, speaking of the possible pressure of the Marquis of Buckingham's friendship and of the acceptance of presents, he adds:—"There is no proof that either influence ever led Bacon to do wrong." † And, finally, speaking of Bacon's religious feeling, he says:—"It is impossible to doubt that it was honest, that it elevated his thoughts, that it was a refuge and stay in the times of trouble." ‡ Spedding is, if possible, even more clear and emphatic. He says:—"The whole course of his behaviour from the first rumour to the final sentence, convinces me that not the discovery of the thing only, but the thing itself came upon him as a surprise, and that if anybody had told him the day before that he stood in danger of a charge of taking bribes, he would have received the suggestion with unaffected incredulity. How far I am

* p. 108. † p. 110. ‡ p. 176.

justified in thinking so the reader shall judge for himself; for the impression is derived solely from the tenor of the correspondence which will be laid before him in due order."*

This correspondence, with the King, Prince Charles, the Marquis of Buckingham, and the House of Lords, is, of course, too lengthy to give in detail. We shall content ourselves with the reading of two short extracts. In a letter to the King, of March 25th, 1621, just before his trial, Bacon writes:—"And for the briberies and gifts wherewith I am charged, when the book of hearts shall be opened, I hope I shall not be found to have the troubled fountain of a corrupt heart in a depraved habit of taking rewards to pervert justice; howsoever I may be frail and partake of the abuse of the times,"† and, a month later, April 21st, writing to the Lords, he says:—"In the midst of a state of as great affliction as I think a mortal man can endure (honour being above life) I shall begin with the professing of gladness in some things.

"The first is that hereafter the greatness of a judge or magistrate shall be no sanctuary or protection of guiltiness; which, in a few words, is the beginning of a golden world.

"The next, that after this example, it is like that judges will fly from anything that is in the likeness of corruption (though it were at a great distance) as from a serpent: which tendeth to the purging of the Courts of justice, and the reducing them to their true honour and splendour.

"And in these two points God is my witness that, though it be my fortune to be the anvil whereupon these good affects are beaten and wrought, I take no small comfort."‡

Spedding goes on to corroborate Dr. Church's opinion of the rectitude of all the Lord Chancellor's judgments in the following words:—"The justice of his decrees in Chancery had in no instance been successfully impugned."§ Of the beautiful prayer, written by Lord Bacon during the period of suspense before his trial, and characterised by Addison in the words "It seems rather the devotion of an angel than of a man," Spedding says:—"This prayer I take to be better evidence of the state of his mind at this crisis than 'the speculations of courtiers, or the anecdotes of the next generation.'"‖

Another accusation against Bacon's character which it is necessary that we should examine is the charge which has been preferred against him of ingratitude to the Earl of

* II., p. 446. † II., p. 468. ‡ II., p. 478. § II., p. 602. ‖ II. p. 469.

Essex. Of the history of this unhappy nobleman we need perhaps say no more here than that he fell away from a fine career, wilfully descended several steps of evil-doing, and finally expiated his crime of high treason upon the scaffold. But so long as hope remained in the efficacy of exhortation or advice Bacon ceased not to remonstrate, to caution, and to counsel. Spedding gives us letter after letter, extending from 1594 to 1599, which evidence beyond question the fact that Bacon spared no pains and no art to save Essex from his folly; and he states: "Essex was going headlong in a course the direct opposite of that which Bacon had always urged upon him." * At the time of the trial Bacon was, of course, obliged to fulfil the duties which his position as law officer of the Crown entailed upon him. But after detailing Bacon's action and words throughout this painful time, Mr. Spedding says: "In a note to Dr. Rawley's *Life of Bacon* I said that I had no fault to find with him for any part of his conduct towards Essex, and that I thought many people would agree with me when they saw the case fairly stated. Closer examination has not at all altered my opinion on either point." † A quotation from *Erdman's History of Philosophy* may still more conclusively establish this verdict. He says: "The rigour with which Bacon has been censured for acting on the fall of his patron Essex as advocate of the complainant, and afterwards laying before the public an account of the process justifying the Queen, appears unjust to anyone who considers how Bacon exerted himself to bring the Earl to reason and the Queen to mercy, and, at the same time, in virtue of his office, was bound to perform whatever duty the Queen laid upon him."

Spedding is also deeply impressed by the unfaltering love shown Bacon by his friends throughout his whole life, but especially in his time of trial, and after quoting from a letter of Sir Toby Matthew:—"It is not his greatness that I admire but his virtue; it is not the favours I have received from him that have thus enthralled and enchained my heart, but his whole life and character," he adds:—"Of the contemporaries whose opinion of him is known to us, those who saw him nearest in his private life give him the best character. I have quoted Toby Matthew, written in 1618, when he had known him intimately for twenty years. Dr. Rawley's is familiar to

* I., p. 228. † I. p. 360.

everybody. That of Sir Thomas Meauty reveals itself still more expressively in the devotion of his life. Ben Jonson . . . after recording his impression of the 'greatness which he could not want,' adds the significant and affecting remark, that in the days of his adversity he 'could never condole in a word or syllable to him—as knowing that no accident could do harm to virtue, but rather serve to make it manifest.'" And to these testimonies we may now add that of Peter Boener, his domestic apothecary and secretary, who concludes his notice with a wish that a statue were erected to his memory—"Therefore it is a thing to be wished that a statue in honour of him may be erected in his country, as a memorable example to all of virtue, kindness, peacefulness and patience."* Finally, analysing Bacon's thoughts, as he better than any man living could, he says:—"And yet his pecuniary embarrassment, with all that it entailed, was not the trouble which weighed heaviest upon his mind. What touched him more deeply was the wounded name that would live behind him." † Perhaps we have, in this feeling of Bacon, one reason why—supposing him to be the author of the plays—he should desire the secret of that authorship kept at the time of his fall, and even after his death.

During the time of his exile from London, Bacon plunged once more into his literary labours, studied and wrote indefatigably. But out of London he could not obtain all the books of reference which he required. He wrote to Buckingham praying for permission to return—complaining that he was "cut off from books." Even in the Tower, he said, I could have "helps for my studies and the writings I have in hand." ‡ What a contrast to the closing days of Shakspere—Bacon was at this time sixty years old. Dr. Church says:—"In these gloomy days . . . his interest in his great undertaking and his industry never flagged. The King," he adds, "did not want what he offered, did not want his histories, did not want his help about law. Well, then, he had work of his own upon which his heart was set; and if the King did not want his time he had the more for himself." § And what followed? It is above all important to mark.

Two years later, in 1623, while this wonderful old man still preserved his powers, there appeared simultaneously from the press the famous *Shakespeare Folio Edition*, con-

* II., p. 654. † II., p. 603. ‡ Dr. Church, p. 158. § p. 171.

taining, in all, thirty-six plays, of which at least six, according to Halliwell Phillipps, were previously absolutely unknown, and of which twelve were re-written and materially altered, and Bacon's *De Augmentis Scientarium*, both works printed on foolscap of similar quality, measuring eight and a quarter by thirteen inches, and in similar type. If the new plays were written by Shakspere, then seven years dead, why had they not been published before? Did he, as his biographers tell us, rest idle for the last five years of his life, with these plays in his hands, written, but both unplayed and unpublished—did he die, as we shall see, in the next section of this paper, without any mention of them, valuable as they undoubtedly were, in his will? These things are hard to believe. And why did his relatives allow seven years to elapse without giving these new plays to the public—and securing their monetary equivalent? And who revised the re-written plays? And how comes it that neither before nor after Shakspere's death there is to be found any record of any connection of his with any publisher—any account of monies due to any publisher or owing by him? These are all questions that no one has ever attempted to answer.

It is important also that we should trace the connection which Baconians find between Bacon's life and the plays. An eminent believer in the Bacon authorship, Dr. R. M. Bucke, asserts, in his remarkable article upon the Baconian question in the issue of *Pearson's Magazine* for December, 1897, that St. Albans, where Bacon's home, Gorhambury, was situate, is named in the plays twenty-three times, and he reminds us that York Place, in London, where Bacon was born, is tenderly spoken of in *Henry the Eighth*, while he claims that Shakspere's native place, Stratford-on-Avon, is not mentioned once. To students of Shakespeare, with sufficient leisure to prosecute the enquiry we may leave the verification or contradiction of the above statistical statement. It is at least noteworthy that the scenes in the play of *Henry the Sixth*, the first play produced, are laid in England and France, from which latter country Bacon had returned not long previously, after a tour through all the districts mentioned in the play, and that in the second part of that play is described the great battle of St. Albans. In or about the year 1593 Bacon's brother, Anthony, returns from Italy and generously aids in relieving Bacon from his money difficulties. Not long afterwards the *Merchant of Venice* appears—scene, Italy—

Bassanio (Bacon) extricated from his debts to Sympson (Shylock) by Antonio (Anthony). Surely the resemblance is striking.

Critics have observed that about the year 1601 the productions of Shakespeare begin to exhibit the sombre aspect referred to as the poet's "dark period." In this year troubles thickened around Bacon — the trial and execution of Essex took place ; Anthony, Bacon's well-beloved brother, died ; and his mother began to exhibit symptoms of madness. *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, quickly followed this time. Lady Anne's lunacy developed and exhibited several stages before she finally died. The studies of madness, for we may so call them, in *Hamlet* and *Lear*, were studies that *must* have been made by Bacon, in his observations of his mother's malady.

During this period, Shakspere's career was attaining its greatest prosperity. He bought New Place, in 1597, and made additional purchases of property in 1602, 1603, and 1605. His daughter Susanna married Dr. Hall in 1607, and he became a grandfather in 1608. In this context it is also interesting to note a rather remarkable general feature of the plays, which some Baconian writers point out as exhibiting a further connection between them and the history of Bacon — the absence of child-life in their otherwise almost universal delineation of nature. Bacon married late in life, and had no children. Nor should we pass from this point without referring to the notable omission from the long period of English History traversed by the plays of the important reign of Henry the Seventh. Near the end of his life, strangely pushed in among his prose works, Bacon supplies the missing link. His *History of Henry the Seventh*, written in a style more approaching that of the plays than any other of his writings, fills the gap and completes the series.

III.

The literary remains of Shakspere and of Bacon are both remarkable. The only handwriting of Shakspere which the world possesses consists of five signatures the facsimiles of which Mr. Lee gives us. Three of them are attached to his will, and the remaining two to other legal documents. It has been argued with much force and apparent correctness that no writings of any length could be manufactured by the hand that executed these signatures. The examina-

tion of the will is of exceptional importance. In it Shakspere bequeathed articles of such lesser pecuniary value as his "sword," "silver-gilt bowl," and "second best bed," and yet, as has already been pointed out, it makes no mention whatever of the literary property of the plays and poems. Of these literary properties Dr. Appleton Morgan, A.M., LL.B., says: "It is simply silly to talk, as the commentators will, of Shakespeare's omitting to mention them in his testaments because his copyrights had expired, or because he or his representatives had sold them to the Globe Theatre. . . . These plays had been entered on the Stationers' books, and once so entered, it was impossible to alienate them to the Globe Theatre or to any other purchaser, except by registry of later date. . . . The record of alienation could have been made but in one place, and it was never made there." Equally remarkable was the absence of any reference to Shakspere's books — if he possessed any. This circumstance evidently strikes Halliwell Phillipps as very curious, for he says: "The inventory of the poet's goods that was taken after his decease has not been discovered. If it ever comes to light, it can hardly fail to be of surpassing interest, especially if it contains a list of the books preserved at New Place. These must have been very limited in number, for there is no allusion to such luxuries in the will." *

The significance of these words, and the thoughts which they must inspire, are profound. If the dead actor were the great writer whose works are not only illumined by genius but saturated with learning—who has added some five thousand words to our language — who thinks and talks in many tongues—to whom the philosophers and poets of old are dear and familiar brothers—who has read nature in all her aspects, and described her in all her moods—the metaphysician, the historian, the scientist, the statesman, the legal luminary, the naturalist, the horticulturist—where are the books from which these vast stores of knowledge have come? In our days of public libraries, and easy reference, there is no writer of repute, no professional man of standing, who does not possess his well-filled bookshelves, Must we believe that the greatest of all had none?

Bacon's will is not thus deficient. In it he says: "As to that durable part of my memory which consisteth in my writings, I require my servant, Henry Percy, to deliver to

* p. 185.

my brother Constable all my manuscript compositions, and the fragments also of such as are not finished to the end that, if any of them be fit to be published, he may accordingly dispose of them. And herein I desire him to take the advice of Mr. Selden or Mr. Herbert, of the Inner Temple, and to publish or suppress what shall be thought fit." Doubtless these friends had been told what works to publish—and what to suppress.

Of the manuscript compositions referred to above, we shall deal with only two. One of these is the now famous Northumberland House Manuscript, discovered in the library there in 1867. It is an unbound volume, and portion of which had been torn or had fallen away. It is a manuscript book containing some writings by "Mr. Francis Bacon," with a list on the outside fly-leaf or cover apparently written by a clerk or amanuensis; and, strange to say, upon this cover, amongst the list of contents, the name of Shakespeare is scribbled over many times. Upon this outer leaf is also written an incorrect quotation from one of the Sonnets, and the word "Honorificabilitudino," with which we shall deal later on. The Table of Contents of this remarkable manuscript remains intact. It includes Essays, Speeches, a Letter, a Device of Bacon's, entitled "A Conference of Pleasure," the title of a play unknown, and a fragment of Nash's "Isle of Dogs" for various persons at entertainments, and *Richard the Second* and *Richard the Third*.

The portion of the manuscript which would have contained these plays is wanting, the threads which held them having been cut. No information concerning this manuscript, or the time or cause of its mutilation, is forthcoming. All that can be said now is that the only place upon which any contemporary handwriting connected with the Shakespearean Plays has ever been found is upon a manuscript of Bacon.

The other manuscript which we shall notice is Bacon's *Promus of Formularies and Elegancies*, at present contained in the British Museum, and first published in 1883, by Mrs. Henry Pott. The *Promus*, or, in English, "storehouse," was a collection of literary jottings of all kinds in different languages. The greater number are in English and Latin, but there are some in Greek, French, Italian and Spanish. The entire manuscript (with the exception, perhaps, of three or four pages of French proverbs at the end) is, on the authority of Sir E. Maunde Thompson,

Chief Librarian at the British Museum, in the handwriting of Bacon. The French proverbs appear to have been copied for Bacon by a Frenchman, but the writing may be an early attempt of Francis to write in the Italian hand, which he seems to have introduced. The total number of entries is 1,655. The present first page, but marked 83, bears the date December 5th, 1594, on top, and the date 1595 appears later on. The jottings may be roughly divided into two classes—words of wisdom and turns of expression. The former exhibit proverbs, epigrams, aphorisms, etc., collected from writings in all the above languages, or evolved out of the fruitful mind of Bacon himself—in many instances old sayings turned and twisted so as to give new expression and meaning better suiting his taste or fancy. The latter consist of expressive phrases, turns of speech, forms of greeting, or combinations of words which appeared to him apt and effective. Many of these, coined from the mint of his prolific brain, have now been for centuries common currency, and we could scarcely realise that they were of his creation if we did not see them first set down in his "store-house," and learn that the literature previous to his day did not possess them.

Dr. Church would appear to have had this manuscript in his mind when he wrote:—"Bacon was a great collector of sentences, proverbs, quotations, sayings, illustrations, anecdotes; and he seems to have read sometimes simply in order to gather phrases and apt words. He jots down at random any good or pointed remark which comes into his thought or his memory. He brings together in great profusion mere forms, varied turns of expression, heads and tails of clauses and paragraphs, transitions, connections; he notes down fashions of compliment, of excuse or repartee, even morning and evening salutations"* Now for what purpose was Francis Bacon's "store-house" filled with such things as "fashions of compliment, of excuse or repartee, even morning or evening salutations?" Why trifled the philosophic scholar with such wares? His biographer, James Spedding, simply does not know. Although here are 50 sheets full of autograph matter of that Francis Bacon whom he loved and revered, and to whom he devoted above twenty years of his life—he leaves them out of his published collection of *Bacon's Works*, confessing that he can see no *raison d'etre* for them —no relevancy—no connection between them and the rest

*p. 23.

of Bacon's writings. And then, Mrs. Henry Pott, a very able and widely known Baconian writer, takes them in hand, and solves the riddle. And what a solution! It may almost be said that she opens for us the door of the wonderful workshop in which the plays were manufactured, and allows us to look reverently in. Now we begin to understand the causes which led Bacon to extol the value of Dramatic Poesy, and the means and methods by which he establishes its use as an instrument of teaching. If he can weave his words of wisdom into popular plays, outliving the centuries, and while he holds enchained the souls of his audiences deliver his great truths therein from the mouths of his puppets—his orators, his soldiers, his statesmen, his rulers, his gravediggers, his merry wives—even his clowns—then will his life-work be accomplished. The editor gives several thousand instances of occasions in which these notes are used either *verbatim*, or approximately so, or with the thought amplified or changed. In many most interesting instances the same image is traced through several of the plays, or from the prose writings to the plays, or *vice versa*—first employed in simple form, then varied, either to avoid sameness or to fit new conditions. Often one finds in the chain of altered versions a more convincing evidence of the identity of authorship than in the exact repetition of single phrases. This interesting note-book, elucidated and illustrated by its patient and industrious editor, is so valuable an evidence of the Baconian case that we must quote freely from it. We shall first cite five instances in which the insertions in the plays are practically *verbatim* copies of the entries in the *Promus*—then five in which the thought is extended—then, again, five in which the thought is employed both in the plays and Bacon's prose, and, finally, five in which the thought is used in more than one of the plays. To instance the first, we find entry No. 119 of the *Promus* read as follows: "How do you? They have a better question in Cheapside, 'What lack you?'" And in the plays: "How do you?" (*Two Noble Kin.* II. ii.). "What lack you?" (*King John* IV. i.).

Entry No. 940.—"Happy man, happy dole."
"Happy man be his dole."
Merry Wives III. iv.

" 472.—"Seldome cometh the better."
"Seldom cometh the better."
Rich. III. II. ii.

Entry No. 477.—"All is not gold that glisters."
"All that glisters is not gold."
Mer. Ven. II. vii.

" 669.—"The world runs on wheels."
"The world upon wheels."
Two Gent. Ver. III. i.

Now the second five:—

Entry No. 5.—"I believed, therefore have I spoken."
"What his heart believes his tongue speaks." (*M. Ado* I. i.).

" 38.—"Black will take no other hue."
"All the water in the ocean could never turn the swan's black legs to white."
Tit. And. IV. ii.

" 661.—"Out of God's blessing into the warm sun."
"Out of Heaven's benediction to the warm sun." (*Lear* II. ii.).

Entry No. 751.—"To stumble at the threshold."
"For many men that stumble at the threshold
Are well foretold that danger lurks within." (3 *Hen. IV.* IV. vii.).

" 972.—"Always let losers have their words."
"And well such losers may have leave to speak." (2 *Hen. VI.* III. i.).

And now the third five:—

Entry No. 72.—"He who dissembles is not free."
"He that dissimulates is a slave."
Bacon's *Adv. of Learning.*

"The dissembler is a slave."
(*Per.* I. i.)

" 106.—"A fool's bolt is soon shot."
"A fool's bolt is soon shot."
As You Like It V. iv.

"I will shoot my fool's bolt since you will have it so."
Bacon's *Letter to Essex*, 1597.

" 191.—"This only I know that I know nothing."
"We know that we know nothing."
Bacon's *Nov. Org.*

"The wise man knows himself to be a fool." (*As You Like It* V. iv.).

Entry No. 303.—"Not unlike."
"Not unlike." (Bacon's *Adv. of Lng.*).
"Not unlike, Sir." (*L. L. L.* II. ii.).

,, 341.—"So give authors their due, as you give time his due, which is to discover truth."
"Let me give every man his due, as I give time his due, which is to discover truth."
Bacon's *Praise of Knowledge.*

"Every one must have his due."
Per. I. i.

"Give love his due." (*Ven. Adonis*).
"Give the devil his due."
1 *Hen. IV.* I. ii.

And, lastly, the fourth five :—

Entry No. 208.—"Answer directly."
"Answer me directly."
1 *Hen. IV.* II. iii.

"Yield me a direct answer."
M. M. IV. ii.

"To answer every man directly, I am a bachelor." (*Jul. Cæs.* III. iii.).

,, 653.—"Thought is free."
"Thought is free." (*Tw. Night* I. iii.).

"Unloose thy long imprisoned thoughts."
2 *Hen. VI.* V. i.

"Thought is bounty's foe.
Being free itself it thinks all others so."
Tim. Ath. II. ii.

,, 1004.—"'Tis best not to be born."
"O welladay that ever I was born."
Rom. Jul. IV. iv.

"Better my mother had not borne me."
Ham. III. iii.

"Would I had never borne thee."
3 *Hen. VI.* I. i.

Entry No. 1207.—"Golden sleepe."

"There golden sleep doth reign."
Rom. Jul. II. iii.

"Shake off the golden slumber of repose." (*Per.* III. ii.).

We may, our pastimes done, possess a golden slumber."
Tit. And. II. iii.

„ 1397.—"Know thyself." (A chiding or disgrace.)

"Mistress, know yourself."
As You Like It III. v.

"He'll never know himself."
Hen. VIII. II. ii.

"That fool knows not himself."
Tr. Cr. II. i.

"The wise man knows himself to be a fool." (*As You Like It* V. i.).

Pertinent as are the above quotations they cannot establish the curious chain of connection which exists between this remarkable manuscript and the Shakespeare plays and poems with anything like the degree of certainty which a perusal of Mrs. Pott's interesting book must create in the mind of its readers. The large number of times—sometimes above a dozen—in which some of the entries are used, and the manner in which the figure expressed in them is varied and developed from the earlier plays to the later require study to be made perfectly evident. It seems beyond question that any impartial mind studying this book will arrive at the conclusion that Francis Bacon's *Promus* must have been in the hands of the writer of the plays, and constantly used by him in their composition.

IV.

In laying before you the argument of identity of reading, writing, and opinion, between Francis Bacon and the writer of the Shakespeare plays and poems, the writer feels that he is striving to wield satisfactorily the strongest and sharpest sword in the Baconian armoury. In the matter of the question of reading it is only necessary to assert a fact which all who have studied the works of Bacon

and Shakespeare must admit; that their writers (to simplify the application of our argument we shall throughout this section count them as two) evince a familiar acquaintance with a strangely large number of similar authors. Both were great plagiarists of stories and plots, and it is, therefore, the more easy to trace the direct connection between their works and those of previous writers. To cite the earliest field of literature as an illustration, both writers quote voluminously from the Bible; both evidence a knowledge of the works of the following among the olden philosophers and classic writers:—Aristotle, Plato, Euripedes, Catullus, Sophocles, Pliny, Lucretius, Tibullus, Statius, Plutarch, Seneca, Tacitus, Horace, Cicero, Ovid and Virgil. Both, too, are well versed in the sciences of music, astronomy, horticulture, medicine, physics, law, &c., &c., and appear to have studied from the same sources. There is no need further to exemplify this argument of similarity of reading.

The argument of identity of writing is still more important. We shall sub-divide this into three parts: 1. Similarity of style; 2. Similarity of phrase; and 3. Similarity of individual words. Before taking up the first of these points it would be well to remind ourselves of the fundamental axiom of good writing, so pithily expressed by Bacon himself, that "the matter of any piece of writing should determine the style." Nevertheless, wide as may be the divergence between the matter of philosophic and dramatic works, we need not hide behind this breastwork in fear of being unable to adduce instances of style sufficiently parallel to convince anyone of the closeness of the comparison. That Bacon wrote as did Shakespeare in a style at once masterly, brilliant, and poetic, has been evidenced by quotations from the most competent judges. It is not possible, within the limits of this section of this paper, to examine and compare all, or even several of the various characteristics of style. It should suffice to point out one so startling and so convincing as to close the question by itself, and this may be done. A very peculiar and unusual item of style in the composition of any writer is the triform construction of sentences. Can anyone name an author other than these two, who has used it at all noticeably? We shall examine ten illustrations of this form—five from the writings of one, and five from those of the other—and we may safely venture to assert that no one (unless he happen to recognise the quotations) will succeed in distinguishing them.

Bacon: "Judges ought to be more learned than witty, more reverend than plausible, and more advised than confident."

Bacon: "A man cannot speak to his own son but as a father, to his wife but as a husband, and to his enemy but on terms."

Shakespeare: "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them"

Bacon: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

Shakespeare: "Now a sensible man, by-and-bye a fool, and presently a beast."

Shakespeare: "One draught above heat makes him a fool, a second mads him, and a third drowns him."

Bacon: "Some ants carry corn, and some their young, and some go empty."

Shakespeare: "It would be argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever."

Shakespeare: "This peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers."

Bacon: "They dispose kings to tyranny, husbands to jealousy, wise men to irresolution."

It is even easier to show similarity in the use of combinations of words. We shall again take ten illustrations of the former, five according to the previous method, exemplifying a practically exact appearance, generally showing only such variation as may be necessary to suit the metre, and five exhibiting more distinct alteration of form.

Bacon: (*Essay*) "It is impossible to love and be wise."

Shakespeare: (*Troilus and Cressida*) "To be wise and love exceeds men's might."

Bacon: (*Letter to King James*) "Considering *that love must creep where it cannot go*."

Shakespeare: (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*) "You know that *love must creep* in service *where it cannot go*."

Bacon: (*Advancement of Learning*) "*Young men* are *no fit auditors* of *moral philosophy*."

Shakespeare: (*Troilus and Cressida*) "*Young men* whom Aristotle thought *unfit to hear moral philosophy*."

Bacon : (*Advancement of Learning*) "You shall not be your own carver."
Shakespeare : (*Richard the Second*) "Let him be his own carver."

A curious phrase is "discourse of reason," said to have been unused down to the time of Bacon. Mark the following :—

Bacon : (*Advancement of Learning*) "Martin Luther, but in *discourse of reason*, finding."
Shakespeare : (*Hamlet*) "O, heaven, a beast that wants *discourse of reason*."

And now the second five :—

Bacon : (*Essay*) "Be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others."
Shakespeare : (*Hamlet*) "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."
Bacon : (*Essay*) "We say that a blister will rise on one's tongue that tells a lie."
Shakespeare : (*A Winter's Tale*) "If I prove honey-mouthed, let my tongue blister."
Bacon : (*De Augmentis*) "The moon. . . came to Endymion as he was asleep."
Shakespeare : (*Merchant of Venice*) "The moon sleeps with Endymion."
Bacon : (*Letter to Mr. M. Hicks*) "Such apprehension. . . *knitteth every man's soul* to his true and *approved friend*."
Shakespeare : (*Much Ado about Nothing*) "Not to *knit my soul to* an *approved wanton*."

An unusual use of a word is "disclose" for "hatch." Mark the following :—

Bacon : (*Natural History*) "The ostrich layeth her eggs upon the sand where the heat of the sun *discloseth* them."
Shakespeare : (*Hamlet*) "The female dove when that her golden couplets are *disclosed*."

The parallel use of the employment of single words naturally does not afford the same facility for carrying conviction. It is, however, perhaps, even more remarkable. We must endeavour to exemplify this as satisfactorily as

we can. In such effort we shall engage the aid of others more industrious in this field of research. In so far as their evidence may need support, it is always in the power of those who find difficulty in believing to examine and test the accuracy of the statements for themselves. It is claimed that Bacon and the writer of Shakespeare have both added from four to five thousand new words to our language, and that the additions made were exceptionally identical. In no writing which the writer has seen has this subject of the philology of Bacon and Shakespeare been so ably and so exhaustively treated as in a paper by Mrs. Henry Pott in the current number of the Baconian quarterly *Baconiana* reprinted from a former number. We may confidently affirm that any one who will study the contents of this paper and test the accuracy of its assertions, will need no further evidence upon this point. It is named *Francis Bacon's Style.* Let us read a couple of extracts from it. The writer says:—"The smallest particulars which we have to consider in the present case are the *words*, the vehicle of thought; therefore let us look a little into Bacon's vocabulary. Here we are met by a great difficulty. For Bacon found our language poor and empty, deficient in every kind of ornament, totally inadequate to the exposition of his lofty and complete theories, his vigorous arguments and reasoning, his subtle and imaginative ideas. He left this English of ours rich, full and furnished at all points, a noble model of language, such as he desired to construct by selecting materials from the best of other nations." And then Mrs. Pott relates:—"More than once I have been told by eminent philologists that the difference in 'style' between the works of Bacon and Shakespeare is so tremendous as to prohibit the possibility of their being produced by the same writer. I have asked: 'Does this observation apply to the vocabulary?' And the reply has been: 'Yes, assuredly; the vocabulary plays a very important part in the style of any writer.' Then I have said: 'You consider that the vocabulary, the actual *words*, used by Bacon, are so manifestly different from those used by Shakespeare as necessarily to affect the whole style?' Again the answer is: 'Yes, certainly.' And this, I believe, has been a very common or popular notion. Now this is what is found to be the case in upwards of one hundred and thirty chapters, letters, fragments and portions of various works examined word by word and compared with

the Shakespeare concordance. Exclude from the question proper names, and absolute technicalities of science and words of learning, such as apogees and perigees, sublimate of mercury, pneumatics, convex lenses, logarithms, acroamatic, or asoteric, or magistral logic—terms which no one would expect to meet with in the Shakespeare plays, and, on the other hand, discard vulgarisms, oaths, and colloquialisms, such as could not find place in scientific writing, or even in letters. The result then is that" . . . "of every two hundred words from the acknowledged works of Bacon there are three words *not* in *Shakespeare*; in Shakespeare there are fewer still which are not in Bacon."

In this little piece of work the writer has exactly hit the nail on the head. A careless enquirer comparing the works in question would notice *most of all* the technical expressions in the one, and the colloquialisms in the other; whereas to institute anything like a useful comparison it would be necessary to discard both.

To establish similarity of opinion in the two great minds is perhaps a still more difficult task. We must again ask the aid of Mrs. Pott, and we may commence by quoting from the preface to the *Promus*, for the purpose of explaining in the best manner the difficulty we have noted. We read: "A few detached instances of similarity or coincidence may be held of no value as evidence, yet an almost innumerable multitude of small instances . . . although of the most minute particles, does in the end amount to proof." And again: "Was it ever known in the history of the world that any two men conceived the same 'original' ideas, thought the same things on the same subjects (old or new), and expressed their opinions, tastes, and antipathies, their theories, doctrine and experience in similar language?"

On the lines of this preface Mrs. Pott proceeds to afford the proof indicated of an unchanging and universal similarity of opinion between Shakespeare and Bacon, such as it seems impossible to find in any other two minds. Her plan is a novel one, and is probably the most searching and conclusive, that could be selected. The title of her book is "Manners, Mind, Morals," and, under this heading, she gives sympathetic passages from Bacon's and Shakespeare's writings over a vast and wide range of subjects. The contents are arranged alphabetically, and in order to judge of the extent and variety of the matter treated, we

may compile a list of those subjects which we find classed under the heading of the first letter of the alphabet. They are—Adversity, Affectation, Age, Amazons, Ambition, Anger, Antiquity, Art, Authority. To illustrate the similarity of opinion upon these subjects expressed in the writings of Shakespeare and Bacon, no fewer than eighty-four quotations from the plays and thirty-seven from Bacon's works are here presented—one hundred and twenty-one in all, or an average of above a dozen upon each subject.

It will be interesting also to examine in this context a curious case not only of similar opinion in the two writings, but of similar *mistaken* opinion, written down first in the *Promus* and expressed afterwards in two of the plays. This case is so lucidly presented by the Rev. Father Sutton, that it may best be given in his own words. He says, in the *New Ireland Review* issue of February of last year, speaking of the published edition of the *Promus* :—"Some examples of the entries in the *Promus*, and of the use made of them in the plays, will give an idea of how much the literary world is indebted to the gifted writer who has edited and elucidated this MS. It would require a volume to do something like justice to the labour, learning, and ingenious research displayed in the book we are considering. We shall first take an instance where the *Promus* entry appears in two different plays, and at the same time expresses an original, and mistaken scientific theory about heat, which again is among the items contained in the *Sylva Sylvarum*, which forms a main portion of the third part of Bacon's great *Instauratio*. The entry is from the *Adagia* of Erasmus. There are 225 of these in the *Promus*, and 218 are reproduced or literally translated in the plays, whereas not more than half a dozen appear in Bacon's other works. In the sheet of the manuscript, marked 101, entry 889, occurs this adage, 'Clavum clavo pellere,' to drive out a nail with a nail. The two instances in the plays are from the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Coriolanus*, plays belonging respectively to the earlier and the later period of the dramatic productions. From the first we have :—

> 'Even as one heat another heat expels,
> Or as one nail by strength drives out another.' (II. 4).

And from *Coriolanus* :—

> "One fire drives out another ; one nail, one nail" (iv. 7).

Mrs. Pott observes, at page 33 of her *Introduction*, an essay on the *Promus* which demands and amply repays profound study: "Some of his (Bacon's) favourite fallacies were that 'one flame within another quenceth not,' and that 'flame doth not mingle with flame, but remaineth contiguous" (*Sylv. Sylv.* i. 33). Knowing, as we now do, that these theories are as mistaken as they appear to have been original, it seems almost past belief that any two men should, at precisely the same period, have independently conceived the same theories. and made the same mistakes."

V.

Before dealing with the argument of the testimony of Ben Jonson (whose name was in all personal records or allusions spelt Johnson) we must mark the notable fact that he is about the only contemporary of William Shakspere who has spoken personally of him, for it cannot be fairly argued that reference to the writer of the Shakespeare plays necessarily means reference to the actor. Mr. Richard Grant White says: "Of his eminent countrymen, Raleigh, Sydney, Spenser, Bacon, Cecil, Walsingham, Coke, Camden, Hooker, Drake, Hobbes, Inigo Jones, Herbert of Cherbury, Laud, Pym, Hampden, Selden, Walton, Wotton and Donne, may be properly reckoned as his contemporaries, and yet there is no evidence whatever that he was personally known to either of these men, or to any others of less note among the statesmen, scholars, soldiers, and artists of his day, excepting a few of his fellow-craftsmen." And, indeed, there is also no evidence that Shakspere ever claimed the authorship of the plays. *The Athenæum*, London, as far as September 13th, 1856, says: "Shakespeare never claimed the plays as his own. . . . He was unquestionably indifferent about them, and died without seeing the most remarkable series of intellectual works that ever issued from the brain of man in the custody of type." And Professor Newman, in the *Echo* of December 31st, 1887, wrote: "I pretend to no special erudition in English literature, but have read from boyhood that Shakespeare never claimed the tragedies as his, nor kept any copy of them." It is remarkable, also, that the two greatest writers of the age, Bacon and Shakespeare—if they be two and not one—have never in their writings alluded to each other. This odd fact has awakened enquiry in the mind of Mr. J. O'Byrne Croke, M.A,, the annotator

of *Bacon's Essays* for the Intermediate School Tests, for he says : "It has been noted as strange with regard to Bacon and Shakespeare, the two greatest contemporary writers of the Elizabethan age, that there is not a single reference in the works of either to the other." So much for this point.

A curious feature of the argument of the testimony of Ben Jonson is that it is a favourite, and by some conceived to be a final, argument upon the Shakesperean side of the question To employ this argument, however, as evidence in favour of the view that William Shakspere wrote the plays is, as we shall see, to demonstrate an incomplete acquaintance with the subject.

During Shakspere's lifetime Jonson more than once alluded to him in terms that were certainly not laudatory ; far different from the famous sentence subsequently written, and relied upon by Shaksperians in their argument. The epigrammatic verse commencing "Poor Poet Ape," said to have been written before 1600, is one well-known instance of Jonson's contemptuous regard for Shakspere. Later on in his *Induction to Bartholomew Fair*, printed in 1614, he so writes as to lead the Editor to remark: "Our author . . . is still venting his sneers at Shakespeare." This, it will be observed, was but two years before the carouse in the tavern at Stratford, immediately previous to Shakspere's death. In *Ben Jonson's Works*, edited by Whalley, we are told that Jonson said to the poet, Drummond of Hawthornden, in 1619, at a time when he was staying at Drummond's house in Scotland, that: "Shakespeare wanted art and sometimes sense."

It was probably after this date, perhaps even after Bacon's fall, during the years 1621 to 1626—the years which witnessed the bulk of Bacon's publications—that Jonson became his amanuensis, some say his private secretary. Assuming, for the moment, Bacon's authorship of the plays, Jonson would have been, during the earlier portion of these five years, busily engaged upon the preparation of the *First Folio* and the other prose works, which were published simultaneously with it in 1623, and it is inconceivable that he should not then have become aware of the true authorship. Drummond of Hawthornden speaks of Jonson's having written in Bacon's house, and it is quite possible that the very words on which Shaksperians rely were there composed. The words in question were portion of a poem prefixed to the *Folio*, and read as follows :—

"... . When thy socks were on,
Leave thee, alone, for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come."

Now mark the word "alone" in the second line of this verse. It must plainly mean that the writer referred to—then seven years dead if it were William Shakspere, and characterised by Jonson *during the very interval*, as we have seen, as "sometimes wanting sense"—was "alone" worthy of comparison with the writers of "insolent Greece and haughty Rome." But writing again, after Bacon's death, he says of Bacon: "He that hath filled up all numbers, and performed that in our tongue which may be compared, or preferrea, either to insolent Greece or haughty Rome." But is there then a second—where before he asserted that there was but one? And would he select, to laud this second, the very words—which he must have well remembered, for he uses them identically—that he employed to laud the first, whom he had described as standing *alone?* Is it not far more reasonable to suppose that in his own mind he praised but one, and that he intentionally used the very same words to mark the effect whenever, or to whomever, in his own time, he may consider himself at liberty to disclose the fact, and to afford to future ages the argument which we are using now? To demonstrate even more clearly still the extraordinary reverence which Jonson had for both Bacon's character and genius, we may examine another written testimony of his. He says: "My conceit of his (Bacon's) person was never increased towards him by his place or honours; but I have and do reverence him for the greatness that was only proper to himself (mark the word 'only'—that was *only* proper to himself) in that he seemed to be ever, by his work, one of the greatest men and most worthy of admiration that has been in many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed that God would give him strength, for greatness he could not want." Could any testimony be more striking or beautiful?

Jonson's personal verse, set opposite the portrait of the actor, prefixed as a frontispiece to the *Folio*, has not certainly anything of the flavour of reverence so deeply enshrined in the above. This portrait is so ugly that some consider it a caricature. Mr. Richard Grant White characterizes it "a hard, wooden, staring thing." Mr. Clement M. Ingleby, in *The Man and the Book*, published

in 1877, says: "Even in its best state it is such a monstrosity that I, for one, do not believe that it has any trustworthy exemplar." And Mr. Parker Norris, in his *Shakespeare Portraits*, asserts: "It is not known from what it was copied, and many think it unlike any human being." The verse opposite this portrait has been employed by Shaksperians to maintain their contention, and no doubt is addressed to the original of the portrait. But Baconians claim that, under the shadow of a compliment it contains a clever satire of the actor—the "Poet-ape" of Jonson's earlier rhymes, and, certainly, the play upon the word "brass" is remarkable. The verse is as follows:—

> "The figure that thou see'st here put,
> It was for gentle Shakespeare cut,
> Wherein the graver had a strife
> With nature to outdo the life;
> O, could he but have drawn his wit
> As well in brasse as he hath hit
> His face, the print would then surpasse
> All that was ever writ in brasse;
> But, since he cannot, reader, looke,
> Not on his picture, but his booke."

It is even possible that the verse was written by Bacon himself and fathered by Jonson. And, in this view, it is interesting to note the similarity of expression between the words and idea in the third line: "O, could he but have drawn his wit," and those affixed by Hilliard to the portrait which he painted of Bacon in the latter's eighteenth year—"If one could but paint his mind." It is worth noting, also, that the phrases "face of brass" and "brazen face" are both used in the plays—as, for instance, in the fifth act of *Love's Labour's Lost*, "Can any face of brass hold longer out?" and in the fourth act of the *Merry Wives*, "Well said, brazen face;" and the *Promus* entry, No. 1,418, says, "Brazed (Impudent)." Finally, in his *Discoveries*, Vol. VII., Jonson enumerates thirteen of the greatest men whom he had known. Among these Bacon, whom he styled, "the mark and acme of our language," is given first place—Shakspere is not even mentioned. And *apropos* of the latter fact it may be interesting to state that in a curious book, published in 1645, and thought to be written by the eminent poet, George Withers, the title-page reads as follows:—

"The Great Assizes,
Holden in Parnassus,
by
Apollo
And his Assessours,
The Lord Verulam Chancellor of Parnassus."

In the assembly following Shakspere is given no place among the poets, and is named twenty-sixth, or last but one, among the jurors.

VI.

The argument of the Anagram is one of a most peculiar kind. Some persons consider it the most conclusive of all the arguments upon the Baconian list, and others laugh at it, or affect to do so. It would be, however, a culpable omission upon the part of the writer if he failed to include it in this booklet. The word which gives rise to it is certainly one of the greatest curiosities of literature. It is the most amazing and the most incomprehensible word in all the Shakespeare plays, and, as such, even if it had no other interest, it is worthy of attention and examination. It is to be found in *Love's Labour's Lost*, which Mr. Sidney Lee considers to have been the first of the plays written. It is in appearance a Latin word, and, apparently to account for that appearance and to give some reasonable complexion to its exceptional character, it is led up to by a most curious pedantic discourse between the characters engaged, partly written in Latin. Ultimately *Costard* says (aside to *Moth*): "O, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words. I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word; for thou art not so long by the head as honorificabilitudinitabus: thou art easier swallowed than a flap-dragon."

Moth (aside to *Costard*): "Peace, the peal begins."

Armado (to *Holofernes*): "Monsieur, are you not lettered?"

Moth: "Yes, yes; he teaches boys the horn-book.—What is A. B. spelt backward, with the horn on his head?"

Holofernes: "B. A. pueritia, with a horn added."

Now continuing this play upon the Latin, and adding the

word cornu, a horn, to B. A., we have bacornu, which lettering does not, of course, spell Bacon, but suggested that name to Dr. Platt, of New Jersey, who, some years ago, was puzzling over the above remarkable portion of this play. We may read the rest of Dr. Platt's explorations into it from the words of his friend, Dr. R. M. Bucke, who relates it in the article in *Pearson's Magazine*, to which reference has been already made. "Whence," he says, "is to be derived the A. B. which is to be spelt backward? In the middle of the long word we find these letters in that order, A. B. Begin now at the B, and spell backward as you are told. You get b-a-c-i-f-i-r-o-n-o-h. From these letters it is not hard to pick out Fr. Bacon."

Now, before continuing to read Dr. Bucke's extract further, we should note two facts that may assist in lending reasonableness to his view. The first is that Bacon took great interest in cyphers. Dr. Church remarks: "Bacon mentions in his *De Augmentis* that when in France he occupied himself in devising a new system of cypher writing." * The second is that Bacon habitually signed his name as above—*Fr. Bacon*. Those of his letters, which both Dr. Church and James Spedding give us in their biographies are all so signed. To continue from Dr Bucke: "Now take the other half of the word spelt forward, ilitudinitatibus. It is not hard to pick out from it ludi (the plays), tuiti (protected or guarded), nati (produced). These words (with those we had before) give us: Ludi tuiti Fr. Bacono nati. The remaining letters are h i i b s, which are easily read as hi sibi.

"Now put the words together in grammatical order and you have: Hi ludi, tuiti sibi, Fr. Bacono nati. (These plays, left to themselves, proceeded from Fr. Bacon). It is a perfect anagram. Each letter is used once, and once only. . . . The intention is fully declared and plain. There is no flaw. But where does the long word come from, and can a connection be traced between it and the actual man, Francis Bacon? To answer this we must turn to the famous Northumberland House MS. That MS. belonged to Bacon, and could never have been seen by the actor, Shakspere. On the outer leaf is written the word Honorificabilitudino. This, also, is an anagram. It enfolds the words: Initio hi ludi Fr. Bacono. (In the beginning these plays from Fr. Bacon). It seems to have been a first thought. . . . The anagram in this form

* I., p. 7.

was not considered satisfactory, and was amended into the form found in *Love's Labour's Lost.* Thus we have before us the making of the word by Bacon. The sense of the word and its history correspond. The case seems to be complete."

To make quite clear this case of Dr. Bucke's we may observe that the two long words are identical except in their terminations, and call to mind that the illustrations given from the *Promus* showed that it was Bacon's habit to develop and expand words and thoughts when transferring them from his notebooks into his writings.

The writer has come to the end of the subject matter which he proposed to submit to his readers, and has only, before closing, to recapitulate what he has done, in order to make the plan of his argument more clear. He has (1) presented a sketch of the life of Shakspere, drawn from the two principal biographers of the man of Stratford—the standard biography and the most up-to-date—profusely illustrated by quotations from these works, and trusts that he has fairly shown that whoever wrote the Shakespeare plays and poems, Shakspere the actor could not and did not. He has (2) likewise given a sketch of the life of Bacon, drawn, too, from the two principal biographies of the great Chancellor, and similarly illustrated by *verbatim* quotations; and may, he thinks, claim that he has certainly offered satisfactory evidence of Bacon's possession of all the qualifications necessary in the writer of the plays and so conspicuously wanting in their reputed author, so far as one may be enabled to judge from an examination of the known facts of Shakspere's life. He has, he would hope, made it evident also that Francis Bacon was engaged during nearly all of his long and busy life in some hidden labour, as well as that he fully appreciated the important aid which dramatic composition could give towards the furtherance of the cherished object of his life, and that there are good reasons why the circumstances of his life and the safe accomplishment of that end forbade the avowal of his identity with the play writer. In his examination (3) of the literary remains of Shakspere and Bacon he has sought to crown and complete the argument of their lives. He has shown that if Skakspeare possessed the property of the plays his inaction in not handling that property for the benefit of his wife and children is inexplicable. He has opened a private handbook of

Francis Bacon, in which were imprisoned for future use the noble and beautiful—even the merely useful—thoughts that are ever flitting through the mind of a great poet, and has shown these same thoughts scattered through the plays; in some instances exact as they were captured, in others extended or embellished with added gracefulness or appropriateness. He has (4) evidenced that Bacon and the writer of the plays—if they be two—must have studied from the same sources, similarly assimilated the fruits of these studies, written the same style, used almost invariably the same words, and, if it might be possible, thought with the same mind. He has (5) cited Ben Jonson to the bar of his reader's justice-chamber and extracted from him the testimony which loyalty to a loved and revered master one time withheld; and he has (6) traced a connection between a word which must be admitted to be a Shakesperean curiosity—a word the most astounding and enigmatical in all the plays—and a similar literary eccentricity in a manuscript book of Francis Bacon. He has given a dissection of that word which bears a fair probability of being at least a close interpretation of the meaning which we must believe was originally attached to it by a mind that would not waste itself upon meaningless nothings—and that interpretation, if correct, offers an absolute proof of Lord Bacon's identity with the writer of the plays.

The work undertaken is concluded. The writer has summarised as completely and succinctly as he could the Baconian belief. Whatever be the degree in which he may have convinced his readers of the truth of the claim that the Shakesperean plays and poems were written by Francis Bacon he shall at least have cause to congratulate himself if the interest of some among them has been so awakened as to induce them to study the question for themselves. The more the life and works of Francis Bacon are studied—and better still if they be studied side by side with the plays, by whomever written—the more shall the greatest and noblest mind which the world of letters has known attain the cherished end of its life-long labours by operating to good and useful purpose upon the mind of the world to come.

ROBERT BANKS & SON, Printers, Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

L 006 851