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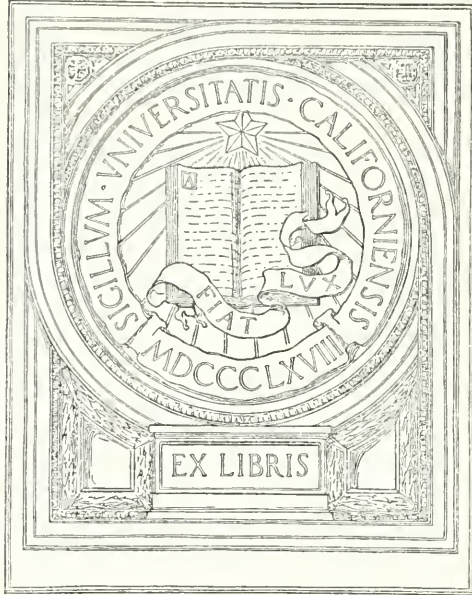


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DELIA BACON.

From a Daguerreotype taken in May, 1853.

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Noteworthy Opinions, Pro and Con.

BACON vs. SHAKSPERE.

Compiled and Edited

BY

EDWIN REED, A. M.

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PREFACE.

The authorship of Shakespeare has now been a subject of discussion in literary circles throughout the civilized world for more than fifty years. The problem is still practically unsolved. Men distinguished in almost every walk of life are on either side, though professional Shakspearean scholars remain, as a rule, loyal to the traditional bard.

May we not hope that lovers of truth, for truth's sake at least, will yet, in greater numbers even than heretofore, participate in this fascinating research? The eye of the mind is like that of the body: with a doubt in the one or a mote in the other, there is no peace.

Furthermore, the effect of such debates as this among citizens of different nationalities, compared with the barbarisms of war and the equally barbarous preparations for war, now universal, cannot fail in some measure to unify and fraternize mankind.

EDWIN REED.

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Truth is like a torch: the more it's shook, the more it shines.

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DELIA BACON.

CONCORD, MASS., 18 February, 1858.

DR. LEONARD BACON :

I could heartily wish that I had very different news to send you of a person who has high claims on me and on all of us who love genius and elevation of character. These qualities have so shone in Miss Bacon that, whilst their present eclipse is the greater calamity, it seems as if the care of her in these distressing circumstances [her last illness] ought to be, not at private, but at the public charge of scholars and friends of learning and truth.

R. W. EMERSON.

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BACON vs. SHAKSPERE.

NOTEWORTHY OPINIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE CONTROVERSY

A. W. VON SCHLEGEL.

“**G**ENERALLY speaking, I consider all that has been said about him [Shakspere] personally to be a mere fable, a blind extravagant error.”¹—(1808).

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

“What! are we to have miracles in sport? Does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?”²—(1811).

LORD BYRON.

“Shakespeare had many advantages; he was an actor by profession and knew all the tricks of the trade. Yet he had little fame in his day; see what Jonson and his contemporaries said of him. Besides, how few of what we call Shakespeare’s plays are exclusively so! And how at this distance of time, and lost, as so many works of that period are, can we separate what really is, from what is not, his own?”³—(1821).

BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

“‘And who is Shakspeare’ said Cadurcis. ‘We know of him as much as we do of Homer. Did he write half the plays attributed to him? Did he ever write a single whole play? I doubt it. He appears to me to have been an inspired adapter for the theatres, which were not then as good as

¹ Schlegel’s ‘Dramatic Art and Literature,’ p. 302.

² ‘Notes on Shakespeare,’ i. 66.

³ Medwin’s ‘Conversations with Lord Byron.’

barns. I take him to have been a botcher up of old plays. His popularity is of modern date; and it may not last; it would have surprised him marvellously.”¹ — (1837).

HENRY HALLAM.

“The two greatest names in poetry are to us little more than names. If we are not yet come to question his [Shakespeare’s] unity, as we do that of ‘the blind old man of Scio’s rocky isle,’ an improvement in critical acuteness doubtless reserved for a distant posterity, we as little feel the power of identifying the young man who came up from Stratford, was afterwards an indifferent player in a London theatre, and returned to his native place in middle life, with the author of ‘Macbeth’ and ‘Lear,’ as we can give a distinct historic personality to Homer. All that insatiable curiosity and unwearied diligence have hitherto detected about Shakspeare serves rather to disappoint and perplex us, than to furnish the slightest illustration of his character. It is not the register of his baptism, or the draft of his will, or the orthography of his name that we seek. No letter of his handwriting, no record of his conversation, no character of him drawn with any fulness by a contemporary has been produced.”² — (1837).

In a subsequent edition of his work Mr. Hallam commented on the above in a foot-note as follows :

“I am not much inclined to qualify this paragraph in consequence of the petty circumstances which have been lately brought to light, and which rather confirm than otherwise what I have said. But I laud the labours of Mr. Collier, Mr. Hunter and other collectors of such crumbs; though I am not

¹ ‘Venetia.’ Mr. Disraeli subsequently became Earl of Beaconsfield and Prime Minister of England.

² Hallam’s ‘Literature of Europe.’ Mr. Hallam was probably the ablest literary critic England ever produced. To the close of his life he still asserted that he was in search of the author of the Plays.

sure that we should not venerate Shakspeare as much if they had left him undisturbed in his obscurity. To be told that he played a trick to a brother player in a licentious amour, or that he died of a drunken frolic, as a stupid vicar of Stratford recounts (long after the time) in his diary, does not exactly inform us of the man who wrote Lear. If there was a Shakspeare of earth, as I suspect, there was also one of heaven; and it is of him that we desire to know something." (1854.)

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

"I remember noticing that the Malones and Steevenses and critical gentry were about evenly divided [on the authorship of a song in 'Measure for Measure'], these for Shakspeare and those for Beaumont and Fletcher. But the internal evidence is all for one, none for the others. If he did not write it, they did not, and we shall have some fourth unknown singer." ¹ — (1838).

"Shakspeare is a voice merely: who and what he was that sang, that sings, we know not." ² — *Idem.* (1842).

"I cannot marry this fact to his verse. An obscure and profane life." ³ — *Idem.*

AUGUST FRIEDRICH GFRÖRER.

"Karl Müller-Mylius reports that as early as 1843 Professor Gförrer, then librarian at Stuttgart, privately expressed the opinion that it was impossible that the historical Shakspeare should have composed the Shakspeare dramas."—*Lectures on Shakspeare*, p. 7.

JOSEPH C. HART.

"He was not the mate of the literary characters of his day,

¹ Holmes's 'Life of Emerson,' p. 128.

² Conway's 'Emerson at Home and Abroad,' p. 101.

³ 'Representative Men.' Mr. Emerson was a sympathetic adviser of Miss. Bacon in her efforts to discover an adequate authorship for the Plays. It was through him that she secured the first publication of her views in Putnam's Monthly, January, 1856. He declared that she had opened a discussion that would never be closed. Toward the close of his life, however, he pronounced her composite theory, viz., that Raleigh, Bacon and others wrote the plays, "fantastic."

and none knew it better than himself. It is a fraud upon the world to thrust his surreptitious fame upon us. The inquiry will be, who were the able literary men who wrote the dramas imputed to him?"¹ — (1848).

GEORG GOTTFRIED GERVINUS.

"Scarcely anything can be said of Shakespeare's position generally with regard to mediæval poetry which does not also bear upon the position of the renovator, Bacon, with regard to mediæval philosophy. Neither knew nor mentioned the other, although Bacon was almost called upon to have done so in his remarks upon the theatre of his day. . . . Shakespeare despised the million, and Bacon feared with Phocion the applause of the multitude. Both are alike in the rare impartiality with which they avoided everything one-sided. Both have an equal hatred of sects and parties; Bacon, of sophists and dogmatic philosophers; Shakespeare, of Puritans and Zealots. Both, therefore, are equally free from prejudices, and from astrological superstition in dreams and omens. Just as Bacon banished religion from science, so did Shakespeare from Art; and when the former complained that the teachers of religion were against natural philosophy, they were equally against the stage. From Bacon's example it seems clear that Shakespeare left religious matters unnoticed on the same ground as himself, and took the path of morality in worldly things; in both this has been equally misconstrued, and Le Maistre has proved Bacon's lack of Christianity, as Birch has done that of Shakespeare. . . . In both a similar combination of different mental powers was at work, and as Shakespeare was often involuntarily philosophical in his profoundness, Bacon was not seldom surprised into the imagination of the poet. . . . In Bacon's works we find a multitude of moral sayings and maxims of experience from which the most striking mottoes might be drawn for every Shakespearean play, aye, for every one of his principle characters, testifying to a remarkable

¹ Hart's *Romance of Yachting*.

harmony in their mutual comprehension of human nature. In these maxims lie at once, as it were, the whole theory of Shakespeare's dramatic forms and of his moral philosophy."¹
— (1850).

CHAMBERS'S EDINBURGH JOURNAL.

"What was to hinder William Shakspeare from reading, appreciating, and purchasing these dramas, and thereafter *keeping a poet*, as Mrs. Packwood did? This is at least as plausible as most of what is contained in the many bulky volumes written to connect the man William Shakspeare with the poet of 'Hamlet.'

"We repeat, that there is nothing recorded in his everyday life that connects the two, except the simple fact of his selling poems and realizing the proceeds, and their being afterwards published with his name attached; and the statements of Ben Jonson, which however are quite compatible with his being in the secret."²—(1852).

DELIA BACON.

"My visit to Mr. Carlyle was very rich; I wish you could have heard him laugh. Once or twice I thought he would have taken the roof off. And first, they were perfectly stunned—he and the gentleman [James Spedding] he had invited to meet me. They turned black in the face at my presumption. 'Do you mean to say' so and so? inquired Mr. Carlyle, with strong emphasis; and when I said that I did, they looked at me with staring eyes, speechless for want of words in which to convey their sense of my audacity. At length, Mr. Carlyle came down upon me with such a volley; I did not mind it in the least. I told him he did not know what was in the

¹ We quote the above from a remarkable work, entitled 'A Study of Shakespeare,' published in Germany in four volumes in 1850. It was at that time not only the high-water mark of Shakespearean criticism in the world, but also the actual forerunner of the new era in it, that dawned upon mankind in Miss Bacon's publication seven years later. Gervinus must be ranked with Lessing in honors conferred upon German scholarship.

² The author of the article is said to have been Mr. Jameson.

plays, if he said that; and no one can who believes that that book by Whiteoak. It was then that he began to shriek. You could have heard him a mile. I told him, too, that I should not think of questioning his authority in such a case if it were not with me a matter of *knowledge*. I did not advance it as an opinion. They began to be moved with my coolness at length, and before the meeting was over they agreed to hold themselves in a state of readiness to receive what I had to say on the subject.”¹ — (1853).

DAVID MASSON.

“Shakespeare is as astonishing for the exuberance of his genius in abstract notions, and for the depth of his analytic and philosophic insight, as for the scope and minuteness of his poetic imagination. It is as if into a mind poetical in form there had been poured all the matter that existed in the mind of his contemporary, Bacon. In Shakespeare’s plays, we have thought, history, exposition, philosophy, all within the round of the poet. The only difference between him and Bacon sometimes is, that Bacon writes an essay and calls it his own, while Shakespeare writes a similar essay and puts it in the mouth of a Ulysses or a Polonius.”—(1853).

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

“What I claim for this [Delia Bacon’s] work is that the ability employed in its composition has been worthy of its great subject, and well employed for our intellectual interests, whatever judgment the public may pass upon the questions discussed. And after listening to the author’s interpretation of the plays, and seeing how wide a scope she assigns to them, how high a purpose and what richness of inner meaning, the thoughtful reader will hardly return again—not wholly, at all events—to the common view of them and of their author. It is for the public to say whether my country-woman has proved her theory. In the worst event, if she has failed, her failure

¹ In letter to her sister, published in Theodore Bacon’s ‘Biographical Sketch of Delia Bacon,’ p. 62.

will be more honorable than most peoples' triumphs; since it must fling upon the old tombstone at Stratford-on-Avon the noblest tributary wreath that has ever lain there."¹—(1857).

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH.

"Thus we see that Bacon and Shakspeare both flourished at the same time, and might, either of them, have written these works, as far as dates are concerned, and that Bacon not only had the requisite learning and experience, but also that his wit and poetic faculty were exactly of that peculiar kind which we find exhibited in these plays."²—(1857).

SOPHIA (PEABODY) HAWTHORNE.³

"I believe Lord Bacon and Shakespeare to be one and the same person, or rather I believe that Lord Bacon wrote what are called Shakespeare's plays and sonnets . . . He shared with the divine Plato the highest human intellect."—(1857).

LORD PALMERSTON.

"Augustus Craven, having mentioned giving to Palmerston a book or pamphlet trying to disprove that Shakspeare wrote

¹ Preface to Delia Bacon's 'The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded.' Mr. Hawthorne's remarks ought to have furnished the key-note to the discussion that has followed.

² Smith's 'Bacon and Shakespeare.' In a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, written June 2, 1857, Mr. Smith said: "For upwards of twenty years I have held the opinion that Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare Plays." In public announcement of this theory, however, he was anticipated by Miss Delia Bacon.

³ Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne, a lady of fine intellectual powers and high culture. She read some of the chapters of Miss Delia Bacon's book before they were printed, and expressed her opinion of them in these words:

"MY DEAR MISS BACON:— Mr. Hawthorne wishes me to tell you that your manuscript arrived safely on Saturday evening. He has not read it yet, for the very good reason that he could not, as I have had possession of it ever since it came, and only finished it last evening. My dear Miss Bacon, I feel so ignorant in the presence of your extraordinary learning, that it seems absurd in me even to say what I think of your manuscripts, and yet I cannot help it; for I never read so profound and wonderful a criticism, and I think there never was such a philosophic insight and appreciation since Lord Bacon himself. No subject has so great a fascination for me, as 'divine philosophy,' this searching into the nature of things, and extracting their essence, and discovering the central order, the Law that perpetually is striving to bring Harmony, and which

the plays which go by his name, Houghton added: 'Palmerston used to say he rejoiced to have lived to see three things,—the reintegration of Italy, the unveiling of the mystery of China and Japan, and the explosion of the Shakespearian illusions.'"¹ (c. 1860.)

NATHANIEL HOLMES.

"It should be understood to what manner of man this authorship belongs; for it is not only

— 'a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd'—

but also a positive injury done to learning and philosophy, and to every individual scholar and man, who shall be taught to believe the enormous impossibility that such works could be, and were, written by mere genius without learning, or by some more fantastically superhuman inspiration. Does not any man feel an unutterable indignation when he discovers (after long years of thought and study perhaps) that he has been all the while misled by false instruction, and that consequently the primest sources of truth have been left lumbering his shelves in neglect . . . [while he has] been put off and befooled with paltry child's fables? By the help of the

never can be broken — I mean, without a darkening of the universe. I am not one of those who have

' a credence in my heart,
An esperance so obstinately strong,
As doth outdo the attest of eyes and ears.'"

TROIUS AND CRESSIDA, (v. 2, 121).

We think that this judgment of the character of Miss Bacon's writings was prophetic. Unfortunately, and to the disgrace of modern scholarship, it is prophecy still. The time is coming when Miss Bacon will be considered as the ablest and most courageous woman, the true heroine, of the nineteenth century.

¹ From the Diary of Rt. Hon. Sir Mountstuart E. Grant.

Lord Houghton (Richard Monckton Milnes), referring to the above when on a visit to this country a few years ago, assured Dr. Appleton Morgan, president of the New York Shakespeare Society, that he no longer considered Shakspeare, the actor, as the author of the plays of Shakespeare.

Eternal Power and such abilities as we possess, let the truth and the proof of it come forth" ¹—(1866).

WILLIAM H. FURNESS.

"I am one of the many who have never been able to bring the life of William Shakspere and the plays of Shakespeare within a planetary space of each other. Are there any two things in the world more incongruous? Had the plays come down to us anonymously, had the labor of discovering the author been imposed upon after generations, I think we could have found no one of that day but F. Bacon to whom to assign the crown. In this case it would have been resting now on his head by almost common consent.

"The popular reluctance to entertain Miss Delia Bacon's opinion and yours appears to have no better cause than the fear of losing a great miracle of genius. But the miracle is far grander, besides being a rational miracle, when we make Shakespeare and Bacon one."²—(1866).

THOMAS PREWEN.

"If you by accident have not seen a small two-shilling volume by W. H. Smith, entitled 'Bacon and Shakespeare,' you should get it. I confess myself an entire convert to his opinion, that Bacon and not Shakspere wrote those wonder-

¹ Preface to Holmes's Authorship of Shakespeare.'

The author of this work, the profoundest yet written on the subject, is still living (1899), at the age of eighty-five, in retirement in Cambridge, Mass. He has been Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of the State of Missouri, a law professor at Harvard University, and a deep thinker in some of the most abstruse problems of modern thought.

² Letter to Hon. Nathaniel Holmes, printed in Holmes's 'Authorship of Shakespeare,' p. 628.

Mr. Furness, one of the most able scholars of his day, was father of H. H. Furness of Philadelphia, editor of the *New Variorum Shakespeare*, now in process of publication. It is a remarkable fact that the son at the inception of his great enterprise had never given any "prolonged thought" (as he has confessed) to the subject of the authorship, notwithstanding his father's well-known convictions in regard to it. We shall consider it a just penalty if the new *Variorum* becomes, as it is likely to become, a magnificent monument to a dead superstition.

ful plays. I was delighted to see that Lord Palmerston was equally a convert to that opinion. I have held it for years.”¹ (1867).

EDWIN P. WHIPPLE.

“To this individuality we tack on a universal genius, which is about as reasonable as it would be to take the controlling power of gravity from the sun and attach it to one of the asteroids.”² — (1869).

JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN.

“What do we know of Shakespeare? Is he much more than a name, *vox et præterea nihil*? Is not the traditional object of an Englishman’s idolatry, after all, a nebula of genius, destined like Homer to be resolved into its separate and independent luminaries, as soon as we have a criticism powerful enough for the purpose? I must not be supposed for a moment to countenance such scepticism myself, though it is a subject worthy the attention of a sceptical age.”³ — (1870).

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

“Nobody believes any longer that immediate inspiration is possible in modern times; . . . and yet everybody seems to take it for granted of this one man Shakspeare.”⁴ — (1870).

HENRY J. RUGGLES.

“This presents one of the most extraordinary facts in the history of the human mind. It makes necessary the conclusion that two men, living contemporaneously in the same town, then a comparatively small city,—one a philosopher,

¹ Letter to Mr. James Spedding.

² Whipple’s ‘Age of Elizabeth,’ p. 36.

³ From Newman’s ‘Grammar of Assent,’ p. 276.

⁴ Lowell’s ‘Among my Books,’ p. 101. Mr. Lowell and Dr. O. W. Holmes frequently discussed this problem together, the former saying in explanation, “It is genius.” “No,” the Dr. would reply “It is not genius; genius cannot give a man learning.” Mr. Longfellow also had an intelligent interest in the question, and made frequent inquiries concerning it.

endowed with the most brilliant imagination, the other a most imaginative poet, possessing the profoundest philosophical genius, and both reckoned among the greatest thinkers the world ever saw — did, possibly in the same year, at the same time, and certainly at the same period of their lives, write, without any interchange of views or opinions, upon the same identical subjects, follow the same train of thought, arrive at the same conclusions, and digest the results of their study, reading and meditation into the same system or body of philosophy, the which one stated to the world in abstract scientific propositions, while the other embodied it in poetic forms and dramatic creations. No coincidence of mental action so remarkable as this can be found, it is believed, in any other age of the world.¹ — (1870).

W. HEPWORTH DIXON.

“What you say about your conviction that Bacon wrote the Shakespeare dramas is not surprising to me. That question is a strange one, indeed; but the argument in proof of your theory is very strong.”² — (1877).

CHARLES DICKENS.

‘The life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery, and I tremble every day lest something should turn up.’³ — (1880).

WILLIAM THOMSON, MELBOURNE.

‘Identification will come in due time. Meanwhile the admissions show how able men perceive in the works of Bacon indications of a mind gifted with the highest poetic power.’⁴ — (1880).

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

“Our Shakespearean scholars hereabouts [Boston, Mass.]

¹ From ‘The Method of Shakespeare as an Artist,’ p. 289.

² In letter to Dr. Robert M. Theobald of Blackheath, London. Mr. Dixon, a well known littérateur, was the author of two works on Francis Bacon. He was engaged on another at the time of his death.

³ From Halliwell-Phillipps ‘New Lamps or Old?’

⁴ From ‘On Renaissance Drama,’ p. 30.

are very impatient whenever the question of the authorship of the Plays and Poems is even alluded to. It *must* be spoken of, whether they like it or not. We'll

—‘have a starling shall be taught to speak
Nothing but’—

Verulam, whenever Shakespeare is mentioned, if need be. The wonderful parallelisms must and will be wrought out and followed out to such fair conclusions as they shall be found to force honest minds to adopt.”¹—(1883).

KUNO FISCHER.²

“Bacon desired nothing less than a natural history of the passions, the very thing that Shakespeare produced.” — (1884.)

WILLIAM D. O’CONNOR.

“Mr. Richard Grant White says that ‘the great inherent absurdity of the Baconian belief lies in the unlikeness of Bacon’s mind and style to those of the writer of the plays.’ Of all fudge ever written this is the sheerest. What likeness of mind and style could he detect between Sir William Blackstone’s charming verses, ‘A Lawyer’s Farewell to his Muse,’ and the same Sir William Blackstone’s ‘Commentaries’? What likeness of mind and style could he establish between the famous treatise by Grotius on the ‘Rights of Peace and War,’ and the stately tragedy by Grotius entitled ‘Adam in Exile’? Where is the identity of mind and style between Sir Walter Raleigh’s dry-as-dust ‘Cabinet Council’ and Sir

¹ Letter to Mrs. Henry Pott, London, England. Some doubts having been cast upon Dr. Holmes’ letter, we take this opportunity to say that the above is a faithful transcript of a portion of it, made for us in photographic fac-simile in the British Museum.

It has also been asserted that the poet changed his mind on the authorship question when he visited Stratford during the “Hundred Days.” This is an error. He simply expressed the opinion, a perfectly reasonable one, that almost any person, born and bred in that town and subjected to all its influences, would favor the local traditions.

² Professor of Philosophy in University of Heidelberg, and one of the foremost literary critics of Germany. Not a Baconian.

Walter Raleigh's magnificent and ringing poem, 'The Soul's Errand'? What likeness of mind and style could he find between Coleridge's 'Aids to Reflection' and the unearthly bronze melodies and magian imagery of Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan'? What likeness of mind and style exists between the exquisite riant grace, lightness, and Watteau-color of Milton's 'Allegro', the gracious and an-dante movement and sweet cloistral imagery of Milton's 'Penseroso' and the 'Tetra-chordon' or the 'Areopagitica' of the same John Milton? Are the solemn rolling harmonies of 'Paradise Lost' one in mind and style with the trip-hammer crash of the reply to Salmasius by Cromwell's Latin Secretary? Of all propositions I have ever heard, this of Mr. White's passes—that a man must show the same "mind and style" in writing science and philosophy that he does in writing poetry!"¹ (1886).

PROFESSOR FRANCIS W. NEWMAN.

"Do the combatants intend to go to the bottom of the purely historical question? No more, I think, than did the ancient Greek critics into the Homeric question. They were as proud of Homer as we of Shakespeare, and insisted on believing that the blind 'Homer' of the Hymn to Apollo wrote the other hymns, and the 'Iliad,' and the 'Capture of Troy,' and the 'Margites.' Modern criticism has made a great overturn of the Greek notion. . . . Are the devotees of Shakspeare determined to make him a miracle?"²—(1887).

¹ From 'Hamlet's Note Book,' p. 56. Mr. Hawthorne was accustomed to say that O'Connor was the only man he ever met who had read Miss Bacon's book through to the end.

As to diversity of styles, we quote from Dr. Abbot's Life of Francis Bacon, p. 447: "Few men have shown equal versatility in adapting their language to the slightest shade of circumstance and purpose. His style depended upon whether he was addressing a king, or a great nobleman, or a philosopher, or a friend; whether he was composing a State paper, pleading in a State trial, magnifying the Prerogative, extolling Truth, discussing studies, exhorting a judge, sending a New Year's present, or sounding a trumpet to prepare the way for the Kingdom of Man over Nature."

² The Echo, London.

COUNT VITZTHUM D'ECKSTÄDT.¹

"I am convinced that Bacon left the MSS. either with Percy or Sir Toby Matthew, with authority to publish after his death. But the civil war broke out, and the trustees may have thought that under the rule of Cromwell and the Puritans the memory of Bacon, as a philosopher, would have been ruined, if it were published that he was the author of these dramas. In the interest of their deceased friend, they may have destroyed the MSS., together with the key." — (1888).

LOUIS DE RAYNAL.

"It has often been said of Shakespeare that he was even more of a philosopher than a poet. Bacon's ambition was to grasp the universe, making all knowledge his province. Lessing has profoundly remarked of Shakespeare that his drama is the mirror of nature. And M. de Rémusat has said that 'in Bacon's ordinary way of reflecting and representing the characters and affairs of men we cannot but notice something which brings Shakespeare to mind.' The analogy between the two is certainly very strong."² — (1888).

WALT WHITMAN.

"Firmly convinced that Shakspere of Stratford could not have been the author."³ — (1888).

SIR LEWIS MORRIS.

"That Shakespeare possessed an altogether extraordinary knowledge of law, of medicine, of science, of philosophy, of language, of everything, in short, which would be impossible for an uneducated man, whatever his genius as a poet might be, has long seemed to me an insoluble mystery." — (1888).

¹ Privy Councillor to the Emperor of Austria.

² In a letter to the 'Correspondant' (Paris). This distinguished jurist says: "When the editor of the 'Correspondant' received my article, he told me that, after studying the question, his convictions went even beyond mine."

³ Kennedy's 'Life of Walt Whitman,' p. 30.

GERALD MASSEY.

“The philosophical writings of Bacon are suffused and saturated with Shakespeare’s thought. . . . These likenesses in thought and expression are mainly limited to those two contemporaries. It may also be admitted that one must have copied from the other. This fact is reasonably certain, and deserves to be treated with courtesy.”¹—(1888).

JOHN BRIGHT.

“Any man who believes that William Shakspeare of Stratford wrote ‘Hamlet’ or ‘Lear’ is a fool.”²—(1889).

W. E. GLADSTONE.

“Considering what Bacon was, I have always regarded your discussion as one perfectly serious and to be respected.”³—(1889).

W. T. HARRIS.

“I see by your aid, better than before, the strength of Bacon’s claim.”⁴—(1890).

PROFESSOR DAVID SWING.

“If Shakspeare wrote the plays and poems attributed to him, nothing is so useless as a good education.”⁵—(1890).

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER WINCHELL.

“I am a believer in the Baconian theory.”⁵—(1890).

PROFESSOR SAMUEL EDMUND BENGOUGH.

“Experience disposes me to think that most of the finer Shakespearean Plays may be illustrated from the works of

¹ And yet in the same breath Mr. Massey pronounced the Baconian Theory “a revolt against common sense.”

² To an interviewer during his last illness. The ‘Rochdale Observer’ (his home newspaper) reported him as “scornfully angry with deluded people who believe that Shakspeare wrote ‘Othello.’” Issue of March 27, 1889.

³ In letter to Dr. R. M. Theobald, Blackheath, England.

⁴ In letter to us. Prof. Harris is U. S. Commissioner of Education.

⁵ In letter to us.

Bacon in the same way. If this be so, it certainly suggests the exceeding probability that the universal genius, enthroned by Ben Jonson on the summit of Parnassus, and the author of the Plays were one and the same person."— (1890).

REV. H. R. HAWEIS.

"We are all Baconians here."¹— (1890).

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

"I have read thy able Brief with interest. Whether Bacon wrote the wonderful plays or not, I am quite sure the man Shakspeare neither did nor could." —(1891).

GEN. BENJAMIN F. BUTLER.

"I am a firm believer in the Baconian theory."²—(1891).

FRANCIS PARKMAN.

"Some of the points you raise are very hard to answer."² — (1891).

MRS. HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.

"One who loves all of Shakespeare and who was brought up on Charles Knight's conjectural biography, and also loves Bacon and burns with his wrongs, is cruelly torn between two opinions. But it makes Bacon a supernal being."²— (1891).

SIR JOSEPH N. MCKENNA, M. P.

"On the general question of the authorship of the Shakespeare Plays, I may say that I have no more doubt that Lord Bacon was the author of all of them, and of the poetry attributed to Shakspeare, than I have of the fact that Pope wrote the Essay on Man."² — (1891).

¹ In letter to us. One year later (1891), Mr. Haweis said that he had never met any one who, having thoroughly investigated the matter, came to a different conclusion.

² In letter to us.

ROBERT M. THEOBALD.

"I believe that if the question could be made a material one in some action at law, where either character or money was at stake, it would be perfectly easy for any barrister of ordinary skill to carry the plaintiff's case triumphantly with an intelligent jury."¹ — (1891).

GAIL HAMILTON.

"You have put it briefly, succinctly; it seems to me, incontrovertibly."² — (1891).

JOHN L. T. SNEED.

"When one comes to study the literature of the subject in an honest quest of truth, it will occur to him, as a strange feature of the controversy, that the literary world has confided for three hundred years in tradition alone, and thus accepted the belief that the jolly lessee of the Globe and Blackfriars wrote the celebrated plays, collected after his death in the folio of 1623; and yet, upon thorough investigation, it is manifest that he never wrote a line of them."³ — (1891).

LYSANDER HILL.

"The weight of evidence is, I think, in favor of Bacon."⁴ — (1891).

HENRY LABOUCHERE.

"The case for Bacon, thus put, is a strong one. There is nothing particularly improbable in Shakespeare, as the man-

¹ In letter to us.

² Miss Abigail Dodge in letter to us. She said further that one day, as she was reading the historical Plays, the conviction suddenly flashed upon her mind that Shakspeare, considering his position in life, could never have written them. He did not have, and under the circumstances could not have had, the kind of knowledge necessary for the purpose. "You have now converted me, and I shall never be re-converted."

³ Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of the State of Tennessee, in letter to us.

⁴ It was this utterance of a college classmate, an eminent lawyer of Chicago and a gentleman of strongly conservative tendencies, that first called our serious attention to this controversy.

ager of a theatre, having given his name to plays that he produced, and the author of which had grounds not to wish to be known as their writer. In any case, it is not more improbable than that the uneducated son of a man who could not write, and whose daughter could not write, came up to London from a small country town, very shortly afterwards wrote a play like *Hamlet*, and followed it up with plays which involved a knowledge of ancient and modern literature, of several foreign languages, and of the niceties of forensic procedure; and then went back to his country town to consort with the clowns who had been the friends of his youth.”¹— (1891).

PRINCE BISMARCK.

“On this, as on a previous occasion, Bismarck referred to the controversy concerning the authorship of Shakespeare’s plays. He gave expression to a half-hearted belief that there might well be something in the supposition that Lord Bacon and not Shakespeare had written them. ‘Well, well,’ he said, with one of his significant looks implying doubt or at least an open mind on the subject, ‘after all there may be something in it.’ He did not pretend to any special knowledge, but he said that he could not understand how it were possible that a man, however gifted with the intuition of genius, could have written what was attributed to Shakespeare unless he had been in touch with the great affairs of state, behind the scenes of political life, and also intimate with all the social courtesies and refinements of thought which, in Shakespeare’s time, were only to be met with in the highest circles.

It also seemed to Prince Bismarck incredible that the man who had written the greatest dramas in the world’s literature, could of his own free will, whilst still in the prime of life, have retired to such a place as Stratford-on-Avon and lived there for years, cut off from intellectual society and out of touch with the world.”²— (1892).

¹ The Truth, London.

² From Sidney Whitman’s ‘Personal Reminiscences of Prince Bismarck,’ pp. 135-6.

THOMAS W. WHITE.

“I have been driven to the conclusion that Shakspeare had nothing to do with the composition of the Plays.”¹— (1892).

FRANCES E. WILLARD.

“It seems perfectly reasonable to me that Lord Bacon and a number of other brilliant thinkers of the Elizabeth era, who were nobles, and who, owing to the position of the stage, would not care to have their names associated with the drama, composed or moulded the plays.”²— (1893).

O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

“In his general position as showing the impossibility of the Shakspearean authorship Mr. Reed is unanswerable.”²— (1893).

“There is a bitter tragedy in the mistaken enthusiasm that for more than two centuries has been scattering flowers on the wrong grave and laying garlands on the wrong head.”— *Idem.*

PROFESSOR A. E. DOLBEAR.

“It appears from the evidence presented highly improbable that Shakspeare either wrote or could have written what has been attributed to him.”²— (1893).

MARY A. LIVERMORE.

“The arguments for Bacon [in the ‘Arena Magazine’] demonstrate the impossibility of the Shakspearean authorship. Some other person than William Shakspeare wrote the Shakespeare Plays.”²— (1893).

WILLIAM THEOBALD.

“Shakspeare, whose name suggested the pseudonym under which the plays appeared, could have had no possible objection as an actor to be thought the writer of the plays pro-

¹ ‘Our English Homer,’ VIII.

² The ‘Arena Magazine,’ Boston, Mass.

duced under his management. The attribution added to his importance and may have swelled his profits. But with Bacon the case was far different. His mother was a rigid Puritan, who detested plays and actors, and to whom it would have been a terrible affliction had she known that her son, of whose abilities she was so proud, was wasting his time and energies on such compositions. Would such a mother as his have felt easy in her mind as to the sources whence her son had derived his models for such characters as *Doll Tearsheet* and *Mistress Quickly*?"¹ — (1894).

EDWIN BORMAN.

"Bacon's *Instauratio Magna* is composed of two parts. He wrote one part in form of scientific prose and under his own name; he wrote the other, the parabolical part, which was intended for the future of humanity in the form of dramas under the pseudonym of William Shakespeare." (1894).

THERON S. E. DIXON.

"We cannot conclude without a brief word of tribute to Delia Bacon. Alone, and first in all the world, she discerned Bacon's authorship of the plays. Realizing profoundly the value of her discovery, this noble woman freely devoted her life to its development. Crossing the Atlantic to prosecute her researches in London, she was compelled by her poverty to live there in a garret, and almost literally upon bread and water. Through the effect of her privations while thus absorbed in her work, her mind at length became clouded, and her life went out in darkness, — a sacrifice to her devotion. But through her untiring efforts, her discovery had been published; and since then all who have dealt with the

¹ From an address delivered at Budleigh Salterton in 1894. It is pertinent to add that Sir Thomas Bodley, who founded the library that bears his name at Oxford and who would not admit dramas (which he called "riffes raffes") into it, tells us that Bacon "wasted many years of his life on such study as was not worthy of him." What studies? Who can suggest one that fits, if it be not dramatic? And if dramatic, what so likely as the Shake-speare Plays, thirty three editions of which, taken singly, were anonymous?

theme have but labored in the exploration and development of the rich mine she first discovered and disclosed to the world; —and to her be the wreath of immortality.” —(1895).

BERNARD TEN BRINK.

“The world’s continued belief in Shakspeare is a morbid phenomenon of the time.”¹ —(1895).

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

“I can’t help anticipating that, some of these days, Bacon letters or other papers will turn up, interpretive of his, at present, dark phrase to Sir John Davies, of ‘your concealed poet.’ We have noble contemporary poetry, unhappily anonymous, and I shall not be surprised to find Bacon the concealed singer of some of it. May I live to have my expectation verified.”

PROFESSOR GEORG CANTOR.²

“For many years I have in hours of leisure granted me given much study to the life and works of Francis Bacon, who in my eyes is one of the greatest geniuses of Christianity. By this I have become persuaded that the opinion, so ridiculed by most scholars, that he was the author of the Shakespearian dramas, is founded on truth.” —(1896).

GEORGE JAMES.

“To believe Shakspeare to have written these wondrous works, saturated through and through with the reforming spirit of Francis Bacon, containing his philosophic theories and discoveries, advocating his new philosophy over that of Aristotle, containing the favorite, forceful phrases of his mother, the Lady Anne, his brother Anthony, and the Earl of Essex; — to believe that William Shakspeare wrote these is to violate every principle of common sense, and be blind

¹ Five Lectures on Shakespeare.

² Professor of Mathematics and Doctor of Philosophy in the twin universities of Halle a.d. Saale and Wittenberg.

to truths plain as beacon lights for our guidance.”¹
— (1896).

JOHN A. BINGHAM.

“The careful reading of your book has confirmed me in the opinion, long since formed, that the author of the immortal plays was foremost of living men in all the literature and learning of his time, and who had taken ‘all knowledge for his province.’”² — (1896).

REV. I. C. MANCHESTER.

“Only once grant that Bacon lacked imagination (he had infinite imagination), that he was devoid of humor (his humor was unbounded and inextinguishable), that he had no leisure to write the plays (he had years of waiting for place and work and years of struggle with debt), that he had no poetic faculty (his noblest prose is the highest poetry in all but metre), that he was cold and unsympathetic and selfish (Sir Tobie Matthew, and Rawleigh and other contemporaries did not think so) — only grant these postulates (all false) and a few others, and it will be certain that he did not write the plays.”² — (1896).

PROFESSOR — — —.³

“I am a concealed Baconian.” — (1897).

EDWARD JAMES CASTLE, Q. C.

“Malone twisted this apology of Chettle’s into an apology to Shakespeare. It is difficult to see how the language could be so understood, even by one of his most ardent admirers. The letter was not addressed to Shakespeare; he was not one of the play-writers; he was a pretender in Greene’s eyes, and as far as one can see he was severely let alone by Chettle. Of course, it is immaterial whether Chettle apologized to him,

¹ ‘Short Stories on the Origin of the Plays.’ Birmingham, Eng.

² In letter to us.

³ — University, Switzerland.

or to Peele or Lodge. But it is material to see whether a whole succession of writers, Malone, Steevens, Dyce, Collier, Halliwell, Knight, and a host of minor authors, are so blinded by their admiration for Shakespeare that they cannot read a simple document correctly.”¹ — (1897).

THOMAS DAVIDSON.

“For many years I have felt exactly as Whittier did, sure that Shakspeare did not write the Plays. I believe you have proved your thesis.”² — (1898).

DR. THEODORE STRÄTER.³

“There are, in this view, many more treasures yet to be gathered from Shakespeare, of the riches of which few have an idea. Shakespeare is, in truth, as Vischer⁴ calls him, ‘*a yet unknown master of composition.*’” — (1898).

BIRMINGHAM (ENG.) DAILY GAZETTE.

“The greatest of poets ‘walked the earth unguessed at,’ said Matthew Arnold. He has been guessed at ever since. Biographers fill up the gaps in his life much as the old geographers filled up the blank spaces in the map of Africa by putting elephants in place of towns; — the biographers fill up intervals of two or five years by saying — ‘Perhaps,’ ‘Probably,’ ‘Maybe,’ and ‘Doubtless.’ Mr. Edwin Reed contends that there was an actor at Stratford-on-Avon, named William Shakspeare, and that his name ought not to be confused with the pen-name William Shakespeare which appeared on the printed edition of the famous plays. His volume of close on 300 pages is packed with historical facts. There is nothing in it about cryptograms, ciphers, and other crazes; and that is a blessing. Mr. Reed depends upon his

¹ Mr. Castle contends that Bacon and Shakspeare collaborated in the composition of the Plays.

² In letter to us.

³ A German philosopher and author of high repute.

⁴ Friedrich Theodore Vischer, a German writer, born at Ludwigsburg in 1807; became Professor of Philosophy at Tübingen in 1844.

tory, parallel facts, coincidences, and other things capable of definition or demonstration. We purpose to select a few of his points, without comment, except to say that a bare setting forth of casual statements is scarcely just to the author, any more than the production of a few bricks would suffice to show the style and quality of an architect's designs. Mr. Reed's volume is valuable as showing the cumulative evidence in favour of Bacon, and though that evidence may be successfully rebutted it must be considered as a whole before its true weight can be ascertained. In order to produce a good and trustworthy work Mr. Reed has studied, and he quotes no fewer than 117 authorities, only eleven of whom favour the Baconian theory. The remaining 106 are Shakespearians — who unconsciously help Mr. Reed to his conclusions.

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“Here we must cease. We have not mentioned one-fourth of Mr. Reed's arguments, facts, and deductions, nor can we mention those subjects which cannot be condensed into a sentence. But we have probably said enough to show that in Mr. Reed's three hundred pages there is matter for reflection. No doubt it is all nonsense of the saddest and sorriest kind. No doubt the 300 pages of elaborate demonstration can be demolished by a touch of the finger—and this makes it so very surprising that no one arises and demolishes it! We prefer to leave to others a task so simple, and will reserve our own energies for something more difficult.” — (1898).

PERCY W. AMES, F. S. A.

“Shakspeare has not only occupied the chief place in our respect and veneration, but he has also won his way into our affections, and this it is that makes his dethronement at once difficult and painful, even though our better judgment tells us that he was but the mask for the real author. . . . We can still speak of our Shakespeare, although with deeper

feelings and with more rational sentiment; but when we wish to get behind those brilliant productions to have a glimpse of the actual author, we think not of the commonplace bourgeois of Stratford, but of the poet and sage of St. Albans." ¹ — (1898.)

E. W. S.²

"That he ever cherished any ambition more exalted than that of being allowed to add esquire to his name; that it ever occurred to him that he owned any right to, power over, or interest in such a thing as a manuscript; that he possessed or wished to possess anything in the shape of a library; that he had acquired a taste for poetry or prose, history or philosophy; on all these points we have abundance of conjecture indeed, but of evidence fit to be trusted not one tittle. . . . It certainly cannot be proved that English literature owes anything whatever to his pen, except perhaps the mellifluous lines which in his lifetime he ordered to be cut upon his tombstone." — (1899)

PALL MALL GAZETTE (LONDON).

"The day has come when, rejecting fictitious lives of an imaginary Shakspeare, and scrutinizing the insignificant circumstances which are all that is known of him, the discrepancy becomes more and more apparent between the intellectual genius of the author of the plays and the sordid and squalid characteristics of the man of Stratford." — (1900).

W. H. EDWARDS.

"The English-speaking world has been humbugged in this matter long enough." ³ — (1900).

¹ From *Baconiana*, VI, 24. Mr. Ames is Secretary of the Royal Society of Literature, London.

² E. W. Smithson, author of 'Shakespeare-Bacon, An Essay.' London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co. An exceedingly interesting and finely written brochure. The passage, above quoted, is taken from the appendix.

³ Shaksper, not Shakespeare.' Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co.

www.libtool.com SAMUEL F. BARR.

“The Bacon-Shakspeare controversy has reached a crisis. The Baconians produce a chain of circumstantial evidence for their contention sufficient to carry the judgment of any intelligent juror, even in a capital case; and all the evidence attainable *must* be circumstantial. The Shakspeareans deny these proofs presented, and answer argument with vituperation. They nickname a controversy that began during Shakspeare’s active life in London, when the Plays were coming out on the stage, ‘new,’ ‘whimsical,’ and ‘nonsense.’ They offer no proof that the unlearned actor wrote these masterpieces of scholarly genius; while you have demonstrated the impossibility of an uneducated yokel having written them. And yet the myth-worshippers shout Hallelujahs to their idol and cling to their credulity. In this they are not alone.

“But all myths must yield in time, if combated: Slavery as a divine institution, polygamy, witchcraft, for ages held men in bondage, relying on immemorial prescription, general custom, and the sacred law. Who does not now despise any one who tolerates, practises or defends these hoary superstitions? Belief in none of these exploded follies and crimes is less degrading to the mind than a continuance in the myth that an unlearned actor who left no literary remains, no books, no members of his family able to read or write, whose parents made marks for their signatures, and whose active money-making life excludes all possibility of needful self-education, produced these learned and philosophical masterpieces,—unless a greater degradation is displayed in rejecting the now overwhelming evidence that these Plays were conceived by a man who, even in youth, took ‘all knowledge’ for his province, and whose astonishing genius and vigorous intellect made him easily the first scholar of his time, and the teacher for all time.”¹ — (1901).

¹ In letter to us.

WILLIAM A. SUTTON, S. J.
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“Sir Francis Cruise has been for many years what may be called the Apostle of Baconianism in Ireland. He it was who made a convert of Judge Henn. He found him one day, when sick, reading Shakespeare. When the doctor appeared, the learned judge closed the book, saying that he found the immortal dramatist a great solace in the tediousness of illness. ‘But,’ said Sir Francis, ‘are you sure that the dramatist was really named Shakespeare? For my part, I am quite sure that the Stratford player never wrote a line of the plays or poems.’ Sir Francis describes with great humor how the judge looked at him, as if he thought he was a lunatic, while at the same time evidently thinking of the probable consequences of being attended in his illness by a man capable of such fantastic notions. However, after some conversation and a course of reading prescribed by his physician, the invalid became what he remained to the end, an enthusiastic supporter and propagator of the only rational solution of the Shakespearean mystery.

“Some two years ago, Judge Henn met an Anglican dignitary at a country house in Galway, who showed signs of pain and repugnance when spoken to about Bacon as the undoubted author of Shakespeare, whereupon the subject was dropped. But the next day, when the canon was leaving, he consented to take with him Reed’s ‘Bacon vs. Shakspeare.’ Soon after, in a letter which the judge read for me, he cordially thanked him for the great service rendered, and added: “I am quite sure now that the player Shakspeare never wrote a line of the works commonly ascribed to him.”

— (1901).

W. H. MALLOCK.

“The mere theory that Bacon was the real author of the plays, though the mass of Shakespeare’s readers still set it down as a delusion, does not, indeed, contain anything essen-

¹ From BACONIANA, July, 1901.

tially shocking to common sense. On the contrary, it is generally recognized that on purely *a priori* grounds there is less to shock common sense in the idea that those wonderful compositions were the work of a scholar, a philosopher, a statesman, and a profound man of the world than there is in the idea that they were the work of a notoriously ill-educated actor, who seems to have found some difficulty in signing his own name.¹ — (1901).

ANNIE L. EDWARDS.

“The Baconian theory is a search for truth, a study in evolution, constructive, not destructive, a part of the archaeological spirit of the age that insists upon a scientific examination of all traditions and relics in order to have a satisfying reason for its faith. The Bacon-Shakspere Question should at least be frankly acknowledged to be an open one by both parties, and as such presented to the younger generation, who cannot afford to start with the old unqualified belief of Shakespeareans.”² — (1901).

A. P. SINNETT.

“The difficulty hitherto of getting a fair hearing for the mere literary argument has chiefly arisen from the illogical resentment shown by many people at the bare idea of de-throning a national idol. Shakespeare has so long been thought of as a genius of the very foremost order that any suggestion, tending to prove that he was a very commonplace person in reality, is treated as though it involved an attempt to detract from the sublimity of the works bearing his name. But in reason it must be conceded that we worship the memory of Shakespeare because we admire Hamlet, King Lear, and the rest. We do not admire the plays because any particular man wrote them. . . . The question is still one which most English newspapers and periodicals are afraid to discuss freely for fear of offending the blind prejudice above

¹ From *Nineteenth Century and After*.

² In letter to us.

referred to. Orthodox Shakspearean biographers simply ignore the all-important question as though it were a craze in notorious antagonism to well-known facts, like the idea that the earth is flat, and in this way the minds of people who might be capable of independent judgment, if they had the evidence before them, are left in complete ignorance of the prodigious force residing in the Baconian argument— unless, indeed, they have gone out of their way to make a special study of the Baconian books.”¹—(1901).

MRS. HELEN HINTON STEWART.

Lesson to English School-boys.

SHAKSPER.

“To gain command of English words and every grammar rule,
’Tis best to be a butcher’s son, and never go to school.

To form good plays in perfect style, and full of classic knowledge,
’Tis best to be a poacher bold, and never go to college.

To write of ladies, lords and dukes, of kings and kingly sport,
’Tis best to be a common man, and never go to court.

To write about philosophy, and law, and medicine,
’Tis best to stand at horses’ heads, and never read a line.

To treat of foreign lands in strains that all men must applaud,
’Tis best to stay in England, and never go abroad.

To prove that study cannot be ‘deep-searched with saucy looks,’
’Tis best to use a crib, and shun all Greek and Latin books.

To scale the heights of human bliss and sound the depths of woe,
’Tis best to make a steady ‘pile,’ and never let it go.

When come to ripe maturity and genius has full play,
’Tis best to lead an easy life, and lay the pen away.

To show that ‘knowledge is the wing whereby we fly to heaven,’
’Tis best that to your own dear child no lesson should be given.

To leave behind immortal fame as England’s greatest bard,
’Tis best to own no manuscripts and die of ‘drinking hard.’

BACON.

To win injustice and contempt from every biassed mind,
’Tis best to be the ‘wisest and the brightest of mankind.’

¹ From the National Review, August, 1901.

L' Envoi Sereieux.

SHAKE-SPEARE.

To warn the strong, to teach the proud, to give new knowledge scope,
 'Twas best to use a *non-de-plume*, and write in faith and hope
 That future ages, wiser grown, would learn the royal rule,
 That knowledge does not come to those who never go to school."¹

— (1901).

JUDGE WEBB.

"Nothing nowadays is sacred. Here, as elsewhere, the higher criticism has been at work. Difficulties in the way of the orthodox belief have stimulated inquiry; inquiry has suggested doubt; and doubt has largely developed into disbelief. . . . The author of the plays himself suggests the only way of determining the question. In the Sonnets he complains that every word of his all but told his name, and the American school of critics has taken and acted on the hint. The English school had ransacked ancient literature to show the familiarity of Shakespeare with the classics; the American school, on the other hand, has ransacked the works of Bacon, to show the astonishing parallelisms between them and the works of Shakespeare. The old school at the utmost threw a doubt on the pretensions of the half-educated young man who came up from Stratford; but it is only on the labors of the new school that we can rely for a demonstration that Shakespeare was another name for Bacon."²

— (1902).

THOS. COVERDALE.

"I am one of those who believe that Bacon wrote Shakespeare, and who do not require hidden messages and other mysteries to strengthen the faith that is in them. In writing to the local newspapers here on the subject, I have plainly

¹ From the Literary World (London) April 5, 1901.

² From *The Mystery of William Shakespeare, A Summary of Evidence*, page 237. His Honor was Regius Professor of Law and Public Orator in the University of Dublin; Sometime Fellow of Trinity College. The recent death of Judge Webb (1903) is a calamity, not only to his admiring countrymen, but also, in the department of letters, to the world. His book, both in manner and matter, is an honor to our age.

expressed the opinion that these ciphers and cryptograms and infolded meanings do but serve to distract attention from the main issue, and afford material to the scoffer."¹
—Christchurch, New Zealand (1902).

GEORGE C. BOMPAS.

"The facts of Shakspeare's life render his authorship of the plays so inconceivable that Schlegel pronounces it 'a mere fabulous story, a blind and extravagant error.' But in these plays the genius of Bacon is manifest; they bear the stamp of his character, they reflect his intellect, they speak his language, they mirror his life."² —(1902).

THE DAILY NEWS (London).

"There is nothing very outrageous in the supposition that the same mind might have given birth to the Essays and 'Hamlet.'" —(1902).

R. B. MARSTON.

"I am not a Baconian, but I have a perfectly open mind on the matter. I have no objection at all to being convinced that Sir Francis Bacon wrote the splendid dramas attributed to Shakespeare; it is so much easier to suppose from our unquestionable knowledge of his life and genius that he *might* have written them, than to accept from the unquestioned little that we know of Shakspeare and his life that he *could* have done so.

"It is unnecessary to refer at length to the extraordinary similarity in the knowledge of law, science, art, politics, history, literature, and every other branch of human understanding, exhibited by Shakespeare and Bacon."—(1902).

A JOURNALIST.

"The enterprise of making book-reviewing a *daily news* patent precludes long notices. It also, as you will under-

¹ In letter to us.

² From 'The Problem of the Shakespeare Plays,' p. 116.

stand, precludes real criticism of books, which, like yours, require profound and prolonged study, and considerable space for their examination; and, again, it compels concessions to the invincible superficiality of the vulgar.

“So, in saying that it makes no practical difference who wrote the plays, I was adopting the vulgar flippancy to excuse, vis-a-vis my newspaper-sceptics, my own earnest interest in the problem.”¹—(1902).

LORD PENZANCE.

“It is desperately hard, nay, impossible to believe that this uninstructed, untutored youth, as he came from Stratford, should have written these plays; and almost as hard, as it seems to me, to believe that he should have rendered himself capable of writing them by elaborate study afterwards. . . . The difficulty of imagining this young man to have converted himself in a few years from a state bordering on ignorance into a deeply read student, master of French and Italian, as well as of Greek and Latin, and capable of quoting and borrowing largely from writers in all these languages, is almost insuperable. . . . His name once removed from the controversy, there will not, I think, be much question as to the lawyer to whose pen the Shakespeare plays are to be attributed.”²—(1903).

JOSIAH P. QUINCY.

“What it has seemed to me most politic to undertake is to break the force of the silly contempt which has been lavished upon such sober arguments as you have given to the world. Such arguments are answered only when they are answered at their best, and this, so far as I know, has never been done. For this *best* is the cumulative force of hundreds of indications, any one of which, if it stood singly, might easily be

¹ In letter to us, from the literary editor of one of the great leading daily newspapers of the U. S.

² From ‘The Bacon-Shakspeare Controversy, a Judicial Summing-up,’ by Sir James Plaisted Wilde, Baron Penzance, Member of House of Peers, etc., etc.

explained. If the traditional theory is destined to collapse, it will require not only many sturdy blows, but also long and patient waiting; for the Stratford deer-stealer has been so wrapped about with human sentiment that foolish vituperation is meted to those who dare to suggest that his coronation robes are a poor fit, and seem better adapted to a bulkier personage."¹ — (1903).

AUTHOR OF 'IS IT SHAKESPEARE?'

"In my opinion we are not far from the time when our fellow-countrymen and the English-speaking peoples throughout the world will unanimously admit that the most wonderful genius that ever spoke and wrote the English language was the man who combined in *one brain* and produced from *one brain* the Essays and Philosophy of Francis Bacon and the Plays, Sonnets and Poems of William Shakespeare — undoubtedly the greatest miracle of intellect the world has ever seen, and a most extraordinary termination of the greatest literary mystification that ever passed unchallenged for nearly three hundred years."² — (1903).

JOURNAL DES DÉBATS, PARIS.

"The Baconian thesis has up to this day been asserted in presence of three successive generations by able and most sincere writers. . . . Such a controversy is therefore not disdainfully to be set aside, nor *a priori* declared unworthy of consideration." — (1903).

REV. FRANCIS HOWE JOHNSON.

"The main lines of the argument for the hypothesis that Francis Bacon was the author of the plays known as Shakespeare's are to me most reasonable.

"*First.* To believe that the man, William Shakspere, as known by the historical data that have come down to us,

¹ In letter to us.

² From 'Is it Shakespeare?' p. 335.

was the author of these plays, seems to me little short of monstrous.

Second. If we reject this popular tradition and are not satisfied in the vagueness of an unknown authorship, we must, if we can, fix upon some contemporary who had a mind deep enough, wide enough, trained in all the wisdom of the time, a man great enough, both as Philosopher and Poet, to make the hypothesis that he was their author worth while.

Third. Francis Bacon was such a man.

Fourth. There are good and sufficient reasons why, if he wrote the Plays, he should have wished to keep his authorship a profound secret.”¹—(1904).

JUDGE ARTHUR A. PUTNAM.

“Perhaps in the whole history of literature there has not been an instance more notable of rank unreason than the persistency, not to say infuriated stubbornness, with which intelligent men, in the blazing light of improbabilities, adhere to the idea of the unlettered, penurious, and litigious Shakspeare, who was never known to own a book, or write a sentence, or attend a school, being the author of the greatest literary works of all time.”²—(1904).

J. WARREN KEIFER.³

“I cannot accord it to him who, though rich, did not educate his children, and who, though he sought fame through a coat-of-arms claimed to have been earned by the valor of his great-grandfather, nowhere, not even in his last will and testament, claimed the fame of authorship,—such authorship,—and whose sole posthumous anxiety centred on his dust and bones remaining undisturbed in the chancel of Stratford church.”⁴—(1904).

¹ Author of the learned work, ‘Is it Reality?’ Andover, Mass.

² In letter to us.

³ Formerly Speaker of the National House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

⁴ From the Open Court, Feb. 1904.

GEORGE MOORE.

“You ask me for the story of my conversion to the Baconian theory. Well, I believe all conversions are very much like Saint Paul’s. An idea comes upon one suddenly, on the road to Damascus. The first time I heard Bacon mentioned as the possible author of the Plays and Poems, the idea lit up in my brain, and I felt certain that it could not have been the mummer. Nature’s rhythms seem irregular, but irregular things only seem irregular because we do not know them sufficiently; they conform to a law, and that a mummer should have written the plays seemed to me to run counter to every rhythm. The moment it was suggested that Bacon had written them, I felt as many must have felt when they heard for the first time that the earth goes round the sun. Things began to get concentric again; hitherto they had all been eccentric. The first book I read was Judge Webb’s, a good book for beginners, but when one knows the main lines of the argument there are no books but yours. Your books are always upon my table, and I constantly refer to them, and they give me the greatest pleasure. You advance arguments that are very striking, and I should like to point out those that have influenced me, but if I did so, I should be attaching too much importance to a link. No one argument is conclusive; it is the mass of evidence, and I am sure you will agree with me on this point.”¹— (1904).

HON. WILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR.

“You ask my opinion, in a few words, upon the Bacon-Shakspere controversy, which has been a study of immense interest to me for nearly twenty years. In examining a problem of such importance to English literature as the authorship of the plays attributed to Shakspere one can hardly use too great deliberation. I felt this so strongly that it was only after about ten years’ reading and reflection that I became a convinced Baconian. I have been brought to

¹ In letter to us.

this conclusion mainly by the impossibility of reconciling the facts we know concerning the life of the man of Stratford with the technical and universal knowledge inherent in the plays." ¹— Cliveden (1904).

APPLETON MORGAN, LL. D.

"What I have never been able to find out is, why the 'Higher Criticism' (i. e., the authorship question) of Shakespeare is 'ridiculous,' 'preposterous,' etc., as every book-reviewer and college professor assures us that it is. It may be most highly improbable that two burglaries in different localities were committed by the same burglar; but if the measurements of the foot-prints in both cases are identical, the theory that both were committed by the same burglar may be — such a theory is — neither 'ridiculous' nor 'preposterous.'

"If these gentlemen claim, later on, that they denied the whole proposition simply to bring out the facts, I should, however, highly approve of their course." ²— (1904).

CHARLES F. LIBBY. ³

"In the face of all the facts you have presented, I am unable to believe that the man Shakspeare could have written these master-pieces, but on the contrary find much to confirm the theory that Bacon *did*." — (1904).

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE.

"On the 23rd April, 1616, there died an obscure English actor, named Shekspere, to whom, on account of the similarity of the names, people afterwards attributed the works of a

¹ In letter to us.

² In letter to us. President of the New York Shakespeare Society; author of 'Venus and Adonis,' a study in the Warwickshire dialect; The Shakespearean Myth; Some Shakespearean Commentators; The Law of Literature; Editor of the Bankside Shakespeare, etc.

³ Portland, Maine.

more illustrious unknown, who signed himself 'William Shakespeare' (1904).

GEORGE F. TALBOT.²

"Since the discussion has been taken up by such competent disputants as yourself, so thoroughly versed as you are in the critical examination of evidence, so conversant with the whole compass of classical and historic literature and legend upon which the writer of the Shakespearean dramas must have fed his creative imagination, so qualified by a logical and judicial mind, the volunteer counsel on the other side, who have put more passion than reason in their arguments, and seem more satisfied that the crowd is with them than they are with the strength of their case, might as well abandon their line of defence, which has been to accuse you of being half-educated, cranky and insane. . . . The personage to whom you assign the just fame of these marvelous productions seems to have been in every way born, educated and equipped for such a work. He had the requisite learning, the speculative aptitude and habit, the rhetorical skill and poetic feeling that the most cursory reading discloses as the everywhere dominant tone in this grandest diapason of human speech." — (1904.)

W. H. W.

"This seat, No. 33, summing up to seven, should bring good fortune. I am pleased to have seen your work-table in this great library. Now I can picture you at work with a proper background to my picture. Some day the window through which light streamed upon your illuminating page will be treasured with its golden glass commemorating your achievements, and the alcove behind the window will be dedicated to the literature which has brought back to Francis, Lord Verulam, his own divine poems."³

¹ *Original*: "Le 23 avril 1616 mourait un obscur acteur anglais nomme Shekspere, auquel, à cause de la similitude des noms, on attribua plus tard les œuvres d'un inconnu plus illustre qui signait William Shakespeare." L'EUROPÉEN, 21, 1. 04

² Author and retired lawyer, Portland, Me.

³ Barton Room of the Boston (Mass.) Public Library.

ON THE OTHER SIDE.

~~www.libetels.com~~ opinions, as representative in character as possible, on the other side. They will also serve as materials for the history of this controversy, when the history shall be written.

THOMAS CARLYLE.¹

“There is not the least possibility of truth in the notion Miss Delia Bacon has taken up; the hope of ever proving it, or finding the least document that countenances it is equal to that of vanquishing the wind-mills by stroke of lance.

“Lord Bacon could as easily have created this planet as he could have written ‘Hamlet.’” — (1853).

BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

“It proves an unlimited power of credulity among the class to which its writer belongs, and throws some light upon that extraordinary mental process by which men of a crotchety turn of mind can set up pure unreason in the place of plain truth; but it proves nothing whatever about Francis Bacon, nor throws the smallest glimmer of illumination on those mysterious productions called Shakespeare's Plays.”² — (1856).

REV. LEONARD BACON.

“The great world does not care a sixpence who wrote ‘Hamlet.’”³ — (1856).

¹ Carlyle's judgment of a man's character and abilities was often very eccentric, as the following specimens will show: “Keats is ‘a curried dead dog’; Shelley, ‘a ghastly object’; Coleridge, ‘a puffy, obstructed-looking old man, talking in a maudlin sleep an infinite deal of nothing’; Lamb, ‘a pair of cratur, with a thin streak of cockney-wit, nothing humorous but his dress’; Walter Scott, ‘a toothless retailer of old wives' fables’; Sir Robert Peel, ‘a plausible fox’; Lord Melbourne, ‘a monkey’; Brougham, ‘an eternal grinder of commonplace’; J. W. Crocker, ‘an unhanged hound’; Lord John Russell, ‘a turnspit of good pedigree’; Wordsworth, ‘stooping to extract a spiritual catsup from mushrooms that were little better than toadstools.’” *Notes and Queries*, 1895.

² Nearly fifty years have elapsed since the above was written, and yet the plays are to all intents and purposes as “mysterious” now as ever. The key to them is in Bacon's works, as our readers will soon perceive and acknowledge.

³ In a letter to his sister in England, dissuading her from her enterprise.

NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

“There is in Miss Bacon’s work a spirit of subtle analysis, a deep moral insight, and a penetrating research which, separated from the monomania of her particular theory, enlists our admiration, and is adapted to throw much light upon Shakespeare’s genius. It makes us feel that there are in him vast depths of thought and presentations of great human and social laws of the development of which, as yet, we have scarcely dreamed.”¹—(1857).

GEORGE H. TOWNSEND.

“The Baconians are assailants of genius; they are hopelessly ignorant, and their very souls shudder at every kind of mental superiority. . . . Dirty work requires its peculiar instruments; none more readily attack the fame of others than those who have no reputation of their own to lose. . . . Have we no literary police? Oh, for an hour with the giant Christopher North!² Oh, for some swashing blows from his rhetorical cudgel to crush this fungus! Another, and perhaps a better plan would be, to gibbet the offenders.”—(1857).

‘THE ATHENÆUM.’

“Our readers heard two or three years ago that an American lady had announced in the intellectual city of New York a discovery that Will the Jester was a rogue strutting through space in his master’s clothes. They enjoyed the story, and they laughed still more when, about a year ago, the unmemoried³ W. H. Smith reproduced the American hallucination as his own, in a ponderous letter to Lord Ellsmere. But

¹ A remarkable prophecy, yet to be fulfilled.

² Christopher North was, to be sure, a great critic, but he did not hesitate to call Tennyson, on the appearance of the first book of Tennyson’s poems, an owl, and to say, “All that he wants is to be shot, stuffed, and stuck in a glass case, to be made immortal in a museum.”

³ Mr. Smith is not “unmemoried,” but, it is safe to say, the author of this gratuitous and disgraceful insult to his revered memory will be. None but ghouls insult the dead.

the jest is now stale. Yesterday's champagne is detestable. The rocket is burnt, and only a singed stick remains.

“Mr. Smith denies the appropriation of Miss Delia Bacon's theory, and assures us that he never heard the name of Miss Bacon until Sept., 1856. The question may be of slight importance *which* of two given individuals first conceived a crazy notion.”—(1857).

BISHOP WORDSWORTH.

“It has been a frequent subject of complaint that so little has come down to us respecting our poet's life. For my part, I am inclined to doubt whether it would be desirable for us to be more fully informed concerning it than we actually are.”¹—(1864).

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE.

“Shakspeare's ‘Romeo and Juliet’ explains to us the enthusiasm that the poor holder of horses at the door of a theatre has inspired in the most cultivated nation of the universe.”²—(1865).

JAMES SPEDDING.

“I believe that the author of the Plays, published in 1623, was a man called William Shakespeare. It was believed by those who had the best means of knowing, and I know nothing which should lead me to doubt it. . . . I doubt whether there are five lines together to be found in Bacon which could be mistaken for Shakespeare, or five lines in Shakespeare which could be mistaken for Bacon, by one who was familiar with the several styles and practiced in such observation.”³(1867).

¹We are sorry to note that Dr. H. H. Furness, our variorum editor of Shake-speare, shares this extraordinary opinion with the Bishop. He even goes farther and expresses the hope that we may never learn anything more than we now know of Shakspeare personally. How can this attitude of mind be explained consistently with one's self-respect?

²From *Shakespeare et son Oeuvres*.

³In letter to Hon. Nathaniel Holmes, published in Holmes' ‘Authorship of Shakespeare,’ 1887, pp. 616-17.

Mr. Spedding is chiefly and favorably known as the biographer

HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

“That the play~~er~~ was the author of these dramas is as well fixed as any fact in literary history can be.” — (1867).

and editor of Francis Bacon. He devoted nearly forty years of his life to this special work. He seems also to have been well acquainted with Shakespeare. It must be admitted, then, that by training, at least, he was the best fitted man of recent times to give an authoritative opinion on the subject in controversy. And he did give it without the slightest qualification against us before his death.

The world, however, is too full of just such instances of extraordinary self-deception to warrant us, after a thorough inquiry of our own, to surrender our conviction to his. The considerations he advances in his support are extremely unsatisfactory. For example, in this matter of style (one of two points only we have space now to consider), we are reasonably certain that he was in error, and we think we can make our readers equally certain of the error also. To this end we submit hereiu five passages from each of the two sets of works, and challenge anybody to apportion them to their respective authors simply on grounds of style:

“Contrary is it with hypocrites and impostors, for they in the church and before the people set themselves on fire and are carried, as it were, out of themselves, and, becoming as men inspired with holy furies, they set heaven and earth together.”

“It is a wonderful thing to see the semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his own ; they, by observing him, do bear themselves like foolish justices ; he, by conversing with them, is turned into a justice-like serving man. . . . It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught as men take diseases, one of another ; therefore, let men take heed of their company.”

“I have thought that some of Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well ; they imitated humanity so abominably.”

“Novelty only is in request ; it is as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course as it is virtuous to be constant in any undertaking. There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure, but security enough to make fellowship accursed.”

“Faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love.”

“Gentle whispers, which from more ancient traditions came at length into the flutes and trumpets of the Greeks.”

“Thus hast thou hanged our life on brittle pins,

To let us know it will not bear our sins.”

“If money go before, all ways do lie open.”

“It may be you will do posterity good, if, out of the carcass of dead and rotten greatness, as out of Samson's lion, there be honey gathered for future times.”

“False of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand ; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey.”

Our conclusion is, that when our two authors are not on the poetical tripod, their respective literary styles are indistinguishable.

Mr. Spedding had one serious limitation for the work to which

S. A. ALLIBONE.

www.libtool.com.cn
 "I have earned the right by hard labor to assert that there is not in the 1100 pages of *Delia Bacon* and *Judge Holmes* the shadow of a shade of an argument to support their wild and most absurd hypothesis."¹ — (1871).

PROF. HIRAM CORSON.²

"That William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, Gent., was the author of these dramas every one who is willing to accept testimony thereunto pertaining, equally strong and conclusive as the testimony that is requisite in a civilized court of justice to hang a man, can find such testimony in abundance in the volume before us." — (1875).

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

"To admit the Baconian theory of Shakespeare, except as a piece of ingenious pleasantry, demands a brain so addled with theory as to be incapable of literary judgment, or a capacity for credulity not given to mere commonplace mortals." — (1875).

F. J. FURNIVALL.

"The idea of Lord Bacon's having written Shakspeare's he devoted his life; he never could understand Bacon when Bacon made any personal reference to poetry or the drama. For examples: Bacon wrote a letter to Sir John Davies, begging a favor, and closing with the entreaty, "be good to concealed poets;" Spedding says of it, "the allusion to 'concealed poets' I cannot understand." Bacon kept a commonplace book, filled with words, phrases and sentences, applicable (many of them) to dialogue only, though he wrote no known dialogues; Spedding cites hundreds of these entries, and then "wonders" for what purpose they were written. Bacon announced his method of interpreting nature (human nature) as a secret, new to the world and not to be disclosed for several generations; Spedding acknowledges the existence of the secret and discusses it, but in the end confesses his ignorance of what it means.

Bacon says that any person, undertaking to make use of his new method, must wear a mask; Spedding says, "I cannot say that I clearly understand the sentence; but I think it must refer to the necessity of using popular ideas for popular purposes [!]."

¹ From his 'Dictionary of Authors,' p. 2048.

² Cornell University.

plays can be entertained only by folk who know nothing whatever of either writer, or are crackt, or who enjoy the paradox or joke. . . . I doubt whether any so idiotic suggestion had ever been made before, or will ever be made again, with regard to either Bacon or Shakspere. The tom-foolery of it is infinite.”¹ — (1877).

“Americans trained in English literature are as likely to hold that the world was made yesterday by a monkey out of three pounds of putty as they are to maintain that Bacon wrote Shakspere’s works.”²

“Providence is merciful, and the U. S. folk are tolerant; you’d have been strung up on the nearest lamp-post else.”³

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

“When we ask whether it would have been easier for the author of the philosophy to have composed the drama, or the dramatic poet to have written the philosophy, the answer will depend upon which is the greater of the two. The greater includes the less, but the less cannot include the greater. . . . Great as are the thoughts of the *Novum Organum*, they are inferior to that world of thought which is in the drama. We can easily conceive that Shakespeare, having produced in his prime the wonders and glories of the plays, should in his after leisure have developed the leading ideas of the Baconian philosophy. But it is difficult to imagine that Bacon, while devoting his main strength to politics, to law, to philosophy, should have, as a mere pastime of his leisure, produced in his idle moments the greatest intellectual work ever done on earth.”⁴ — (1881).

¹ From the Preface to ‘The Leopold Shakspere,’ p. cxxviii.

² From the Arena Magazine, Boston, Mass.

³ In letter to us.

⁴ From the North American Review. Mr. Clarke is said to have regretted before his death the writing of this article, in which Bacon’s philosophical works are tentatively ascribed to Shakespeare. And yet Shakespeare did write the *Novum Organum*, in the same sense as we say that George Eliot wrote Adam Bede. Mr. Clarke simply builded better than he knew, for he saw identity without fully apprehending what it meant.

PROF. PAUL STAFFER.

www.TheFamousParadox.com
 "The famous paradox, brought forward from time to time by some lunatic."¹ — (1880).

EDUARD ENGEL.

"The Bacon craze has obtained so wide a circulation that it must not at the present time be passed over with the silence of disgust and contempt; but the American champions of the imposture, who have followed in Delia Bacon's wake, shall not receive the honor [!] of personal mention here.

"So far as an approach to coherent opinion can be got out of this many-voiced fools' chorons, where each leading fool extols his own pet crotchet, we may characterize those who promote this stupidity, and those who agree with them, as follows: orthodox-minded lunatics, distinguished from such as tenant asylums in that they are still at large; secondly, indolent ignoramuses; . . . and thirdly, a crew of unreasoning news-mongers and purveyors of social rubbish. People of this brain-sick habit, maniacs, are as hard to convince of their error as they who imagine themselves to be God Almighty, or the Emperor of China, or the Pope."² — (1883).

EDWIN A. ABBOTT.

"The *Promus* seems to render it highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that Francis Bacon in the year 1594 had either heard or read Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Let the reader turn to the passage in that play where Friar Lawrence lectures Romeo on too early rising, and note the italicised words:

'But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain
 Doth couch his limbs, there *golden sleep* doth reign,
 Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
 Thou art *up-roused* by some distemperature.' II. 3, 40.

Now let him turn to entries 1207 and 1215 in the following

¹ Professor at the Faculté des Lettres of Grenoble, France.

² From his history of English Literature, p. 159. We may gauge Herr Engel's capacity to understand the literary men of England by what he says of Bacon: "Of all the better-known writers of the sixteenth century, even prose writers, Bacon was the most prosaic,

pages, and he will find that Bacon, among a number of phrases relating to ~~early rising~~, has these words, almost consecutively, 'golden sleep' and 'uprouse.' One of these entries would prove little or nothing; but any one accustomed to evidence will perceive that *two* of these entries constitute a coincidence amounting almost to a demonstration that either (1) Bacon and Shakespeare borrowed from some common and at present unknown source; or (2) one of the two borrowed from the other."¹ — (1883).

RICHARD GRANT WHITE.

"None the less it is a lunacy, which should be treated with all the skill and the tenderness which modern medical science and humanity has developed. Proper retreats should be provided, and ambulances kept ready with horses harnessed, and when symptoms of the Bacon-Shakspere craze manifest themselves, the patient should be immediately carried off to an asylum, furnished with pens, ink and paper, a copy of Bacon's works, one of the Shakespeare Plays, and one of Mrs. Cowden Clarke's Concordance; and the literary results should be received for publication with deference, and then — committed to the flames. In this way the innocent victims of the malady might be soothed and tranquilized, and the world protected against the debilitating influence of tomes of tedious twaddle."² — (1886).

the most insipid, and the most pedantic. There are many things that are clever in Bacon's Essays, . . . but, with a few sensible aphorisms, an incomparably greater number of common-places and platitudes."

¹ Unfortunately for this clever argument the word up-rouse is not found in the *Promus*.

² The correct measure of Mr. White's abilities as a critic may be found in his book entitled "Shakspere Studies," containing not only what is cited above, but also the following: "That Shakspere did his work with no other purpose whatever, moral, philosophic, artistic, literary, than to make an attractive play, which would bring him money, should be constantly borne in mind (p. 20)."

"He wrote what he wrote merely to fill the theatre and his own pockets. There was as much deliberate purpose in his breathing as in his play-writing [!] (p. 209)."

DWIGHT BALDWIN.

“Does this prove that Bacon wrote the plays? No; rather that he was a greater, brighter, more daring and far-seeing knave than the world has hitherto thought possible.”¹ — (1887).

CLEMENT M. INGLEBY.²

“This remarkable controversy is not without its uses. It serves to call particular attention to the existence of a class of minds which, like Macadam’s sieves, retain only those ingredients that are unsuited to the end in view. . . . It has also another use. It incites us to look up our evidences for Shakspeare’s authorship; and we are reminded how few and meagre they are.” — (1887).

PROF. FREDERIC KARL ELZE.

“The history of modern literature is not beyond the reach of the officiousness and stupidity of dilettanteism. The so-called Bacon Theory is a disease of the same species as table-turning.” — (1888).

SIR THEODORE MARTIN.

“From the belief of three centuries the world is not to be shaken by the fine-spun theories of *nobodies*.”³ — (1888).

¹ We take this opportunity to give a recent and in our opinion perfectly just estimate of Bacon’s personal character:

“An intellect of the first rank, which from boyhood to old age had been steadfast in the pursuit of truth; which in a feeble body had been sustained in vigor by all the virtues of prudence and self-reverence; a genial nature, winning the affection and admiration of associates; hardly paralleled in the industry with which its energies were devoted to useful work; a soul exceptional among its contemporaries for piety and philanthropy—this man is represented to us by popular writers as having habitually sold justice for money, and as having become in office the ‘meanest of mankind.’

“But this picture, as so often drawn and as seemingly fixed in the public mind, is not only impossible, but also demonstrably false.” — *Charlton T. Lewis*.

² Author of ‘A Century of Praise.’

³ Mr. Martin was knighted by Queen Victoria for having written a life (though a very poor one) of the Prince Consort.

LESLIE STEPHEN.

“I believe, all competent critics would agree with Professor Masson’s opinion that the ‘Shakspere-Bacon theory’ is a mere craze. . . . I should think it as easy to prove that Mr. Gladstone wrote Lord Tennyson’s poems, or to square the circle.”¹— (1888).

MRS. CHARLOTTE C. STOPES.

“The authors of Shakespeare’s and Bacon’s works drank different liquors, and therefore did not think alike. The first drank nectar; the second, wine and beer.”²— (1888).

MRS. MARGARET OLIPHANT.

“The discussion about Shakspere and Bacon is a most elaborate piece of folly from beginning to end, quite unworthy the consideration of any reasonable creature. No such thing has ever happened in human experience.”— (1888).

THE ‘HENRY IRVING SHAKESPEARE.’

“The Baconian lunacy.”³— (1890).

J. PROCTOR KNOTT.

The first day of December in the year of our Lord, 1890.

Doe ex dem. Bacon	}	Ejectment.
v.		
Shakspere		

This cause coming on to be heard upon the demurrer to the evidence, and the Court, being now sufficiently advised, delivers the following opinion :

The Court has read with great interest the Brief filed for

¹ We wonder whether Mr. Stephen ever read what we quote from Prof. Masson on page 6, *ante*. It is worthy of a second perusal. Prof. Massey says the same (page 15).

² From a periodical devoted to the liquor interests.

³ This characterization of the Baconian Theory is taken from a critique on ‘The Tempest,’ made by the editor of the Henry Irving Shakespeare, in which Prospero is said to represent James I. The dramatist, according to this authority, “kept his eye on the king” (the wisest fool in Christendom) while writing the drama. And this editor is an expert on lunacy!

Plaintiff and does not hesitate to pronounce it a most admirable syllabus of the argument in that behalf, quite sufficient, indeed, to raise a strong presumption, if it does not fully show, that the tenant in possession is holding without title. Yet in view of the familiar principle laid down in the case of *Doe ex dem. Titmouse V. Golter*, Warren's Ten Thousand a Year, that the Plaintiff in an ejectment must recover on the strength of his own title and not upon the weakness of his adversary's, the Court is not prepared to show that he is entitled to judgment upon the evidence adduced. Although the proof shows, almost conclusively, that defendant is in without title, the case, as made, is scarcely sufficient to entitle Plaintiff to recover.

The Court announces this conclusion with less reluctance since it is held, in the case cited *supra*, that a verdict and judgment in this proceeding will not bar a subsequent ejectment between the same parties for the recovery of the premises here in controversy.

Demurrer sustained and judgment accordingly.

And now at this day come the parties aforesaid by their respective attorneys, whereupon, all and singular, the premises being seen and by the Court fully understood and mature deliberation being thereupon had, it appears to the Court that the Evidence herein is not sufficient in law to entitle said Plaintiff to have and maintain his said action. Whereof it is considered that the Plaintiff aforesaid take nothing by reason thereof, but that he be in mercy for his false clamor, and that the defendant go thereof without day.¹ — (1890).

GEN. W. T. SHERMAN.

"I am inclined to believe, with one of my friends, that it was not William Shakespeare who wrote the famous plays, but another man of the same name."² — (1890).

¹ Our readers may be reminded of the speech, far famed for its wit, made some years ago by Mr. Knott in the House of Representatives at Washington, on Duluth.

² In letter to us.

BISHOP PHILLIPS BROOKS.

"If Bacon should rise from the dead and claim to be the author of the Plays I would not believe him."¹ — (1891).

ROBERT C. WINTHROP.

"I must be frank in saying that I should as soon believe that Shakespeare wrote the Essays as that Bacon wrote the Plays."¹ — (1891).

ALVEY A. ADEE.¹

"I find in the Plays countless internal indications that they were revamped or written by a theatre-manager, and this in the most characteristically Shakespearean passages, like the 'blanket in the dark,' and a hundred other stage allusions."² — (1891).

DANIEL C. GILMAN.

"I thank you for sending me an essay which it was so delightful to read, even though I label it 'extra-hazardous,' and put it out of the reach of the unsophisticated."¹ — (1891).

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

"Frankly, like every other argument I have examined, sustaining the Bacon delusion, it has strengthened my conviction that Shakespeare wrote the plays and poems attributed to him."³ — (1891).

¹ In letter to us.

² Mr. Adee is Assistant Secretary of State, Washington, D. C., and an exceptionally fine scholar. As to Shakespeare's stagecraft, we cite two authorities on the subject for his benefit:

"The Plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on the stage than those of any other dramatist whatever."—*Charles Lamb*.

"Shakespeare is not a theatrical poet; he never thought of the stage; it was too narrow for his great mind."—*Goethe*.

³ In letter to us. The book that had the honor of enlightening Mr. Aldrich in this manner was our 'Bacon vs. Shakspeare, Brief for Plaintiff.'

SAMUEL BLATCHFORD.¹

“The settled belief of the world in Shakspeare is no more to be shaken than is Niagara to run upwards.” — (1891).

THOMAS HUGHES,² J.

“This court doth order that the motion [in behalf of Bacon] be refused with costs, and the further consideration of this action is reserved, with liberty to all parties to apply.”³ — (1891).

W. D. WHITNEY.⁴

“I find it quite impossible to take seriously the thesis that Shakespeare’s works were written by Bacon. It seems to me very much like attempting to prove that Dicken’s works were written by Gladstone.” — (1891).

ANDREW LANG.

“The ‘Brief’ leaves me entirely convinced that the author of Shakespeare’s Plays and Poems was Shakespeare. I am indeed surprised that you should think the author of the Plays was a scholar. The reverse is patent, I think, to any one acquainted with classical literature.”⁵ — (1891).

THE POST.

“Ignorance, credulity, love of novelty, and vanity combined, can swallow any nonsense, and are the natural victims of impudent assertion or hallucinated folly.”⁶ — (1891).

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

“I must frankly say that I consider the theory which you sustain only a specimen of misplaced ingenuity, entitled per-

¹ Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of the U. S., in letter to us.

² M. P., Q. C., Author, and Judge of the County Court of Cheshire.

³ In letter to us.

⁴ Professor of Sanscrit and Comparative Philology in Yale University.

⁵ In letter to us. The personal implication in the last sentence is quite characteristic of this writer.

⁶ The Morning Post, London.

haps to take its place beside Walpole's Historic Doubts about Richard III, and Whately's skepticism as to the existence of the great Napoleon." ¹ — (1891).

GEORGE J. ROMANES.

"The subject is so much out of my line that my opinion is of no value concerning it. But I should have supposed that Bacon was a better Latin scholar than is shown by the Plays, and also better acquainted with geography than to have represented Bohemia as having a sea-coast." ¹ — (1891).

THE 'WESTMINSTER REVIEW.'

"The gratuitous perversity which could erase the greatest name in literature is best treated by silence." — (1891).

JAMES BRYCE.

"We must not think it incredible that two such geniuses as the authors of the *Novum Organum* and 'Hamlet' should have lived at the same time, when we remember that Pericles, Sophocles, Thucydides, and Socrates were contemporaries in the same small city." ¹ — (1891).

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

"Francis Bacon was one of the most polished scoundrels of his age."

"I believe that William Shakspere was born at Stratford, that his father and mother could not read or write, and that he was the greatest man of the human race." ¹ — (1891).

GEN. ELLIS SPEAR.

"I have never given much thought to the matter; in fact, I had been joined to this idol, and resented disturbances of my belief. I don't know now that you miserable iconoclasts are of any benefit. It is hard to transfer the affectionate regard one feels for a poet to a man so mean-spirited as Bacon appears to have been. The person of Shakespeare

¹ In letter to us.

has been almost as mythical as that of Homer, and the more interesting on that account.”¹ — (1891).

PROF. GOLDWIN SMITH.

“I think you will hardly convince me that the same man could have written the ‘Essay of Love,’ and ‘Romeo and Juliet.’”² — (1891).

W. E. H. LECKY.

“I regret that press of other business prevents me from discussing in any detail your theory that all of Shakespeare’s contemporaries (including the next greatest dramatist of his age and a crowd of other dramatic writers) were mistaken about the authorship of the Plays, leaving it for an American, 250 years after, to set them right.

“To be very frank, this theory seems to me one of the very silliest of the many silly paradoxes of the time.”³ — (1891).

EDWARD J. PHELPS.

“Shakespeare is buried in the chancel of the church at Stratford, and his bust is placed in the same chancel; why is this unusual distinction accorded to him? He was of no family, never held any office, rendered any public service or did anything for the church in England.

“There is not an instance in which any great and enduring poetry has been produced by a person who would have been otherwise known to the world.”

“As to the law in Shakspeare, there is not enough to qualify an attorney’s clerk in all his writings put together.”⁴ — (1891).

¹ In letter to us from an esteemed college classmate.

² In letter to us. We discuss this subject elsewhere, showing conclusively by parallels that of the fifteen points made on Love in Bacon’s Essay, every one of them is found in Shakespeare. Such unanimity of sentiment to the smallest detail, if not traceable to the same source, is itself unparalleled in literature.

³ In letter to us.

⁴ In letter to us. Mr. Phelps was Law Lecturer at Yale Uni-

ALFRED TENNYSON.

"I have just had a letter from a man who wants my opinion as to whether Shakspeare's plays were written by Bacon. I feel inclined to write back, 'Sir, don't be a fool.' The way in which Bacon speaks of love would be enough to prove that he was not Shakespeare: 'I know not how, but martial men are given to love; I think it is but as they are given to wine; for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures.' How could a man with such an idea of love write 'Romeo and Juliet'?"¹ — (1892).

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

"The Montaigne-Bacon craze is even more demonstrably preposterous than the Shaconian." — (1892).

versity, U. S. Minister to the Court of St. James, etc. As above quoted, he touches upon three points:

1. As to Shakspeare's burial. Shakspeare was buried in the chancel of the church because the law gave that privilege to all owners of tithes; Shakspeare was such owner.

2. As to poets in general. We wonder if Mr. Phelps had ever heard of Milton, or Voltaire, or Goethe, or Poe?

3. As to law in the plays. Chief Justice Campbell of England, writing before this controversy began, said that "to Shakespeare's law, lavishly as he propounds it, there can be neither demurrer, nor bill of exception, nor writ of error," and that no one, without deep exceptional knowledge of legal principles, can even now understand all of it. Able lawyers, like Mr. Furnivall, Mr. T. S. E. Dixon, Dr. Appleton Morgan and many others, on both sides of the authorship question, fully accept Justice Campbell's statement as true; how, then, could the plays have been written by a man who, it is admitted on all sides, had never studied law, whose father and mother could not read or write, whose daughters were also grossly illiterate, and who himself never wrote a letter, never received one, or, so far as we know or can ascertain, formed with his pen more than thirteen letters of the alphabet?

¹ Here is the identical sentiment in Shakespeare:

"We are soldiers,

And may that soldier a mere recreant prove
That means not, hath not, or is not in love."

Troilus and Cressida, I. 3.

Sir Henry Irving tells the following story: A guest of Mr. Tennyson once broached to him the subject of the authorship of Shakespeare, and mentioned some arguments in its favor. Mr. Tennyson arose and abruptly left the room, saying, "I can't listen to you,—you, who would pluck the laurels from the brow of the dead Christ." Sir Henry sees no impropriety in this shocking speech. We are reminded of the reply so frequently made in the United States fifty years ago to any one urging the abolition of slavery: "What! do you want your daughter to marry a nigger?"

HENRY GEORGE.

Nothing but perversity can attribute the Plays to Bacon. If there is any phrase that will soundingly declare the allegation preposterously false, and the 'allegators' wanton and pestilent disturbers, record it as my verdict in the case."¹ — (1893).

EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

"The instinct of a scholar is against the Baconian theory."² — (1893).

WILLIAM WINTER.

"Effrontery was to be expected from the advocates of the preposterous Bacon Theory."³ — (1893).

MARQUESS OF LORNE.

"Bacon may have left a mark, here and there, and the allusions to 'hang hog' and to St. Albans may speak of him; but some threads do not make a garment, and the garment all know [!] to be of Shakspeare's weaving."⁴ — (1893).

¹ In the *Arena Magazine*, Boston, Mass.

² That is, the instinct of a scholar is in favor of one who, it is claimed by his advocates, was no scholar.

³ Effrontery? How can a charge of effrontery or impudence lie against us in this discussion? Obviously, on the ground only that our friends, the Shakspeareans, are professional scholars and, therefore, have an exclusive right to the subject. But have they such an exclusive right? We quote from two of their own number:

"If we wish to know the force of human genius, we should read Shakespeare; if we wish to see the insignificance of human learning, we may study his commentators."—*William Hazlitt*.

"In all literature there is perhaps nothing more dull, dismal, unprofitable, taken as a whole, than Shakespearean criticism. Here and there, no doubt, we come upon a writer of superior discernment, such, for instance, as Coleridge, who, if he adds little to the illumination of Shakespeare, at least starts fancies of his own; but, for the most part, criticism on this subject is a depressing exhibition of fussy self-conceit and commonplace twaddle."—*Saturday Review*, June 17, 1876.

⁴ From his verdict as a juror in the *Arena Magazine*, Boston, Mass.

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE.

"Never, ~~surely, it was there so~~ utterly baseless a claim as that made by the advocates of Bacon against Shakspeare."¹ — (1893).

A LONDON JOURNAL.

"How any human being of ordinary intellect can read that address (Heminge and Condell's), and Ben Jonson's poem prefixed to this edition, and then believe that Shakspeare was not the author of these plays is beyond comprehension. Examined in the light of these simple testimonies, the Baconian theory is one of the wildest as well as one of the most absurd delusions ever suggested."²

GEORGE L. KITTREDGE.³

"I advise you not to read Baconian books."¹ — (1895).

HOLCOMBE INGLEBY.

"Unhappily, nothing will ever check the strangest and most grotesque theories from being entertained, so long as there are men who cannot appreciate the value of evidence." — (1897).

D. H. MADDEN.

"Bacon has been at pains to prove his incapacity of the higher flights of poetry by printing in the year 1625 a

¹ From his verdict as a juror in the *Arena Magazine*, Boston, Mass.

² The above statement was made on the occasion of the dedication of a monument to Heminge and Condell in the London churchyard where they lie buried. The inscription on the monument tells us that to them as editors of the *Folio*, "the world owes all it *calls* Shakspeare."

³ Professor of English in Harvard University, instructing a class of young ladies in Radcliffe College. With more power in the Professor's hands it would have been but a step beyond this to do as the English government did with Tyndale's edition of the English Bible in 1527; it forbade any one to read it, and made a bonfire of all copies found in circulation. Bacon said of College students in his time, that they were taught to believe, not to investigate. That seems to be Prof. Kittredge's view of collegiate instruction today.

'Translation of Certain Psalms into English Verse,' in which he has transmuted fine oriental imagery into poor rhyming prose."¹ — (1897).

JOHN FISKE.

"I have a wheelbarrow-load of rubbish written to prove that such plays as 'King Lear' and 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' emanated from one of the least poetical and least humorous minds of modern times. . . . Not one of the writers can by any permissible laxity of speech be termed a scholar."² — (1897).

¹ Prof. Madden, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dublin, proves his own incapacity of making a fair statement by omitting to say that Milton did precisely the same thing, and even into "rhyming prose" poorer than Bacon's. A critic that will do this may be expected, when prejudices are at stake, to strip Milton also of his laurels. Another bit of wisdom enlightening us from Madden is, that we must not "look for poetry of the highest order at the hands of a great philosopher, statesman and lawyer." Will this wonderful Vice-Chancellor please inform us to what difference in intellectuality Milton and Goethe owed their poetical gifts as distinguished from Bacon? Mr. Spedding indulged in no such nonsense. He said: "Had Bacon's genius taken the ordinary direction, I little doubt that it would have carried him to a place among the great poets."

² Dr. Fiske claims to have derived these judgments of Bacon (least poetical and least humorous) from a "forty years' acquaintance with Bacon's works." That he was incorrect in them, as he was generally in his views of American history where opposing opinions were to be weighed, can easily be shown:

1. As to poetry:

"The poetical faculty was powerful in Bacon's mind."—*Macaulay*.

"Bacon was a poet."—*Percy Bissho Shelley*.

"One of the finest of this poetic progeny."—*Taine*.

"Poetry pervades the thoughts, it inspires the similes, it hymns in the majestic sentences of the wisest of mankind."—*E. Bulwer Lytton*.

"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. Had his genius taken the ordinary direction, I have little doubt that it would have carried him to a place among the great poets."—*James Spedding*.

Mr. Spedding also gave forty years to study of Bacon.

2. As to humor:

"Bacon hath great wit and much learning."—*Queen Elizabeth*.

"His language, where he could spare or pass by a jest, was nobly censorious."—*Ben Jonson*.

"One of the petty blemishes which, though lost in the splendor

GEORGE BRANDES.

"In recent days a troop of less than half-educated people have put forth the doctrine that Shakspeare did not write the plays and poems attributed to him. Here it has fallen into the hands of raw Americans and fanatical women."¹— (1898).

'QUARTERLY REVIEW.'

"There is no difficulty in supposing that a clever man, living among wits, could pick up French and Italian sufficient for his uses. But extremely stupid people are naturally amazed by even such commonplace acquirements. . . . Shakspeare, *ex hypothesi*, was a rude, unlettered fellow. Such a man, the Baconians assume, would naturally be chosen by Bacon as his mask, and put forward as the author of Bacon's pieces. Bacon would select an ignoramus as a plausible author of plays, which, by the theory, are rich in knowledge of the classics, and nobody would be surprised. . . . Ignorance can go no further than in these arguments. Such are the logic and learning of American amateurs, who do not even know the names of the books they talk about, or the languages in which they are written. Such learning and such logic are passed off by 'the less than half educated,' on the absolutely untaught, who decline to listen to scholars."²— (1898).

of Lord Bacon's excellences, it is not unfair to mention, is this: he is sometimes too metaphorical and too witty."—*Henry Hallam*.

"In wit . . . he never had an equal."—*Macaulay*.

It would be much nearer the truth than is Fiske's partisan statement to say that Bacon's mind was one of the *most* poetic and *most* humorous of modern times.

As to scholarship, there was then living, within 1000 feet of Fiske's home, one of the finest scholars of America, author of a very learned work advocating the Baconian theory, and of another entitled 'Realistic Idealism in Philosophy Itself;' formerly Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Missouri, Law Professor of Harvard University, etc, etc. He had no superior, hardly an equal, in Cambridge.

¹From his 'William Shakespeare,' I. 104.

²July, 1898, p. 35.

‘MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.’

www.digitallibrary.org.uk describes it as a ‘Brief for the Plaintiff,’ and argues with admirable gravity in favor of the topsy-turvy theory that Shakespeare is not Shakspere, but Bacon.”— (1898).

HELEN KELLER.¹

“Your book is very interesting. Some of the arguments are startling, and all of them ingenious; but they have not made a Baconian of me. You know, I told you that I felt quite safe in my fortress; for I knew that your battering-ram of facts would be powerless against love’s armaments.

“I have just finished ‘Macbeth,’ and am now reading Bacon’s Essays. Try as hard as I may, I cannot discover any great resemblance between Bacon and Shakespeare. Bacon’s style is calm, beautiful, intellectual, but cold. Occasionally, one is dazzled by the splendor of a great thought; but he never touches a chord which sets the human heart to vibrating. On the other hand, Shakespeare’s plays are crammed full of deep, tender, passionate human feeling. He studied the hearts of his fellow-men more than their intellects, and that is why our love for him is so real and personal. To paraphrase his own words, we cannot read his lines and remember not the hand that wrote them. We are as sure of the nobility and beauty of his character as of his incomparable genius; we admire his art and love the master.”— (1899).

W. CAREW HAZLITT.

“That Bacon, situated as he was in constant and anxious expectation of loyal advancement, did not venture to associate himself publicly with such performances, had they even been capable of utilization as he left them, is perfectly obvious. . . . It has always struck us as extraordinary, and almost as a problem to be explained, how the two great-

¹One of the most wonderful personalities the world has ever known.

est Englishmen belonged to one era, nearly in the same interval of years, how they lived, as it were, side by side, face to face, yet, so far as we can learn, strangers to each other; one, a poetical philosopher; the other, a philosophical poet; and at length, according to some, the mystery is unravelled, the veil is rent asunder, and not Stratford, but Gorhambury, is entitled to the glory of being the first village in the world. A Cathedral city without a bishop, a shrine with relics canonized by no church, only by the voice of all educated mankind."¹ — (1899).

ANONYMOUS.

"[Mr. Reed's 'Bacon vs. Shakspeare'] is one of the most dishonest pieces of criticism I have ever met with. It is unfair to the extent of falsehood. I could write quires if I were to point out all the shallow arguments, forced misconstructions, baseless assumptions, and direct errors with which the volume bristles from beginning to end."² — (1899).

PARK GODWIN.

"It was reserved for the long-eared quidnuncs of the present century, who invented the Baconian nonsense, to raise the thinnest mist of a doubt."³ — (1900).

¹This is said in irony, however out of place such irony may be, concerning the relations between a "poetical philosopher" and a "philosophical poet" under the circumstances. It reminds us of the ease with which the world was deluded for many years in the matter of the authorship of the Waverley Novels. The books, now being written in behalf of Bacon as the author of Shake-speare, are in some respects mere transcripts, *mutatis mutandis*, of those which once sought to prove, against Scott's positive denials, many times repeated, and even against rival claimants (one of them a clergyman), that Scott himself was the author. Many a mind is like the eye of an owl, the more light you throw upon it the more it contracts.

²Said in a Boston (Mass.) journal to have been written by an "excellent English Shakspearean scholar and author."

³This occurs in a recent book by Mr. Godwin on Shake-speare's Sonnets. The Sonnets, as our readers will remember, were addressed by their author "to Mr. W. H.;" that is, as Godwin interprets the initials, *to Mr. William Himself*. *Ex pede Herculem*. Godwin's book is beyond doubt the most inane and foolish ever written on the subject.

SIDNEY LEE.¹

“Why should the Baconian theorists have any following outside lunatic asylums? . . . Those who adopt the Baconian theory in any of its phases should be classed with the believers in the Cocklane ghost or in Arthur Orton’s identity with Roger Tichborne. Ignorance, vanity, inability to test evidence, lack of scholarly habits of mind, are in each of these instances found to be the main causes predisposing half-educated members of the public to the acceptance of the delusion; and when any of the genuinely deluded victims have been narrowly examined, they have invariably exhibited a tendency to monomania. . . . The whole farrago of printed verbiage which fosters the Baconian bacillus is unworthy of serious attention from any but professed students of intellectual aberration.” — (1901).

H. H. ASQUITH.

“The task which confronts the writer of a life like Shakspeare’s is not to transcribe and vivify a record: it is rather to solve a problem by the methods of hypothesis and inference. His work is bound to be, not so much an essay in biography, as in the more or less scientific use of the biographic imagination. The difficulty is, of course, infinitely enhanced in this particular case by the impersonal quality of most of Shakspeare’s writings — a quality which I myself am heretic enough to believe extends to by far the greater part of the Sonnets. We do not know that the greatest teacher of antiquity wrote a single line. Shakspeare, who died less than three hundred years ago, must have written well over a hundred thousand. And yet, thanks to Plato and Xenophon, we have a far more definite and vivid acquaintance with the

¹ We advise any one who may wish to take a correct measure of Mr. Lee, as biographer of Shakspeare, to read Mr. George Stronach’s pamphlet entitled ‘Mr. Sidney Lee and the Baconians,’ published by Messrs. Gay and Bird, 22 Bedford St., London. Price, 1 d. Or a copy may be obtained with our compliments on application to us, at Andover, Mass., U. S. A. It is a capital piece of work, even in the Latin sense of that word.

man Socrates than we shall ever have with the man Shakspeare.”¹ — (1901).libtool.com.cn

CHARLES L. DANA.

“The Baconians have obsessions [mental states caused by evil spirits] or ideas fixed and disproportionately dominant in their minds, leading them to weak logic, stupendous misrepresentations, and often to erratic conduct. . . Such people have received the scientific name of *mattoids*.² . . . The *mattoid* flourishes in America because we have so large a proportion of half educated minds, and no central authority, or respect for such as we have.” [!] — (1901).

SIR HENRY IRVING.

“The case against Shakespeare seems to rest on nothing better than the assumption that, because Bacon was a learned man and Shakespeare wrote a very poor hand, therefore Bacon must be the real author of the Plays.”³

“I fear that the desire to take Shakespeare from his rightful position is due to that antipathy to the actor’s calling which has its eccentric manifestations to this day.”⁴ — (1902).

¹The writer’s definition of biography is, of course, to be condemned. We can conceive of nothing more inimical to the cause of truth than this would be, if generally adopted. Mr. Asquith does not disgrace himself, however, by expressing a hope that we may never know more than we now do of the greatest author of all time. A British statesman, though he may be wrong in his philosophy, has always some respect for the laws of heredity.

²A medical term, signifying drunken or stupid monomaniacs.

³In letter to us.

⁴From Sir Henry’s Princeton address. That is to say, a search for the highest possible authorship of plays marks a general depreciation of the histrionic art!

But here is another gem of logic, equally brilliant, from the same address: “As for the Baconians, they assiduously forget that Shakspeare [of Stratford] was the greatest of poets.” Our readers will hardly be surprised to learn that on the morning after the delivery of this extraordinary address a leading newspaper of the “intellectual city” of New York proclaimed that the question of authorship was then finally and forever settled.

THE LITERARY WORLD (London).

www.thesebooks.com
 These two books on the next shelf are by Mr. Edwin Reed. We noticed at some length a book by this writer more than three years ago, and we showed that it was a mass of ignorance and folly and misrepresentation. For all that, it is still in circulation; for no pabulum is too gross for the people who use this library; and the more they swallow, the more they want. . . Mr. Reed audaciously transfers the works of the great dramatist bodily to Bacon, *his* Bacon; insomuch that when he affects to compare Bacon's poetry with Milton's he takes a long passage from 'Hamlet' to represent the former. With regard to their value as evidence, therefore, the piles of stuff he puts before us, their foundations being rotten, become a mere heap of rubbish. . . . We will here say no more than that what the publishers call 'Baconian Literature' is not merely and negatively a lot of *biblia a biblia*, but a positive disgrace to literature. . . . Questions affecting mind and morals come to the front; the power of discriminating between truth and error has ceased to exist."¹ — (1902).

¹The passage from 'Hamlet' was introduced to show, under the Rule of Three as it were, that in matter of style no more difference exists between Bacon's prose and Hamlet than there is between the prose and poetry of Milton. We regret that the able critic of the 'World' did not perceive the nature of the argument. His office, however, is a useful one, for the car of human progress requires many brakemen to one stoker.

Concerning the same book, we quote the following from Mr. Edmund Gosse: "The Baconian hypothesis can never be stated with more courtesy and candor, with keener ingenuity, or with fuller investigation than has in this instance been done."

Also, from Mr. Edmund C. Stedman: "Even a staunch Shakespearian ought to read your 'Brief' without feeling his animosity aroused."

We add on our own account that no one can write an author up or down but himself. A book always gravitates to its rightful place at last, under laws as immutable as those of physical nature. Freudenberger's pamphlet was ordered by the authorities of Uri to be burned in the public square by the common hangman, and Freudenberger himself was obliged to flee for his life; but now, one hundred and forty years after, it has conquered the world. And the 'William Tell' myth was supported, precisely as the Shakespearian one has been, by forgeries, deceptions of all kinds, and personal rancor from beginning to end.

‘THE TIMES’ (London).

“It is just as difficult to understand how Burns produced his lyrics as how Shakespeare produced his plays, with this difference — that we know all the opportunities that Burns had, while we know so little of Shakespeare that he may have done much study and had many experiences of which there is no record. What we do know of him, however, is that he was a living man, mixing in the intellectual life of London, and impressing his contemporaries with his wit and information. To get over contemporary opinion we must suppose that Bacon not only wrote the plays, but personated Shakespeare in every-day life.”¹ — (1902).

THE ‘ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.’

“The gravity of these Baconians is as wonderful as their research. Hostess Quickly, describing the death of Falstaff in ‘Hen. V,’ tells us that his feet were as cold as any stone. You may think this coldness, as a sign of approaching dissolution, might have been discovered by Shakespeare, or by any other moderately careful observer. That is too commonplace an explanation for the solemn erudition of Mr. Reed. He cites Bacon on the ‘coldness of the extremities,’ and Hippocrates on the ‘extremities cold,’ and suggests that this phenomenon could have been known only to a profound student of the ancient Greek. . . . A few grains of common sense, to say nothing of imagination, might save Mr. Reed and his like from volumes of folly.”²

‘There is an American gentleman, named Edwin Reed, who goes on producing volumes of Baconian wisdom for the

¹The difference between Burns’ productions and those of Shakespeare in their bearing on the question of authorship does not seem to have occurred to this editorial writer.

²This is a case of *suppressio veri* with undoubted intent to deceive. The presages of death, given by Hostess Quickly, were seven in number, all of which, including the one cited by the News, are found in Hippocrates, and all but one in Bacon. The fact that they were copied from Hippocrates is shown, not only by the number of them under the law of accumulation, but also by the word *green* which Hippocrates uses in his description of the face of a dying

confusion of Shakspeare. He is candid as well as industrious, and when he makes an assertion in the text does not mind refuting it in a foot-note. For instance, a passage in the second edition of *Hamlet*, about the influence of the moon on the tides, was left out of the first Folio of 1623. Why? Because 'Bacon had changed his opinion on the subject.' But Mr. Reed admits that the opinion remains in four other plays printed in the first Folio. Here is the rock on which the Baconian theory splits.¹ — (1902).

A LONDON PERIODICAL.

"Baconocrankism stands out as a sordid superstition, as baseless in aspect of fact as it is slanderous toward the dead." — (1902).

The foregoing is a criticism aimed at Mr. George Stronach, of the Advocates' Library of Edinburgh. Mr. Stronach replied to it as follows:

"I grant I may have slandered the 'man of Stratford' by stating that he did not write, and could not have written the plays attributed to him. But what is this when compared with the slanders in the standard life of Shakspeare by Sidney Lee? According to this authority,—

1. William Shakspeare seduced and was forced to marry Anne

man in Greece, where the people are olive-complexioned. Shakspeare uses it in the same manner: "His nose was as sharp as a pen on a table of green field." This reference to the color of the background is certainly Hippocratic, for it cannot apply to an Englishman. Nor would it have occurred to an Englishman who was not very erudite, or who had not traveled in Southern Europe.

The important point, which *The News* omits to mention, is that now for the first time (after Dr. Creighton), and by collation with the original Greek, Hostess Quickly's famous speech is correctly given. Theobald's "babbling" (1733) nonsense, a known interpolation made more than one hundred years after the play was printed, has been followed long enough.

¹Bacon changed his opinion regarding the cause of the daily tides, rejecting the almost universal theory of mankind that they are due to the influence of the moon, in 1616. The tragedy of *Hamlet* was revised by the author after that date and the old theory left out. The other plays mentioned were not so revised, and in them the old theory was naturally retained. This was fully explained in the said foot-note.

Hathaway, who had a child by him five months after their marriage.—Lee, p. 22.

2. He had to leave Stratford for poaching.—Lee, 27.

3. He cheated his fellow-townsmen in the matter of the enclosure of public lands.—Lee, 270.

4. He endeavored to obtain by means of false statements a coat-of-arms.—Lee, 188.

5. He barred his wife's dower, and cut her off, not with the usual shilling, but with his 'second-best bed.'—Lee, 274.

6. He neglected his daughter Judith's education, so that at the age of 27 she signed her name with a mark.—Lee, 226.

7. He anticipated Burbage in a disgraceful assignation made with a woman at a theatre.—Lee, 265.

8. He died of a drunken debauch.—Lee, 271-2.'

THE 'EAST ANGLIAN TIMES.'

"To the majority of thinking men these dramas have been, and are, the most miraculous achievement of a human intellect. Tennyson has left on record his ignorance of any mental process by which they could have been written. Emerson has said, 'A good reader can, in a sort, nestle into Plato's brain, and think from thence; but not into Shakespeare's.' But in the fulness of time Mr. Edwin Reed has plucked the heart out of the mystery; he can play on the recorder. It is a tune of his own composition, and sensitive people stop their ears; but he plays merrily on. And why should he not? Did not Francis Bacon, by the mouth of Hamlet, say that it is as easy as lying?" — (1902).

'THE DAILY PEOPLE.'

"'Francis Bacon, our Shakespeare' is an effort that is equally futile as the other [on Parallelisms]. Both books together are enough to damn any cause. The pity of putting good paper and good type in these two volumes, when the 'Man in the Purple Pants,' 'Locked in the Safe, or a Brave Boy's Daring Deed,' 'A Rise in the World, or Stepping on a Barrel Hoop,' 'Naughty Nettie's Nineteen Lovers,' and other choice bits of literature are forced to come before the world in cheap five-and-ten-cent editions! The crime that some books are!" — (1902).

EDWARD L. TEMPLE.¹

www.Olibanions.cn and blatant quidnunc would have the brain of another, great indeed in his own domain, rob Shakspeare of his unrivalled glory, by means of a microscopical analysis, far-fetched and fanciful; an analysis which would sustain Mother Goose's authorship of the Lord's Prayer as thoroughly as it does the Baconian parentage of these dramas."—(1892).

FRANKLIN H. HEAD.

"Shakespeare, in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' says, 'Let no dog bark.' Bacon says, in his Essay of Gardens, 'The bark of this tree,' etc., etc. This parallelism, that occurs to us, seems to have escaped Mr. Reed's vision. He is welcome to its use in case another edition of his book is ever called for; . . . what the Baconians call evidence is surely the weakest scheme ever devised by human dullness."²—(1902).

¹President of the Shakespeare Society, Rutland, Vt., U. S. A.

²We take this opportunity to say that the argument from parallelisms is (historical evidences being in the nature of the case, as far as possible excluded by the author) the strongest that can be presented on behalf of a common authorship. We mean, of course, parallelisms, not in imagery and diction alone, but also in the whole intent and scope of the respective works. Bacon sought the restoration of mankind to the state of happiness in which (as he believed) it had lived in the Garden of Eden before the Fall, and to this end brought the whole weight of his philosophy to bear on man's intellect and moral nature. Accordingly he wrote in prose sixty-one essays and in verse thirty-seven dramas, on traits of human character, their beginnings, processes and ends, not for amusement, but for instruction. The first essay was published in 1597; the first drama also in 1597. The last essay was published in 1625; the last drama in 1623. In time, in character and in purpose the prose and the poetry are the same, except that in the one the principles of conduct for man's guidance are laid down theoretically; they are worked out, illustrated and enforced, brought home to men's bosoms, in the field of action in the other. For example, take the drama of Julius Caesar; its subject is envy. Bacon wrote also an essay on envy. The two productions touch each other at every turn; in at least one hundred and forty places, by actual count, as our forthcoming edition of the play will show. Herein is the real legitimate sphere of the argument from parallelisms which our friend, Mr. Head, ridicules. He ridicules it, because, like the world in general, he has no conception of the

'THE NATION' (N. Y.)

"Further argument is really out of place in the presence of such a misrepresentation of known facts as Mr. Reed's chapter contains. We have no doubt that the misrepresentation is unintentional. It exhibits, nevertheless, the character of Mr. Reed's Baconian scholarship, and the equipment with which he operates in his attempt to elucidate the meaning of the great philosopher."¹ — (1902).

meaning of the Shakespeare plays, nor can he have until he learns who wrote them. But this is a knowledge reserved for the next generation. Fortunately for the progress of humanity old men die, for they never change.

As to the imputation of dullness, that is of no consequence. It certainly cannot be justly applied to Mr. Head, he being one of the brightest men we ever met.

¹This is taken from a very elaborate and, generally speaking, an ingenuous critique contained in a recent number of *The Nation* (N. Y.) The particular question at issue was whether the Shakespeare plays constitute the fourth part of Bacon's philosophical system, in accordance with certain intimations found by us to that effect in Bacon's prose works.

The writer makes no allowance for the secret in the case. He admits that Bacon approves of acroamatic or enigmatical methods of expounding truth, as the ancients did, but regards this fact as unworthy of consideration here, because Bacon does not plainly assert that he himself would adopt them. This is a fair specimen of the author's reasoning powers.

Bacon called his system *Instauratio Magna*, The Great Restoration, because by means of it he expected, as we have already said, to restore mankind to its original state of bliss. For this purpose the system was divided into a certain number of parts, devoted successively and in the following order to a consideration of the intellectual, physical and moral faculties of man. One part, therefore, and, considering the end in view, the crowning one, was to consist of instruction in morals, but where is that part? It was to develop, illustrate and apply right principles of conduct, such as we need for our guidance (quoting Bacon) in "logic, ethics and politics;" of traits of character, such as (again quoting Bacon) "anger, fear, shame and the like;" but where is this great part, the first of its kind in literature, to be found? In Bacon's acknowledged works? Not a line of it! In works unacknowledged by Bacon, but produced in his time, suitable for his purpose, and, in form at least (under the prejudices of the age) demanding a pseudonym? What did Bacon mean when, in prescribing the qualifications of any future interpreter of nature, who would follow in his footsteps and carry on the work as he himself had done, he said, "*My son, thou must wear a mask!*" And what did he mean, too, when he said that the art of inventing grows by invention itself, and that his own

'THE CHURCHMAN.'

www.newtangledmolly.com
 "Newtangledmolly on one side, and scholarship and unbroken tradition on the other." — (1903).

THE 'ACADEMY AND LITERATURE' (London).

"The whole of the pullulating mess of mushroom literature which has sprung up around the [Bacon-Shaksperc] question in recent years is the production of writers who, even where they are not actually dishonest, are at least incapable of dealing with any literary problem in accordance with the canons of sound reasoning." — (1903).

'THE SATURDAY REVIEW' (London).

"Here is a notable contribution for the library of the Bacon-Shaksperc lunatic asylum."¹ — (1903).

efforts under that head were the first of the kind ever attempted? Perhaps Coleridge caught a glimpse of the truth when he declared that the Shake-speare dramas are neither tragedies, nor comedies, nor both in one, but a different *genus*, diverse in kind, not merely degree."

The Nation is also on record as having taken the same general position as early as 1866, when Judge Holmes' book first appeared, as follows: "The notion has not even the merit of ingenuity, since it cannot be maintained but by violating all the laws which have hitherto obtained in regard to the value of contemporary testimony. . . . We believe that the Baconian theory has not a leg to stand upon."

The "contemporary testimony" applies only to the works of an author known by his pseudonym, Shake-speare, and has no more probative force on the question of real authorship than similar references to George Eliot's Adam Bede would go to prove that that book was written by Mary Ann Evans.

¹This has reference to the New English Dictionary in which Dr. Murray, editor in chief, had recently stated that "while Shakespeare used verbs with the prefix *out* fifty-four times, for thirty-eight of which he is our first, and for nine of them our only authority, we, [Dr. Murray and his associates] cite Bacon for only two." These remarks have led to a very serious arraignment of the dictionary itself. On an expert examination of it by Mr. G. Stronach of the Advocates' Library of Edinburgh, a perfectly competent and trustworthy critic, it is found that instead of Bacon's "eschewing" that form of verb, as alleged, (he used it often) Murray as a rule eschews Bacon. That is to say, Murray fails to draw words for his purpose from a large part of Bacon's writings. The "Letters," for instance, comprised in seven volumes published by Spedding and covering Bacon's whole career, from 1580 to 1626,

J. CHURTON COLLINS.

“There is nothing to detain us. . . in Mr. Edwin Reed’s ‘Bacon versus Shakspeare,’ a masterpiece of nonsense which has gone through at least seven editions.”

“And so this epidemic spreads, till it has now assumed the proportions, and many of the characteristics, of the dancing mania of the Middle Ages.”¹ — (1904).

is not once referred to in the dictionary, though filled with words, as might have been expected of Bacon, that ought to have been cited there. And this, in a dictionary that pretends to give the history of words from the time when they were first introduced into the vernacular until the present. Mr. Stronach shows that not only new words of the verbal form in question, but also many others, in various parts of speech, running we have no doubt into hundreds, but unnoticed in the dictionary, were used by Bacon before they happened to find their way into the Plays. In this state of things what becomes of the dictionary? Must everything in the world be vitiated by one giant blunder in scholarship? We regret, however, that we cannot quarrel with the Saturday Review for saying that this prodigious work in philology is a fit contribution to the libraries of lunatic asylums.

¹ The position taken by Mr. Churton in this controversy has, until quite recently, been to us incomprehensible. He has shown beyond all question (as others, indeed, have done before him) that the author of the Plays was familiar with the Latin and the Greek literatures; and that he derived his knowledge of the former from its originals. Mr. Churton, however, goes farther, and, in order to accommodate the authorship of the Plays to a comparatively ignorant yokel, asserts that the dramatist must have acquired his knowledge of Greek literature wholly from Latin translations. We have never doubted that knowledge of the Greek language cannot be safely assumed from one’s familiarity with a single work or two in Greek; we took this ground, in opposition to Mr. Steevens, in our FRANCIS BACON, OUR SHAKE-SPEARE (p. 206 n.), published long before Mr. Churton’s articles on the subject appeared; but to apply this theory to the great body of Greek literature, as Mr. Churton now does, is manifestly absurd. The explanation, which we have sought, has finally been given by Dr. R. M. Theobald, the refined and justly-minded author of ‘Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light’; for the Doctor has fully and absolutely convicted Churton, not only of downright falsehood, but also of snobbery. The reference, as above, to the dancing mania of the Middle Ages, in a purely literary discussion, and particularly on a question whether an author who made hundreds of quotations from the Greek tragedies, in an English work of tragedies, was acquainted with the Greek tongue in which only those tragedies can be adequately understood, shows of itself a mind the character of which entirely justifies and confirms Dr. Theobald’s personal criticism.

MANCHESTER LITERARY CLUB.

“Why do a number of men and women, grossly ignorant it is true, devote themselves to the fraud and cheat of pretending to dethrone Shakspeare? Why do they frame false history, forge documents, assert to be truth what they know to be untruth, for the poor and the pitiful, the beggarly reward of dishonorable notoriety? . . . Save and except those who are crazy, they are mean and contemptible cheats all.” — (1904).

H. K. D. ANDERS.

“I have not been able to discover any traces of Bacon in Shakespeare’s works.”¹ — (1904).

THE ‘IRISH PACKET.’

“Ireland, I regret to think, has not wholly escaped the contagion of the Baconian epidemic. Life would be too short to plough this interminable sand, to winnow this illimitable chaff.”² — (1904).

JOHN ROWLANDS.

“Some may consider such a work unnecessary, and the author himself would have maintained that opinion a few years ago. But having met with persons of all classes and students of all grades who fancy that Bacon was the real author, it is scarcely necessary to apologize for attempting to show — rather than assert — that the idea is preposterous.”³ — (1904).

¹ This is taken from Herr Ander’s Book, *Schiften der Deutschen Shakespeare Gesellschaft, Band 1*. It is devoted to an exposition of Shakespeare’s indebtedness to other authors. He traces nearly 2000 passages in the plays and poems to their originals elsewhere, but not one to Bacon. He claims that not one that can be credited to Bacon exists.

² So far as we can judge at this distance, the brightest minds in Ireland (where bright minds abound) are with Bacon; such as George Moore, Judge Henn, Sir Francis Cruise, Archbishop Walsh, Rev. Wm. A. Sutton, S. J., Monseigneur Molloy and Father Healy.

³ From the preface to the author’s little book entitled ‘Shakspeare still Enthroned.’ Mr. Rowland’s testimony to the rapid spread of

RICHARD GARNETT.

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EDMUND GOSSE.

"The parallel [between Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Bacon's *The New Atlantis*] suffices to display the ludicrousness of the identification of Bacon with Shakespeare. Shakespeare waves his wand, and a new world starts up around him. Bacon transplants the world he knows to an imaginary locality.¹ So little of the wild and wonderful is there in his work that one of the chief merits claimed for it is, to have prefigured the institution of the royal society and to have not improbably influenced its founders."² — (1904).

C. CREIGHTON, M. D.

"This is his [Shakspeare's] personal judgment upon the fame of Francis Bacon. It arises out of the word-play of memory in two senses, the train of thought being that a man whose own memory is short ought not to live long in the memory of others. But an easy memory in this case meant an easy conscience."³ — (1904).

Baconian sentiment among all classes in England at the present time is perfectly accurate. A few years ago, a London journal, bitterly hostile to us, estimated the number of Baconians in that country and the U. S. combined at not less than a half million; the number is now certainly among the millions. We learn from the highest source that the same state of things exists in France. It was said in a recent French periodical that "whereas French books about English literature did not speak of this controversy a few years ago, they now generally find room for a more or less large discussion of it."

We shall take the liberty to regard Mr. Rowland's description of the Droeshout engraving and also of the Stratford bust of Shakspeare as ironical, until we are authoritatively assured to the contrary.

¹ As though Shake-speare did not transplant the scene of *The Tempest* to an "imaginary locality"! They are both new worlds; both, islands of the imagination; and both intended to pre-figure a future life. The editorial levity on this point is itself "ludicrous."

² From the *History of English Literature*, issued under the joint editorship of Messrs. Garnett and Gosse.

³ From *Shakespeare's Story of his Life*, by C. Creighton, p. 95.

The chief object of the writer of this book seems to have been, we regret to say, to show the existence of gross immoralities in the

WALTER. W. SKEAT

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“Said Hood: ‘I know, if I’d a mind,
I could like Shakespeare write,
And soon could prove to all mankind
How well I can indite;
And yet,’ remarked this genial man,
‘A little hitch I find
That somewhat mars my simple plan—
I havn’t got the mind!’

“So Bacon might have borne his part
And said: ‘For sake of praise,
I well could find it in my heart
To write all Shakespeare’s plays;
But ah! I feel a touch of fear
That somewhat makes me start;
I have the mind serene and clear,
But havn’t got the heart.’”¹

— (1904).

We bring this exposé to a close by giving a specimen of what may reasonably be considered on both sides fair, impartial criticism, adapted to the present stage of the enquiry :

THE ‘MADRAS MAIL.’

“It seems to me something more than childish that your

life of Shakespeare and of Shakespeare’s intimate associates. When will this sort of thing end? When shall we have done with the irrelevant and disgusting story of Mary Fitton? Must we have for the protection of our homes an index expurgatorius for works on Shakespeare? Does intellectual blindness to the meaning of the greatest and best dramas in the world’s literature naturally lead one into moral cesspools?

Dr. Creighton tells us that in ‘The Tempest’ Francis Bacon is personally held up by the dramatist to universal contempt, not only as a man of weak memory and, therefore, of easy conscience, but one also destined to oblivion at death!

Weak memory!

Easy Conscience!!

Oblivion at death!!!

¹ Prof. Skeat’s muse is ill-informed. Every statement made by Bacon in his famous Essay of Love is repeated, almost word for word, in the plays of Shakespeare; while no more sincere and lofty panegyric of this passion than his speech in Gray’s Inn, recently discovered, was ever uttered by man. Hereafter, this slander on Bacon will not be deemed otherwise than vile!

Shakespearean commentator and biographer should use such very objectionable language when speaking of Baconians. This is ignorance, of course. Take Dr. Brandes, for example, whose recent work on Shakespeare is a monument of patient learning, though his fad is absurd. He calls Baconians 'less than half educated,' 'raw Americans and fanatical women,' and so on. A man who indulges in violent language like this is not to be trusted, and it is not surprising therefore to find it coupled with the following astounding statement: 'What most amazes a critical reader of the Baconian impertinences is the fact that all the different arguments for the impossibility of attributing these plays to Shakspeare are founded upon the universality of knowledge and insight displayed in them, which must have been unattainable, it is urged, to a man of Shakspeare's imperfect scholastic training.' Now this is simply untrue; and if Dr. Brandes were in this one department of the subject a critical reader in any real sense he would know it to be untrue. The arguments against the William Shakspeare authorship are not all founded on his 'imperfect scholastic training;'—there are others, as I have detailed. But it is evident from Dr. Brandes's words that he has not read the literature of the subject,—notably, he is ignorant of the book by Mr. Edwin Reed, 'Bacon vs. Shakspeare,' which sums up nearly all that has been written on the other side. I say again,—disbelieve the Baconian theory (I do not believe it myself) —but do not commit the worse than absurdity of writing down an ass every one who does believe it. The improbability of William Shakspeare having thought and set down the greatest imaginings the world has known is so enormous that one may be forgiven for accepting another improbability instead." — (1901).

The matter at issue in this conflict of opinion is at bottom the validity and power of tradition. This accounts for what is seemingly unaccountable, the heat of the controversy as conducted for the defence. To these disputants,

it is but just to say, the Shakspearean myth has something of the sacredness of divinity; and divinity itself is largely a matter of tradition. Indeed, they may be reviving Tertullian's famous maxim, *Credo, quia absurdum*, paraphrased thus: Shakspeare, an ignorant yokel, wrote the learned dramas; this I believe, because it is repugnant to human reason. He died and was buried seventeen feet deep in the ground under the church at Stratford in 1616, and yet made large additions to those dramas after that date and burial; this is certain, for it is impossible.

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