'In stead thereof scoffing Scurrilitie
And scorning Follie with Contempt is crept
Rolling in rhymes of shamelesse ribaudry
Without regard or due Decorum kept
Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
And doth the Learned's taske upon him take.

'But that same gentle Spirit, from whose pen
Large streames of honnie and sweete nectar flowe,*
Scorning the boldnesse of such base-born men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throwe,
Doth rather choose to sit in idle Cell,
Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell.'

Now, who was 'our pleasant Willy'? Who was 'that same gentle Spirit' who had a pen flowing with honey and nectar? Dryden was one of the earliest to attempt to answer this important literary question, and he thought that the passage could refer to no one but Shakespeare, meaning, of course, the actor of Stratford. This was taken for granted for some time, but it was noticed that Willy was described as 'dead of late' in 1591, so that answer could not possibly stand. It was suggested by a seventeenth-century commentator that the famous comedian Tarleton, who had died a few years before the lines were written, was the man meant, and

* Here is 'sweet Mr. Shakespeare' again.

Mr. Sidney Lee endorsed that view in his 'Life of Shakespeare.'

Dean Church, in his excellent monograph on Spenser, thinks that Philip Sidney and his masking performances was here alluded to. So we have Shakespeare the actor, Tarleton the comedian, and Sidney the courtier to choose from.

Mr. Sidney Lee says 'there is no reason to dispute the view' that Willy means Tarleton, and adds,—'Similarly, the "gentle spirit" who is described by Spenser in a later stanza as sitting "in idle cell" . . . cannot be reasonably identified with Shakespeare.' Here he makes Spenser refer to *two* personages, and misquotes or leaves out the adjective 'same' before 'gentle spirit,' which adjective shows that Spenser is still referring to Willy. In fact, Mr. Lee has badly blundered over the Spenserian allusions, both here and with Aetion.

I hold that not one of the three answers satisfies the conditions of the questions anything like so well as the answer I propose now to give.

Shakspere of Stratford is excluded without a chance of appeal on account of the date. In 1590 he was a thoroughly unimportant personage, of whom no mention had been made by anyone, and for Spenser to call *him* 'our pleasant Willy,' and

then to say he was 'dead of late,' is ridiculous. And it was not much less absurd to speak of the Stratford stable-boy as one who would

> 'rather choose to sit in idle Cell,
> Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell.'

Was Will Shakspere a man to sit and cogitate in an idle cell or study? Was he one to refuse to sell anything, whether it brought 'mockerie' or not, so long as it brought a profit to himself? Neither Tarleton nor Sidney was a writer of comedy or a votary of the Muse Thalia, in the strict sense of the word; nor was the name of either Willy, although I know it may fairly be said that Willy was a general name of familiarity, and appears with Colin and Cuddie and other such friendly abbreviations in pastoral poesy, and especially in the 'Shepherds' Calendar.'

But the man I suggest—viz., Francis Bacon—is not excluded in any of these ways. The early date of 1590 certainly does not exclude him, for I have no doubt that the talented youth of eighteen brought back from France several pieces of good literary work in 1579, and comedies, too, partly sketched and ready for revision, and he had ten years to revise and compose others between 1579 and 1590. If we read and properly interpret the

letters of Harvey and Immerito in 1580 and a little earlier, we shall not find it difficult to believe that Francis Bacon, in the decade 1580-1590, brought out several pleasing and 'decorous' comedies, whether at Gray's Inn or before the Court circles, or perhaps now and then at the Bull or elsewhere, which, after further revision and amplification, had their final literary issue among the immortal dramas of the First Folio.

There are floating traditions and notices of plays which may well have developed later on into 'the Jew that Shakespeare drew' in 'The Merchant of Venice,' and into the wonderful Fairy Court of Oberon and Titania. And, besides these, there are the *prima stamina* of the great chronicle plays, some of which first sketches may well have been written before the poet made Thalia weep; but these would be out of her province.

Again, to Spenser he was 'pleasant Willy.' But who so soon afterwards signed 'Venus and Adonis' as William Shakespeare? And who said in the sonnets, 'My name is Will'? But if I ask the orthodox such questions they seem deaf.

Look, too, again at Thalia's fine account of what true pleasing and decorous comedy should be. Read the stanzas again, and see what it was that

made Willy 'choose to sit in idle cell' and give up writing his comedies for a time. He was disgusted with the low ebb the drama had reached by reason of 'scoffing Scurrilitie and scorning Follie,'—

> 'Rolling in rhymes of shamelesse ribaudry
> Without regard or due Decorum kept.'

Now, this would apply well to Francis Bacon, who certainly was for elevating the drama and making it a vehicle of his views and plans for the public good. If Bacon printed or revised plays, he would exclude the vile 'clownage' as far as possible, and would not sell himself to 'mockerie,' certainly; for he had a most high opinion of decorum in all things, and, as far as we know about his earlier years in London, would much rather 'sit in his studie' like Faustus, or in 'his idle cell' at Gray's Inn indulge his genius in 'concealed' works of recreation, than subject his name and fame to common envy.

But some critic will be sure to say that my suggestion is 'plausible' enough, but utterly 'in the air,' and 'will fall down with a mere touch like a house of cards.' This is the way of the pretty Fannys of the press, and I know it well. If I did not anticipate them, they would all come down like a wolf on the fold with a hungry yelp-

ing chorus of 'To Earlswood with him! It's a clear case without a doctor's certificate. Why, this Willy was *dead* in 1590, and Bacon was alive till 1626. How could Willy be Bacon?'

Well, if they put me away for that, they must send Dean Church to keep me company, for that accomplished divine and elegant Spenserian scholar says that, as far as Willy is concerned,—

'the lines imply, not that he is literally dead, but that he is in retirement. The expression that he is "dead of late" is explained in four lines below as "choosing to sit in idle Cell," and is one of Spenser's common figures for inactivity or sorrow.'*

Also Rowe in 1709 held a similar view that *dead* meant only retirement, but, curiously enough, did not refer to the proof so evidently there.

So the result of the careful examination of this important and very early allusion is that it cannot allude to Sidney, as some Shakespearians try to make out, nor yet to Tarleton, for both of these were not merely 'dead of late,' but were dead altogether; and to suppose that these 'same' two, or either of them, could be sitting years after in an idle cell, and meditating with closed doors, we must also assume that they had risen

* 'Spenser,' by R. W. Church, London, 1902, p. 107.

from the dead. But miracles cannot be admitted into this purely literary question ; and since Bacon was alive, and suits the case better than anyone else, we accept this allusion of Spenser as a useful piece of biography to fill up an empty space in Bacon's life.

And even though Bacon's name was Francis, and Shakespeare's William, there are good reasons for taking Bacon to be 'Willy,' rather than Shakspur of Stratford; and the man who says to himself, 'Willy Bacon is ridiculous,' is, I fear, not acquainted with the hidden peculiarities of this Elizabethan question.

Believers in the Swan of Avon have always thought that their strongest argument was the fact that all Shakspere's contemporaries acknowledged *him* to be the author of the works passing under his name, and there was absolutely no hint or reference concerning Bacon for nearly 250 years. This was their *terra firma*, and when on this ground they have always felt themselves invincible and secure.

The truth is, this was really a very sandy foundation, and if they do not speedily decamp, the moving quicksand will swallow them up, and their

pretensions with them. The new evidence of Hall, Marston, and others, which I adduced in 'Is it Shakespeare?' still remains uncontradicted, and I have seen no reasons to qualify or retract it, and have now been able to corroborate it and to add several other pieces of contemporary evidence to show that the Baconian authorship was well known in certain circles, but was not openly divulged.

My first additional witness is found in an early piece of contemporary evidence for Bacon—as early, indeed, as 1593-1595.

It is from Thomas Edwards, who wrote 'Cephalus and Procris,' and had it licensed for the press in October, 1593. The only copy extant is dated 1595. This has at the end another poem by the same author, called 'Narcissus,' which is also dated 1595.

In this latter poem we have references to many contemporary poets, and among them the very earliest notice of Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander,' with several quotations from it. Thomas Edwards must have seen a copy, either in manuscript or printed, very shortly after Marlowe's death; and seeing that our earliest copy of 'Hero and Leander' is dated 1598, or five years after the author's death, this is a fact of interest, which

I am surprised to find quite unnoticed in all the editions of Marlowe that I have seen.

But 'Narcissus' tells us things of far greater import than this; for we are introduced to 'Adonis' not long after the latter had been first published. In the last part of 'Narcissus,' called 'L'Envoy,' we have a cursory notice of Elizabethan poets, beginning,—

'Collyn was a mighty swaine;'

and, mentioning Rosamund [Daniel], Amyntas [Watson], Leander [Marlowe], he says,—

'Amintas and Leander's gone
* * * *
That so amorously could sing.'

And, of course, in 1593-1595 Watson and Marlowe had both recently died. So Edwards does not seem to have any doubt of the true author of 'Hero and Leander.'

And next he comes to 'Adon,' and possibly to Bacon. I will give this in full:—

'Adon deafly* masking thro,
Stately troupes rich conceited
Shew'd he well deserved to,†
Love's delight on him to gaze,
And had not love herself intreated
Other nymphs had sent him baies.

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* ? Deftly. † ? Too.

'Eke in purple roabes distain'd
Amidst the center of this chime
I have heard saie doth remaine
One whose power floweth far,
That should have been of our rime
The only object and the star.

'Well could his bewitching pen,
Done* the Muses objects to us,
Although he differs much from men
Tilting under Frieries
Yet his golden art might woo us
To have honored him with laies.'

Now, who can this last poet be who 'should have been the only object and the star' of Edwards' rime?

This puzzle has taxed the ingenuity of critics for many years past. Some have said the Earl of Oxford, Vere; some Lord Buckhurst; some Southwell the Jesuit; others Essex or Raleigh. Henry Morley thought Michael Drayton, and Dr. B. Nicholson thought Shakespeare; Dr. Grosart and the Rev. W. E. Buckley, the editor of the rare book itself, both declared for Bacon. So do I. For I cannot see how with anyone else we can get out of the 'Adonis' allusion—a poem which had just been written and was already becoming famous. If it be Bacon really, we

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* Done = have done, auxiliary 'have' being omitted.

certainly have very early contemporary evidence from Edwards.

At this early date (1593-1595) Burbage's 'stable-boy' is, of course, out of the question.

The next piece of contemporary evidence is from Heywood. There is a very peculiar character in Thomas Heywood's 'Rape of Lucrece' (1608), which to me suggests that Heywood knew Francis Bacon was a sonnetteer and maker of love ditties and poems.

I mean the character in the play who is called Lord Valerius. This aristocratic Roman is brought on the stage in the singular and uncalled for character of a singer of love songs and ballads, both in season and out of season, but chiefly the latter.

The question arises, What could induce Heywood to bring in such apparently irrelevant songs and love lyrics, and attach them to the acting part of a noble Roman of whom classic history records no such characteristics?

Surely it was the title of his play, 'The Rape of Lucrece,' and the current talk in literary circles that Bacon was a kind of Ovid junior and a sonnetteer, which prompted Heywood to make such an unconventional character.

It is pretty clear now that Jonson knew the

current talk, and apparently believed it, or he would not have put Bacon and his sonnets and love-elegies so plainly on the boards in his 'Poetaster' and other plays, which were composed some time before Heywood's 'Rape of Lucrece.' Bacon had also written before this a Latin philosophical piece, under the name of 'Valerius Terminus.' This might have come to Heywood's knowledge also.

But let us see whether there is more internal proof that Lord Valerius is a skit on Bacon. The second mention of Valerius appears in the play 'Rape of Lucrece' (Act II., Scene i.) when the question is asked,—

'But where's Valerius?
How does he taste these times?'

And this answer comes a little further on,—

'Strangely; he is all song, he's ditty all.
* * * * *
Conclusively, he's from a toward hopeful gentleman
Transformed to a mere ballater, none knowing
Whence should proceed this transmutation.'

Shortly after this Valerius begins to sing of love, and we have these two noticeable lines:

'Now what is love I will you show:
A thing that creeps and cannot go.'

Now these two lines are highly significant.

They are, in fact, nothing less than one of the most famous of the numerous 'parallelisms' between Bacon and Shakespeare which the Baconian heretics are so fond of collecting.

This is how they put it,—

'Love
Will creep in service where
it cannot go.'

Two Gentlemen of Verona, IV. ii. 19.

'Love must creep in service
where it cannot go.'

Bacon's Letter to King James.

I have already said in my former book that I do not rely much on the parallelisms adduced in such enormous numbers by Baconians; but if there are a few grains of wheat, and I certainly think there are, among mountains of chaff, then this looks like one of the grains.

But let us take the very first words that Valerius utters on the boards; we have seen before how useful it is to search the vestibule.

Valerius replies to Collatine,—'No doubt, Collatine, no doubt here's a giddy and drunken world; it reels; it hath got the staggers.'

Now, what says the great dramatist in Richard III.?

'It is a reeling world indeed.'

Richard III., III. ii. 38.

And again :—

'Does the world go round?
How come these staggers on me?'

Cymbeline, V. v. 233.

Again :—

'A' bears the third part of the world, man; see'st not?
The third part, then, is drunk.'

Antony and Cleopatra, II. vii. 98.

Again :—

'He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.'

Taming of the Shrew, V. ii. 20.

I attach little importance to these parallelisms, but they are curious coincidences.

However, there seems rather more importance in the words which finish the second act. They are spoken by the Clown, and are, 'O my sweet Lord Valerius.' Whereupon *omnes exeunt* and curtain falls.

We cannot help being reminded of 'O sweet Mr. Shakespeare,' which meets us in 'The Returne from Parnassus,' and stands almost alone in its respectful courtesy title to the actor manager and poet ape. There were not many Misters then among the licensed vagrants who helped to amuse the audiences round about Shoreditch or the Bankside. Even University men who had taken their Arts degree, when they joined their interests

with the players', mostly lost their chance of being dubbed Mister.

We do not hear much of Mr. Nash, Mr. Spenser, Mr. Marlowe, or Mr. Ben Jonson, or even of Mr. Chapman, old and respected as was this last poet and playwright; but we get Mr. Shakespeare much more often. Was it not pretty well known to the author of 'The Returne from Parnassus,' and several other writers in those days, who 'sweet Mr. Shakespeare' and 'gentle Shakespeare' really was? I certainly think so from the way he is sometimes spoken of or alluded to, and consequently I think it just possible that Thomas Heywood was aiming in his ditty loving Lord Valerius at no less a prominent personage in the State than Sir Francis Bacon, who was about this time (1607-08) made Solicitor-General, Clerk of the Star Chamber, and *Lord* Treasurer. Of course there is the ready and obvious reply that he alone was called Mr. Shakespeare because he alone applied for his father's heraldic arms. But why call him Lord Valerius?

And why call him 'sweet' Lord Valerius? There is more in that word 'sweet' than meets the eye. It was almost an especial epithet for Shake-speare among poets, which he seemed to share with the other epithet 'gentle.' As a poet

he was named by his contemporaries 'mellifluous, honey tongued, and other adjectives of the same saccharine character, and his 'sugred' sonnets are almost proverbial. He was also one of the 'sweet gentlemen' whom Nash and Greene were rather annoyed with for supplying the 'taffeta fooles' with verses and plays.

Indeed, sweet and gentle are the distinguishing marks of Shake-speare's early Muse, the chief faults admitted against that Muse being 'love's foolish lazy languishments,' and that the written word was not altogether 'cleanly.'*

There are some curious allusions in the play called 'Histriomastix' to *Sir Oliver Owlet* and his players. I leave the curious reader to conjecture who is referred to.

My next witness is a new one, who has not before been examined in this difficult case of identity. I refer to Edmund Bolton, who in his 'Hypercritica' seems to have had a good idea as to the real author of the two great Shakespeare poems.

In his 'Addresse the Fourth,' which deals with 'the best authors for written English' in prose and verse, he leaves out all notice of the poems

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* *Cf.* 'The Returne from Parnassus,' p. 87 (Macray); Hall's Satires, Labeo, *passim*.

and sonnets of Shakespeare, though he mentions all such similar authors of fame and repute.

There was clearly some reason for this, for such popular and highly praised poems could not be undesignedly ignored in such a general survey as Bolton was giving.

I think the reason is that Bolton was unwilling to offend that great man of 'mystery,' the rising Francis Bacon, by letting out any literary secret, or by mentioning his poems at all, when he knew Bacon wished to repudiate his connection with them.

So he got out of the difficulty by mentioning Sir Francis Bacon under the first head of Historical Prose Writers.

He mentions him *last* in order, but certainly *first* in general praise, for he concludes :—

'Most of all Sir Francis Bacon's writings have the freshest and most savoury form and aptest utterances, that (as I suppose) our Tongue can bear.'

Another strange omission among the 'best authors in verse' is that of Marlowe and his famous 'Hero and Leander.'

There is an earlier rough draft of Bolton's 'Hypercritica' among the Rawlinson manuscripts, and there we have Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander'

duly recorded; but in the later printed edition of the 'Hypercritica' this item is totally omitted, and nothing said of Marlowe whatever. Hence we may perhaps be permitted to suggest the inference that between the writing of the Rawlinson manuscript and the final revision of the book there was an appreciable interval during which Bolton found out the truth about Marlowe as an author and left him out, as well as Shakespeare, thus effectually excluding two 'masks' from the fame roll of the 'best authors.'

Bolton is also one of the first to give definitely the fame of that remarkable Elizabethan anonymous treatise, 'The Arte of English Poesie,' to Puttenham, but, knowing what has been just shown, it is not improbable that Bolton again wished to help the concealment of Bacon's literary work.

Indeed, the evidence for George or Richard Puttenham writing 'The Arte of English Poesie' is very weak. For twenty-five or thirty years there is no mention of any author for it, although the book itself is several times referred to and borrowed from, and sometimes spoken of as a work of authority. Bolton is nearly the first author who at all connected a Puttenham with this work, and this was more than thirty years

after 'The Arte of English Poesie' had been printed. No Christian name is given, and Bolton goes no further than saying the book was 'the work as the Fame is' of one of her (*i.e.*, Queen Elizabeth's) Gentlemen Pensioners, Puttenham. But this Puttenham authorship has been already considered.

There are several reasons for believing that Bolton knew the secret of Bacon's great literary activity. He was of Trinity Hall, Cambridge (Gabriel Harvey's college), where he says that he 'lived many years on his charge a free commoner.' He then proceeded to the Middle Temple, and 'lived in the best and choicest company of gentlemen.' He was in early life well acquainted with Camden, and in the year 1600 he first appears as an author, being a contributor to 'England's Helicon,' a notable book with which Bacon, as I have endeavoured to show elsewhere, had much to do. He was also a great advocate for instituting a Royal Academy or College of Learning and Honour on a somewhat magnificent scale. We may be well assured this would greatly interest Bacon, who had Solomon's House of the 'New Atlantis,' or something like it, strongly impressed on his heart and brain. What more likely than

this to bring these two contemporaries into a literary correspondence and friendship? So I hold, from all these facts, that Bolton was a very likely man to know about Bacon's literary pre-eminence.

Having now come to the end of my 'new contemporary evidence for Bacon' I would ask 'those who know' to compare it with what is called the 'contemporary evidence' for William Shakspere the actor.

Big books have been filled with this so called evidence, but of late years they have been so gutted that they almost present the appearance of the framework of a burnt-out house, the covers and the title being about all that remains solid and standing.

Indeed, the reservation of contemporaries in their references to Shakspere is really very remarkable, when we consider both the number of persons who avoided any mention of him, and the extreme likelihood, also, that these same persons should frequently refer to him.

Look at Gabriel Harvey. Not the slightest allusion can be discovered in all Harvey's works and voluminous letters—at least, so says Mr. Grosart, who edited his works and made a most careful glossarial index of the whole.

Spenser, Sir James Harington, and many other literary Elizabethans from whom we should certainly expect some occasional references to their great contemporary, are all mute as a fish. What if they all went on the excellent principle of learning wisdom from proverbs, and took the advice, 'Never stir up Camarina,' as the best for the case in hand? Some such explanation on Baconian lines would do away with the otherwise insuperable difficulties, but they remain insuperable if Shakspere's personality is retained.

Both Shakespeare's 'Centurie of Prayse' and the 300 extra allusions published as a kind of sequel and complement to it, though they are the compilation of excellent orthodox researchers, are disappointing, and are very far from fulfilling the promise of their title-pages. One would suppose that the praises of the Stratford man were in the mouths of hundreds of his contemporaries; but, as a matter of fact or proof, that is far from being the case—indeed, we get very little to help us with regard to the manager actor from Stratford and *his* wonderful poems and plays. In fact, far too much has been made of the so-called contemporary recognition of Shakespeare's excellence.

It may be admitted that the poems of 'Venus

and Adonis' and 'Lucrece' did undoubtedly receive considerable attention and praise shortly after their production. But the *kind of mention* these poems received is not exactly of the nature we require for settling a piece of literary history. We have, strange to say, nothing definite from the great and eminent littérateurs or historians of the age to help us to a verdict. Such authorities absolutely refrain from mentioning Shakespeare at all. The most careful researches into the works of John Selden, Henry Vaughan, Lord Clarendon, Viscount St. Alban, Lord Brooke, Sir John Beaumont, and many other notabilities in the literary world, have not been able to discover even the most trivial allusion to these wonderful productions or to their author.

CHAPTER X

NEW EVIDENCE FROM BEN JONSON

THE problem of the Shakespeare poems and plays partakes somewhat of the nature of a chess game or problem. The problem cannot be possibly solved without a good previous knowledge of the game. Like chess, this problem has many openings of a different character and name, and unless the solver is fairly well acquainted with the moves in these respective openings, and the way they have developed by the best players, he will have poor chance either of winning his game or finding the solution required. For instance, there is the Southampton opening and there is the Herbert opening, both chiefly connected with the problem of the sonnets and poems, but each very different from the other in inception and progress. Then there is the Ben Jonson opening, which has been much used by players ever since it was so brought into prominence in the famous First Folio of 1623

I have already dealt with the first few peculiar moves of this in 'Is it Shakespeare?' and shall presently add a few instances of Ben Jonson's play before this opening of his was invented. Then there is the Dark Lady's gambit, and her opening as well—a much used one—but the problems connected therewith seem still unsolved. We have also the Ruy Lopez or Queen's Doctor's gambit—a fatal one, as it proved. The two Knights' and Mary Fitton's moves must be known, and many other such complicated positions that for a junior pressman to judge the result off hand from a superficial survey of the game is simply absurd. But they do it, sometimes even without so much as looking at the board.

Let us now consider how Ben Jonson gives us further help to solve the Baconian problem. I have considered his Ovid junior, his Sir John Daw, his Poet-Ape, his Cheverell the lawyer, and his Luscus, and have no reason to think that Ben Jonson's help has led us to make any grossly mistaken moves so far. Does he suggest any new moves? I think he does, and I think he gives them in the earlier plays, before the stage quarrel was at its height in 1601. The plays I refer to chiefly are 'The Case is Altered,' 'Every Man out of his Humour,' and 'Cynthia's Revels.'

After a few statements I will proceed to make some suggestions.

(1) Jonson's earlier plays are full of allusions to personalities of the time, generally literary men. He draws pictures of the humours and habits and phraseology of certain characters whose identity is in several cases absolutely certain. For instance, Asper, Crites, and Horace in three different plays are all meant, with absolute certainty, to represent Jonson himself. Antonio Balladino and Poet Nuntius in two early succeeding plays stand for Anthony Munday without a doubt. Carlo Buffone, in 'Every Man out of his Humour,' is Charles Chester with equal certainty. I mention these *certainties* because some of the Shakespearian experts are pleased to say *ex cathedrâ* that whoever builds on the identities from Jonson's plays builds on 'a sandy foundation.' My answer is, there is plenty of firm rock to build upon if you can only get down to it, and I assert that rock is being reached frequently nowadays.

Look at Posthast in 'Histriomastix.' What a time he and his critics were floundering together in the quicksands! He is firm on the rock now. So is Carlo Buffone at last, being now on the hard rock where Aubrey first of all put him.

Of my own work of this kind I forbear to say more. My statement, then, is this. Ben Jonson *did* allude personally to certain living characters, and in some cases they have been actually and undoubtedly unveiled to present day readers. The inference is that the Ben Jonson 'moves' in the Baconian problem may help considerably to a correct solution, and need not be sandy or unlawful.

(2) The next statement is that Ben Jonson's personal allusions are often 'composite'—that is to say, he blends two different persons sometimes under the same stage name. This was done for sake of safety; it gave him a loophole of escape if threatened by the authorities for libel or scandal. Therefore, if in our investigations of a character in Jonson's plays we discover certain clear traces of Marston, and again traces equally distinct of Gabriel Harvey or Francis Bacon, perhaps in the same person, we are not to say at once, 'Here is a contradiction and no identity of any value;' but we are to remember how and why Ben Jonson so mixes up his characters, and do our best to separate their several characteristics.

(3) The third statement is that Jonson in his earlier plays rings the changes on certain characters, which reappear under different names in

successive plays. This gives us useful help in identifying them. Thus, we have Asper, Crites, Horace, Puntarvolo, Amorphus, Valentine, and others of a similar nature, though none quite so marked as these. The first trio represents Jonson throughout; this is allowed by all. The second trio is untried ground, and as it seems to help the solution of the Bacon problem I offer a few suggestions.

The second trio of names seems to refer to one man throughout, because in all cases we have references to a great and boastful traveller who had been to Constantinople, the Tower of Babylon, Mesopotamia, the Indies, Jerusalem—in fact, such out of the way places as fall to the lot of few people to visit—while in addition to these we have particularly mentioned the 'Goodwin Sands.' Now, who *could* this be? We may be quite sure that the Tower of Babylon and the Goodwin Sands were not introduced without an object, nor were they likely to be chosen because they were the first names that came into Jonson's head at the time. Ben was not such a slipshod satirist as that. When he used names in his early comedies he meant something by them. I shall presently venture to suggest who this peculiar traveller was, and give some reasons and

corroborations with regard to what must *primâ facie* appear to be very ridiculous assertions.

Unfortunately, my suggestions cannot be fairly appreciated by the few extracts I can find space for here.

First I would say that Ben Jonson has generally some useful hint in the *name* of his characters, if we could only take it; for instance, Carlo Buffone is Charles Jester, *i.e.*, Charles Chester. There is the man *named* clearly, but no one saw it till quite recently. Now, I think Valentine gives us a hint, as a *name* pointing to Bacon. Valentine and Proteus of 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona' were not likely to be unknown to such a dramatic critic as Jonson, or their true author, either. Jonson must know that Burbage's stable assistant was not equal to writing so courtly a play.

Moreover, in all these early plays by Jonson there is such abundance of allusion to well known living characters that this assured fact alone is sufficient to render my suggestions and conjectures *probable* even if they seem at first sight rather far fetched. But in many cases I hope to pass the bounds of mere probability, and to show for certain that Bacon is the man to whom Jonson is referring.

What surprises me most in these my unveilings

of Jonson's hidden meaning is that not one of the many American and English students of Jonson, and of his share in the 'Poetomachia,' or poets' war, have noticed, so far as I know, these curious allusions.

I will take first the important though neglected play of

'THE CASE IS ALTERED.'

The date of this play is, fortunately, known with accuracy, for it was acted *after* Mere's 'Palladis Tamia' (1598), to which it refers, and *before* Nash's 'Lenten Stuff' (1599), which notices the 'merry cobbler' in the 'witty play of "The Case is Altered."' So we fix the date between 1598 and 1599, a narrow limit. It was not printed till 1609.

Two of the characters of the play are skits on Harvey and Nash, *Juniper* standing for Harvey, and *Onion* for Nash.* Antonio Balladino, another character, stands for Anthony Munday. These three are certain identifications—at least, I think they will appear so to anyone who will read their parts carefully in the play. But my present object is to show that the character of

* This has been shown at some length in *Notes and Queries* by Mr. Hart, who is, I believe, a Shakespearian.

Valentine is a skit on Francis Bacon, and shows on the face of it that Ben Jonson well knew who was the true author of the Shakespeare plays.

I will first draw attention to certain special *words* and *scenes* which point to Bacon, and next unveil the traveller to the Goodwin Sands, Constantinople, and other odd places.

Words and Expressions.

As Juniper and Onion can be clearly seen from the *words* used by them or of them in the play, so, I hold, is the case with Valentine. I quote from Cunningham's edition of Jonson, and my first extract is from vol. ii., p. 521, italicizing the significant words :—

'JUNIPER. Come on you precious rascal *Sir Valentine*, I'll give you a health i' faith, for the heavens, you *mad Capricio, hold hook and line.*'

Now, 'Capricio' is almost a test word for Bacon —it is used by Harvey, Marston, and other contemporaries, to denote a phantastical and capricious intellect, as well as here, too, by Ben Jonson. None of them *name* Bacon—they dare not—but no one suits the several allusions so well. Take Jonson, for instance, in 'The Poetaster' (Act III., Scene i.). He brings on Tucca, talking to Histrio, a player (viz., Alleyn, of the Fortune Theatre, as

appears plainly by the allusions), about the players and poets of the time,—

'There are some of you players honest gentlemanlike scoundrels, and suspected to have some wit, as well *as your poets both at drinking and breaking of jests, and are companions for gallants.* Capricio (Quart.). Dos't thou not know that there?
Pantalabus (Fol.). HISTRIO. No, I assure you, Captain.'

Tucca then recommends this Capricio as one of the poets who 'pens high, lofty, in a new stalking strain,' and that if Histrio secured his services, 'if he pen for thee once,' that then Histrio would soon be a rich man.

Now, no successful or popular playwright at this period suits Jonson's allusions so well as the author of the Shakespeare plays, and by using the name Capricio Jonson shows that he knew the *real* author, for no one ever called the Stratford man either phantastical or capricious—*he* was an honest, sensible, money making man.

No, Capricio stood for Bacon here (1601), just as mad Capricio stood for him in 'The Case is Altered' (1599); but this harping on the same word in two nearly successive plays was, I suppose, too obvious, and so Ben Jonson in the next edition of 'The Poetaster' altered Capricio to Pantalabus, and got rid of the Baconian allusion here, just as

he got rid of the Baconian allusion 'Knight' elsewhere in a second edition.

'Capricious' is used again in 'The Case is Altered' in a very significant manner, by Valentine to Juniper (Bacon to Harvey), and as we have both 'capricious' and 'capricio' in two Shakespeare plays* that hail from the same period, or a little earlier, we get strong additional force to the suggestion that under the name of Valentine we have marked allusions to the real author of the immortal plays, whose odd words would be fresh in the minds of the play going critics among the audience, for whom Jonson especially prepared his numerous allusions. In fact, Jonson in his early plays especially strove to depict the 'humours' of the different classes of society, the Court ('Cynthia's Revels'), and the literary circles, and he 'spiced' his plays with semi-concealed personal allusions, often purposely enigmatical and 'composite.' But they were comparatively easy to discover then, for the dress, action, and theatrical make up all helped to point to the man or woman alluded to.

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* In one passage Touchstone says to Audrey, 'I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet honest Ovid was among the Goths.' (A very Baconian pun, for 'Goths' and 'goats' were pronounced almost alike.) See 'As You Like It,' III. ii. 7.

We nowadays are, of course, without this advantage of seeing a personal caricature, but, in spite of Jonson's cautious allusions, many of his caricatures and topical allusions have been discovered recently, and I am proud, naturally, to claim my share in this work.

I next come to a very marked allusion in the extraordinary health which Juniper-Harvey gives to Valentine-Bacon. 'I'll give you a health, i' faith,' he says, '*hold hook and line*,' and that is the end of the scene, and they leave the stage together (Act I., Scene i.).

To the man in the street, or even in the club, nowadays, this would be pure nonsense; but at that time it was pure Shakespeare, taken from a piece only recently acted, and would be recognised as 'a play-scrap' by the critical frequenters of the drama. It is to be found in '2 Henry IV.,' II. iv., 171, where Pistol says: 'Hold hook and line, say I; Down, down, dogs!' and it occurs nowhere else in the whole of Shakespeare.

If this and many other almost equally striking allusions to the Shakespeare plays do not bring Valentine into premeditated connection with the real author, whom Jonson clearly knew, I do not understand evidence.

The next significant word I take is 'hieroglyphic.'

It occurs in the first meeting of Juniper and Valentine :—

'JUNIPER. What, Valentine! . . . tell me how thou dost, sweet ingle.

'VALENTINE. Faith, Juniper, the better to see thee thus *frælich*.

'JUN. Nay, 'slid I'm no *changeling*; I am Juniper still. I keep the pristinate; ha, you mad *hieroglyphic*, when shall we swagger?

'VAL. Hieroglyphic! What meanest thou by that?

'JUN. Mean! od'so is it not a good word, man? What, stand upon meaning with your friends?' and presently he adds: 'Valentine, I prithee *ruminate* thyself welcome. What, *fortuna de la guerra*.'

And then Balthasar comes in shortly afterwards, and also welcomes Valentine :—

'BALTH. Welcome, sweet rogue . . . And how is't, man? What *allo coragio*?'

Now, I hold that the words I have drawn attention to by the italics point to Shakespeare and his recent plays indubitably. The two foreign exclamations occur in 'Love's Labour's Lost' and in 'All's Well.'

The little Indian *changeling* plays a conspicuous part in 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and also

most probably in the blind Indian Boy Prince of the 'Gesta Grayorum,' and thereby hangs a Baconian tale, or tail, which no one has managed properly to adjust. Ben in the witness-box on this subject would be very interesting, I have no doubt.

Frælich, or frolic, is used also in Shakespeare, but as Jonson brings this word up in several other places where Bacon seems intended, there seems to have been some hidden reference here which is now lost.

But when Jonson makes two different characters of his play welcome Valentine in certain outlandish expressions recently heard and known through Shakespeare's plays, we come to but one conclusion, and that conclusion will be strongly corroborated by the fact that Valentine is addressed as 'you mad hieroglyphic.' What an extraordinary fashion of speech! It is almost as bad as calling the Billingsgate woman in the tale an 'isosceles triangle.' What could the word possibly mean as applied to Valentine? First let us see what was meant by the word. The 'New English Dictionary' gives this,—'A figure, device, or sign, having some hidden meaning; a secret or enigmatical symbol or emblem.' Ah! this gives us the clue—it was

'Bacon's head' which he promised, if needs be, to show to Southampton in 'Lucrece.'* It was the hieroglyphic F^{R}_{B} which Bacon used in varying forms to put at the head of 'Lucrece' and other 'hidden' works of his. And Jonson, like Marston, knew the secret, and we credit Jonson with this knowledge, especially since we are well aware that he used a hieroglyphic himself of a nearly exactly similar kind against Bacon as Cheveril the lawyer, and also in the dedication of his 'Epigrams' says plainly that he, at least, had no cause to hide himself under a hieroglyphic—for 'I had nothing in my conscience, to expressing of which I did need a *cypher*.' Marston knew Bacon's hiero-glyphic, too, and referred to its one letter which bounded or enclosed the others—*i.e.*, the F of F^{R}_{B}. This was in his contemporaneous 'Satires,' so it is not likely that the omnivorous reader and critic Jonson would be ignorant of this device or *hiero-glyphic*, as he was the first to call it.

Harvey used the word once or twice, though not quite in this sense, and also the words *change-ling* and *capricious*, so the words would come in aptly in a dialogue between Harvey (Juniper) and Valentine (Bacon), and Ben could have thrown it upon Harvey if challenged by Cheverel the

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* See 'Is it Shakespeare?' chapter I., for this.

lawyer, or any other offended aristocrat, and so escaped. Ben was clever, for the same plan could have been adopted with regard to Capricio. But Capricio was too marked, and he had to alter that.

There are other words, such as *alabaster*, p. 548 (Richard III. and Harvey), and *assoil*, p. 549 (Puttenham—*i.e.*, Bacon—in this peculiar sense), and *peregrination through Mesopotamia*, all pointing to Bacon and Harvey, though the last is peculiarly Baconian; also *keisar*, etc. But we will leave the *words* pointing to Bacon, and come to the

Scenes which indicate Bacon.

These scenes are Act II., Scene iv., and Act IV., Scene i. They deserve reading carefully, and I have no doubt that others more expert than myself will be able to add much that has escaped me.

In the former scene we have Valentine appealed to as an authority on *fencing in Italy*, and on *theatres and the drama in Italy*. And when we remember how well Bacon, from his friendship with Essex, must have been acquainted with Saviolo's book of fencing, which was dedicated to Essex, and how Shakespeare also borrowed from it in his plays, and still further how Bacon-Shakespeare drew his plays and characters

from Italy—if, I say, we remember these things in reading through the scene, we shall not hesitate to admit that Bacon is lying *perdu* there. Harvey is mixed in as well, I do not deny that, but I hold Bacon to be the principal character in this scene.

The other scene is a remarkable one indeed (Act IV., Scene i.), and I cannot understand how the stinkards and groundlings could sit through it, as far as the words go; but doubtless there was ludicrous action and make up in the three characters which passed it off satisfactorily. The action is of the nature of a dialogue between two finical foreign pages, who meet in a private room in a nobleman's house, and take the opportunity to practise the last fashionable society phrases and motions then used when aristocrats, who had travelled, met each other in public places.

I take this scene to be, from beginning to end, a fine and cleverly arranged Jonsonian skit on the extraordinary frequency of courtesy words and finical compliments used by that master of decorum Bacon-Shakespeare in the plays already acted.

It is well known that the author of the immortal plays was distinguished above all contemporary writers and dramatists by his excep-

tionally frequent use of such courtesy phrases as 'good-morrow,' 'good-day,' 'bonjour' (once used by an extraordinary anachronism in 'Titus Andronicus'), and other polite salutations, when gentlemen meet each other. Indeed, we know Bacon studied these phrases and put them in his 'Promus,' to be brought forth on proper occasions, and wrote on the back of the leaf of the manuscript 'Formularies and Elegancies.' We have in this scene of Jonson's play a very fine list of Shakespearian 'Formularies and Elegancies' brought before the audience for their amusement and ridicule, and it is Valentine that is being covertly satirized, though he is not on the stage as a speaker.

How we know that it is Valentine who fits these allusions is in this way. The two pages had just begun their practice, when Onion calls from without, 'Sirrah Finic!' on which Pacue, the other page, exclaims, 'Mort Dieu, le paisant!'—that is to say, ''Sdeath, it's the peasant!' Onion then comes on the scene, and says, 'Didst thou see Valentine?' and the other page answers, 'Valentine? No.' Now, the point of this is only clear when we remember that Valentine in 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona' is once called (very inappropriately, as it seems) 'peasant Valentine,' and

it seems that sometimes this word 'peasant' was applied by contemporaries to the author of 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona.'

So it seems that one of the pages, hearing a voice calling out, at once, conscience-struck at what they were going to do, thought it was the very man they were going to parody and ridicule, and cries out: ''Sdeath, here's our peasant himself!' Onion, overhearing this, and knowing well enough who 'the peasant' was (for Onion was Nash, who was strongly suspected by Harvey of aiming at great folks by this very word), says: 'What, was Valentine here, or have you seen him?' But I fear I have overlaboured this to make it clear.

I hold that Jonson, with great stagecraft, thus brought Valentine in merely to prepare the critical audience for what was really coming. By somewhat similar 'business' did Toole make himself heard before he appeared, by calling out something in his whimsical way while in the street or passage outside.

But in these days of Shakespeare knowledge we do not require such a preliminary hint as Jonson vouchsafed to the critical playgoers. Nearly every complimentary word or phrase in this most interesting and neglected scene of 'The Case is Altered' is to be found in the Shakespeare

plays that had been recently written. 'Bonjour;' 'Good-morrow;' 'Good signior;' 'Glad to see you;' 'I return you most kind thanks, sir;' 'Dieu vous garde;' 'God save you;' 'Welcome, signior;' 'By this hand;' 'Faith, exceeding well;' 'Pray be covered, I beseech you, sir;' 'Pardonnez-moi, you wrong me'—all these occur, and some of them an extraordinary number of times, in the plays already known.

I hold that I have sufficiently shown that Jonson referred to the Shakespeare plays and their author, who was the very glass of fashion in his courteous decorum, which art he certainly never learnt among the yokels of Stratford-on-Avon, nor among the stable boys and ostlers in Burbage's pay.

Having thus, I hope, somewhat prepared the ground for the entrance of the great traveller Valentine, who was acquainted with the Goodwin Sands, the Tower of Babylon, Constantinople, and Mesopotamia (blessed word!), he shall introduce himself with 'Bonjour, messieurs, alla coragio; by this hand, you have wronged me.'

The 'great traveller' is first brought into notice just after Juniper had called Valentine a 'mad hieroglyphic' (p. 520), and Juniper proceeds to recall these travels thus,—

'JUNIPER. Sirrah ingle, I think thou hast seen all the strange countries in Christendom since thou went'st.

'VALENTINE. I have seen some, Juniper.

'JUNIPER. You have seen Constantinople?

'VALENTINE. Ay, that I have.

'JUNIPER. And Jerusalem, and the Indies, and Goodwin Sands, and the Tower of Babylon, and Venice and all.

'VALENTINE. Ay, all.'

Now, what contemporary can possibly be brought into connection with *all* these specially selected places? I can suggest no one but the *very man* we have taken for Valentine in all the other places of the play—viz., the author of the Shake-speare plays, whom Jonson knew to be Bacon.

But surely neither Shake-speare of Gray's Inn nor Shakspere of Stratford ever went to Constantinople, or Jerusalem either. Possibly not; but I will quote a passage from 'Henry V.,' whose date (1599) we know for certain from internal evidence, and which was, therefore, probably being performed in London at this very time at another theatre; and this, I believe, will explain the Constantinople allusion.

In Act V., Scene ii., King Henry says to Katherine,—

'Shall not thou and I, between St. Dennis and

St. George, compound a boy half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard ?'

I hold that Jonson knew that Bacon (who was himself a half-French, half-English lad at one time) was the author of this 'phantastical' passage, and therefore sent Valentine-Bacon to Constantinople, and also to some places, such as the Goodwin Sands and Jerusalem, etc., which also, like Constantinople, are referred to by name specially in the plays. For instance, the Goodwin Sands are mentioned three times in the early plays before 1600, and Jerusalem is mentioned ten times, but, strange to say, *never after this Jonsonian satire.* The Indies are mentioned several times, and of course Venice.

This accounts for all the places except one; and so Bacon had been to all of them, *as an author*, in having referred to them, and therefore Ben makes Valentine, who stands for Bacon, go to these places as a traveller.

The exception is the Tower of Babylon; for though Babylon does occur once in Shakespeare, it is only in the burden of a song, and Jonson must have meant something more cutting than that. Perhaps he was thinking of Harvey's friend, who wrote a long piece of Latin verse to

his dear Gabriel just before *starting for Babylon* and the Caucasus on a mission for Leicester, as he declared. But was this young 'traveller' Bacon? Quien sabe? It may be so.

Nor must it be forgotten that these Constantinople and Babylon (Bagdad?) allusions *may* be connected with 'Huon of Bordeaux,' which old French romance was well known to Bacon, for Oberon and his fairies are there, and hobgoblins as well; and Huon had to go to the court or palace (or tower?) of Babylon or Bagdad, and to bring back a lock of the Emir's beard, which is not unlike the curious 'phantasy' of 'Henry V.,' which could hardly have entered into the level and 'business' head of Shakspere of Stratford.*

That Bacon was chaffed on the stage by Jonson as a traveller of an amazing kind, under the different characters of Valentine in this play, of Puntarvolo in 'Every Man out of his Humour,' and of Amorphus (a composite character) in 'Cynthia's Revels,' will be admitted by careful and unprejudiced readers.

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* According to some German authorities, we are told that in Northern folk-lore, *Hamlet and Tamburlaine stormed and took Constantinople!* I have not been able to go deeper than this superficial statement; perhaps some expert will explain it.

'Every Man out of his Humour.'

Let us take Puntarvolo first, and notice the very curious name. Jonson generally meant some allusion by his *names*, as we have already shown. What did he mean by Puntarvolo? Well, it is the Italian for a bodkin, and Sir Bodkin the knight leads us on close to Bacon, though, of course, we cannot be expected to enter into the jest as well as did the audience who first heard the play; for they were acquainted with the last jests of the town, and were on the look out for their appearance on the stage. Now, Sir Puntarvolo, or, in plain English, Sir Bodkin, is described in the *Dramatis Personæ* prefixed to the play, as :—

'A vain-glorious knight, over-Englishing his travels and wholly consecrated to singularity, the very Jacob's staff of compliment,' etc.

This does not look unlike Bacon, but why Sir Bodkin? Well, perhaps as a counter-thrust to the redoubtable *Spear* of Pallas, which Bacon professed to *Shake* at Ignorance, and other 'deficiencies' of mortal man.

Johnson scoffed at it as a mere 'bodkin,' and added insult to injury by making Carlo Buffone call Puntarvolo a 'yeoman-feuterer,' which is a

very ambiguous expression; for though 'feuterer' is a dog-keeper (from the French *vautrier*), as Puntarvolo was in the play, yet the word 'fewter' means to put one's spear in rest (*cf.* 'Faerie Queene,' IV. iv. 10), and thus we get a thrust at Bacon-Shakespeare—a rather far-fetched one to us, but more easily understood when these obsolete words were often in people's mouths. Then there was Hamlet's 'bare bodkin' in the famous soliloquy. This might well have been heard of as early as this, and made a joke against the author. And, again, there is Nash, who speaks of a Mounseer Bodkin who praised Harvey. It was really Bodin who was meant, but Nash must have changed the word into 'Bodkin' for some personal reason or other. In fact, whatever way we look at the *name* Bodkin, which Jonson gave to this traveller knight in his play, we seem always carried in the direction of Bacon.

In Act II. Scene i., Puntarvolo addresses his lady, when she appears at the window, in the following strain:—

'PUNTARVOLO. What more than heavenly pulchritude is this,
What magazine or treasury of bliss?
Dazzle, ye organs to my optic sense,
To view a creature of such eminence;

O, I am planet-struck,* and in yon sphere
A brighter star than Venus doth appear!
'Fastidious Brisk. How! in verse!
'Carlo Buffone. An extacy, an extacy, man.'

Now, I take this to be a parody on the famous balcony scene in 'Romeo and Juliet,' just as in 'The Poetaster' Jonson makes a still more elaborate and ecstatic parody on the same incident, one of Francis Bacon's most notable love-ecstasies, as Jonson, no doubt, well knew.

The 'Romeo and Juliet' parody by Jonson in his 'Poetaster' was given at length in 'Is it Shake-speare?' I did not know of Puntarvolo then. Sir Bodkin does not use so many Baconian *words* as did Valentine in 'The Case is Altered,' but he brings out the word 'real' twice, being the only times it is used by Ben Jonson. This is a Bacon-Promus word, and is also one of the three words nailed to the counter in Marston's satires as belonging to 'Judicial Torquatus.'

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* *Cf.* Shake-speare:

'Some *planet strike* me down.'
Titus Andronicus, II. iv. 14.

'The nights are wholesome: then no *planets strike*.'
Hamlet, I. i. 162.

'It is a bawdy planet that will strike.'
Winter's Tale, I. ii. 201.

One of the most suggestive scenes for our purpose is that scene, near the end of the play, in which Sir Puntarvolo strikes Carlo Buffone, the loose tongued libeller, and seals up his mouth. Puntarvolo took patiently a good many of Carlo's unpleasant allusions, but matters came to a climax when Carlo Buffone refers to a German 'familiar' who could turn himself into a dog, or anything else, for certain hours. On this Puntarvolo strikes him, and afterwards seals up his mouth.

Carlo Buffone's allusion seems to have been to a German 'conjurer,' or magician such as Faustus, and Cornelius Agrippa with his mythical dog, and the transformation scenes that such conjurers could bring about. Why this should so particularly annoy Puntarvolo is not at first sight so clear. But I should say it had reference to the 'conjurer' of Gray's Inn, of whom we hear in the 'Gesta Grayorum,' possibly so called on account of Dr. Faustus and his devotion to alchemy and other occult conjuring. And as for the 'dog' allusion, it is known now how often Bacon was called a 'dog' (through the Greek) in Marston and elsewhere—*mendacia famæ*, but very exasperating, and quite enough to rouse Bacon to use the power of the seal.

Bacon had the power and influence necessary to stop people's mouths, and their libels as well, and he used it, as Jonson finds, in the Star Chamber and by the Privy Council, too. As a matter of history or tradition, it was Raleigh who stopped up Charles Chester's mouth; but that need not prevent Jonson using the incident as a hit at Bacon; indeed, he preferred an indirect or puzzling allusion, which might be transferred easily to another person, as has been shown before.

Nash gives a long account of what punishment was meted out to Charles Chester (Buffone) by 'a great personage,' but he does not name him (Nash, i. 190, McKirrow's edition).

Puntarvolo also, like Valentine, is to go to Constantinople on his wonderful travels. He is to go to the Turk's Court there, and 'to bring thence a Turk's mustachio,' which bears a striking likeness to what Shake-speare Bacon made Henry V. say about his 'half-French, half-English boy that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard.' And, again, in 'Much Ado About Nothing' (II., i. 271) Benedict says: 'I will fetch you a hair off the Great Cham's beard.'

And there is the Huon of Bordeaux incident of a similar kind. I think all these points, taken

together and duly considered, are sufficient to induce a slight presumption that Sir Puntarvolo or Sir Bodkin was intended by Jonson to call Francis Bacon into the thoughts of the curious, the gossiping, and the critical, among the audience.*

But we now pass to the next play,—

'Cynthia's Revels.'

Here we have a traveller again, under the name of Amorphus this time, and the descriptions

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* We have also Puntarvolo's curious motto, 'Not without mustard.' What *can* this mean? Enigmatical as it is, I do not think we need go far to find the solution. The play of 'As You Like It' was performed about this time, as we have before seen, and it is here that we shall find both the knight and the mustard. In the second scene of the first act 'a certain knight that swore by his honour' a strange oath about pancakes and mustard, and swore 'the mustard was naught.' And in the play of 'Taming of the Shrew' Katherine is told, 'You shall have the mustard, or else you get no beef,' and the incident is dwelt upon through several lines of the drama.

I hope it will not be thought a rash conjecture if I take it that Ben Jonson is here mocking at Shakespeare's plays and their author—the travelled 'knight' whom he knew well enough. Besides, this *non sanz droict* was Shakespeare's motto, and facetious Ben may have meant a sly thrust at that as well.

given of him in the play, his actions and manners in the different scenes, and the words he uses, all point strongly to Francis Bacon—in fact, so strongly that the evidence can hardly be put aside, and is therefore a good corroboration of the Valentine and Puntarvolo allusions.

There is much more in this play than I can afford space to quote or to annotate; I will therefore give only short extracts here and there, with italics to draw attention to the Baconian allusions.

It must be remembered that this play deals with the Court and with aristocrats. Former critics and interpreters have, it seems, failed to notice this. Consequently Asotus has been taken to represent Lodge, which is very unlikely, and Hedon and Anaides have been degraded to the social position of Marston and Dekker, though distinctly described as 'courtiers' and 'gallants.' While Amorphus has been identified with the impossible Barnaby Rich (Fleay) and the equally impossible Anthony Munday (Penniman); indeed, few of Jonson's allusive plays have been so ludicrously misinterpreted as 'Cynthia's Revels.'

I think we shall see that Bacon as Amorphus is somewhat more reasonable than either Rich or Munday.

Now, Amorphus is described as:

'The very *mint of compliment*, all his behaviours are *printed*, his face is another *volume of Essays*.'

N.B. Bacon's 'Essays' had been only recently published, and were almost the first of their kind in England, or, at any rate, the best yet produced.

Again, Amorphus describes himself thus,—

'Knowing myself an essence so sublimated and refined by travel; of so studied and well exercised a gesture; so alone in fashion; *able to render the face of any statesman living*, and to *speak the mere extraction of language*,' etc.

Cf. Bacon's deracinated phraseology.

Again, he says to his pupil Asotus,—

'Come, look not pale, observe me, *set your face* and enter.'

Cf. Marston's 'Scourge of Villainy,' p. 276 (Halliwell), where Bacon is alluded to as having a 'glass-set face'—*i.e.*, a face composed before a looking-glass.

Again, Hedon says of Amorphus:

'You must know, lady, he cannot speak out of a *dictionary method*.'

Again, we have Amorphus presented (Act IV.,

Scene i.) as a good hand at masques and revels, especially in the inventive parts—better in his own estimation than Ben Jonson.

In the play the Queen had asked for some 'solemn revels' or 'device of wit' to entertain her on some early future occasion. Amorphus suggests a masque, and then there is a question of sending for Crites,—*i.e.*, Ben Jonson—and getting his advice.

To this Amorphus replies,—

'Why his advice more than Amorphus? Have not I *invention* afore him? *learning* to better that invention above him? and infanted with pleasant travel——'

Here he breaks off. But who else could the speaker represent except Francis Bacon?

Like Valentine and Puntarvolo, Amorphus was a knight, and so signs himself to a letter he wrote, and we hear also that he was 'the first that ever enriched his country with the laws of the duello.' This allusion evidently refers to Saviolo's book on 'Fencing and Honour in Quarrels,' recently dedicated to Essex, and, as the Shakespearian play of 'As You Like It' had humorously brought some of the arguments of this courtly book before the public more recently still, there seems good reason to believe that Jonson was alluding to the real

author of the immortal plays, here as elsewhere. Moreover, there is a long satirical account of how Amorphus travelled to the Courts of the Emperor and various Kings and Princes on the Continent, and what happened to him in such lofty surroundings—all strongly reminding us of George Puttenham's tales in his 'Arte of English Poesie,' a book which we know Jonson possessed, for his copy is in the British Museum, and whose real author I have shewn elsewhere, by many proofs, to be Bacon. And, further still, a great part of the play is taken up by an amusing but rather prolix account of Amorphus showing his pupil Asotus how to use the 'most cunning weapons of court compliment,' viz., the 'Bare Accost,' the 'Better Regard,' the 'Solemn Address,' and the 'Perfect Close.'

Who better qualified than the courtly and decorous Francis Bacon to be the instructor here? and how like to what Touchstone says in 'As You Like It,' about the weapons of good manners, derived from Saviolo:—

'O, sir, we quarrel in print, by the book, as you have books for good manners. I will name you the degrees. The first, *the retort courteous*; the second, *the quip modest*; the third, *the reply churlish*; the fourth, *the reproof valiant*; the fifth,

the countercheck quarrelsome; the sixth, *the lie with circumstance*; the seventh, *the lie direct*.'

How could the stage critics fail to see the allusions of Amorphus and the man they were aimed at?

Gabriel Harvey has been suggested for Amorphus, and some of the words used in the first act of the play are peculiar to him; but he was not a knight, and not of much interest to London playgoers, and if Ben used him a little in his 'composite' manner for self-protection from libel, the rest of the play and its marked allusions show that Bacon was the main object of Jonson's satires.

Again, Amorphus is described as 'a traveller that hath drunk of the fountain,' and

> 'has caused such a drought in the presence with reporting the wonders of this new water, that all the ladies and gallants lie languishing upon the rushes . . . sighing one to another, and gasping, as if each of them expected a cock from the fountain to be brought into his mouth.'

I take this to be a reference to the known popularity of 'Venus and Adonis' at Court among the gallants and ladies. The fountain was the fountain of the Muses, from which came the Castalian water with which Apollo gave 'full

cups' to the author, as appeared on the title-page of the new love-poem, 'Venus and Adonis,'—

> 'Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
> Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.'

And Amorphus and Crites have a long dialogue about this water, in which *Helicon* and the *Muses' Well* are both referred to, and Amorphus is chaffed about *not* writing *verses* since he has become a water-drinker. It is also 'New Fountain water' of which Lady Arete, the quintessence of Court virtue, will not drink when she is asked, and it appears that Crites (Jonson) would not be a drinker, either. All this points to the wanton Muse of Francis Bacon, as I think, which so attracted the more frivolous members of the upper classes, and ran through so many early editions.

Amorphus speaks also of metheglin, which he had tasted 'from the hand of an Italian antiquary, who derives it authentically from the *Duke of Ferrara's bottles.*' Does this refer to the use of Sir John Harington's translations of Ariosto (1591)?*

In interpreting 'Cynthia's Revels,' it must be kept in mind that the play is a satire on the

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* *Cf.* Hunter's 'New Illustrations of Shakespeare.'

people of the Court, especially the wealthy, extravagant and licentious ones. The very *names* of the courtiers in the play show this. Hence Hedon, Anaides, and Asotus (a beardless youth, and therefore not Lodge, as many have supposed), would represent prominent characters of the aristocracy, and would be easily divined by the guesses of the critics then. It is not so easy to do so now. But seeing that Dekker, in his 'Satiromastix,' complains of Ben Jonson's base ingratitude to his friends, and, most significantly, to *Patrons* and *Mæcenases*,* and seeing that Dekker was writing this attack just after 'Cynthia's Revels' and 'The Poetaster' had been produced, there can be no harm in suggesting that aristocrats were meant rather than playwrights. In this play, as in the others, the *words* used point to Bacon as well as the *incidents* of the piece.

Amorphus uses the more or less common words:—*Intendments*, *obsequious*, *statist*, *practic* and *theoric*, *distemperature*, *intrinsecate*, *redoundeth*, *retrograde*, *paradox*, etc. Now, these all appear in the Shakespeare plays *recently acted*, and

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* *Cf.* the whole passage a few pages on, *s.v.* 'Poetaster.'

some of them (*e.g.*, 'distemperature') are repeated there as often as five times. There are also Harvey words, but only in Act I. Not only is this 'traveller' an expert in words, but he professes to be an authority in musical diction. He gives a lyrical ditty on a glove, and comments thus,—

> 'Do you not observe how excellently the ditty is affected in every place? that I do not marry a word of short quantity to a long note? . . . you see how I do enter with an odd minum and drive it through the brief; which no intelligent musician, I know, but will affirm to be very rare, extraordinary and pleasing.'

On this I would only say that there is no critic of poetry who examines the question of musical metre and tones and accents at anything like the length which Puttenham devotes to this subject in pp. 5, 6, and the succeeding chapters on Proportion in his 'Arte of English Poetrie.' That Puttenham was no other than Francis I claim to have shown by many proofs elsewhere.

It seems clear enough that Ben Jonson does attack the Shakespeare plays both in 'Cynthia's Revels' and many others. This was not 'malignity against Shakespeare,' as some contended in Malone's time, and caused a most bitter contro-

versy on the subject, one party holding Ben guilty of unworthy malignity against his manifest superior from Stratford, and the other party holding that Jonson neither maligned the plays nor was ever unfriendly to the Warwickshire actor who wrote them. Both parties were ludicrously wrong, for they did not possess the evidence we have now. There are no proofs of any malignity to the *actor* Shakspere; on the contrary, Ben seems to really like the Stratford man, but Ben has many a covert sneer and many a damaging allusion to the immortal plays in early days before he 'crept into' Bacon's bosom, and honoured and praised him as the very ἀκμή, the very point and summit, of the literary genius of the time.

In the induction to this play of 'Cynthia's Revels' we read of plays filled with 'stale apothegms,' 'other men's jests,' and 'old books,' and also of *umbræ*, or ghosts, of some three or four plays departed a dozen years hence. We also read of matter that the authors 'have twice or thrice cooked,' and of stages haunted with such hobgoblins. All these allusions seem to point to Gray's Inn rather than Stratford, and to that recluse in his cell in London who was constantly revising what he had written, and improving his plays both for the stage and for the press.

I therefore propound the equation, not mathematical, but literary, that Amorphus, Puntarvolo, and Valentine each stand for Bacon, and may be substituted for him. It of course follows that, as they were all great travellers, so must Bacon also be.

Lastly, then, there is the objection to consider of those who say that Bacon was not a traveller properly speaking, and probably never went farther than to Paris, and to a few other French towns, during his whole life. This can be met, as I believe, satisfactorily.

For even if it could be shown that Bacon was no traveller, and never even left his native country or crossed the Channel, still, that would not do away with the allusions to the author of the Shakespeare plays; for it might well be supposed that Jonson was satirizing their author as one who made his *characters* travel here, there, and everywhere within the limits of a few acts. This was quite contrary to the classical traditions and what is known as 'the unities' of the drama; and Jonson, who was an orthodox classical dramatist, was strongly against the new romantic drama and its habit of constantly breaking the principles of what Jonson considered to be true art. So these references to Goodwin Sands and Venice and

Constantinople, this 'practise to vault thus from one side of the world to another,' as Jonson terms it in Act I., Scene i., may only be a pleasant skit on Shakespeare's methods of dramatizing.

And I hold that this is the true explanation of the apparent contradiction, and that a neglected passage in the induction to 'Every Man out of his Humour' clearly proves it.

Literary critics are well aware that, in this long and unique induction, Jonson as Asper gives such an excellent account of his views on the legitimate drama, and such a fine definition of humour, that it is the *locus classicus* for the subject, as far as he is concerned.

Now, towards the end, and just before the prologue, enters (after discussing the unities and such like supposed requisites of a true drama) Mitis, one of the characters representing a stage critic, who asks this question,—

'How comes it then that in some one play we see so many seas, countries and kingdoms, passed over with such admirable dexterity?'

Cordatus (another stage critic) answers,—

'O that but shows how well *the authors can travel* in their vocation, and outrun the apprehension of their auditory.'

Now, I take this to be a sly and satirical attack

upon Francis Bacon and the Shake-speare plays, and the true explanation of the curious fact that Amorphus, Puntarvolo, and Valentine are all said to be travellers, and to go to such out of the way places. In fact, the author of the Shake-speare plays *had travelled in his vocation as dramatist* to the Indies, Constantinople, the Goodwin Sands, and the rest, though neither he nor any living dramatist had visited them all in person. Especially had he travelled to the Indies.

Shake-speare in no less than eighteen places of his plays refers to the Indies and to Indians, and frequently alludes to the strange beasts, birds, and plants of the New Continent as well as the old one.

If anyone cares to see how the author of the Shake-speare plays was interested in the Indies and America, I refer him to an article in the *Deutsche Rundschau* for January, 1904, p. 109, 'Shakespeare und die Anfänge der englischen Kolonialpolitik,' where all the passages in the plays are noted and criticised. I have already referred to this interest in the new American colonies, in 'Is it Shakespeare?' (1903), and since then my arguments have been much strengthened.

No wonder Ben Jonson should make Bacon such a traveller to the Indies and other outlandish

places! No living *traveller* could equal him on paper.

I do not expect the orthodox will accept this explanation of mine for a moment. There are some people who will not *take in* Bacon on any grounds—just as others, Dr. Furnivall, *e.g.*, will not *give up* that 'merry cheekt' old gentleman of Stratford, Shakspere's father, who had the famous interview with Sir John Mennes when that little toddler of two years or so went to Stratford, presumably accompanied by his nurse.

On this vexed but most interesting and important literary question, there are alas! too many who will neither take in or give up anything. They cannot be convinced because they will not. Not even the comical fiasco of the 'little toddler' and the 'merry cheekt' John Shakspere shook Dr. Furnivall's faith; if the two year old and his nurse did not interview Shakspere's father, no doubt someone else did.

Is a veteran to be nonplussed by a two year old? Certainly not. No self-respecting man would allow it. See how Gifford treated Theobald years and years ago. Theobald had written in the margin of his copy of Ben's play, against the passages I have just quoted, '*a flurt at Shakspeare.*' On this Gifford remarks bitterly: 'The charge is

too absurd for serious notice, or, indeed, for any notice at all.' All this occurred long before the pestilent Baconian heresy arose, but I think the maligned Theobald was much nearer the true mark than the contemptuous Gifford; for I hope I have shown, not only here, but in many other places, that Ben Jonson *did* attack the author of the Shakespeare plays, in spite of Gifford's rancorous and persistent denial of the fact.

CHAPTER XI

NEW EVIDENCE FROM BEN JONSON (*continued*)

I NOW come to another play which I believe supplies us with evidence, viz., Ben Jonson's 'Poetaster.'

How Bacon and Shakspere were discovered in this play, and some less important characters as well, has been related in my former work.* Critics have not yet dislodged Ovid junior (Bacon) and Luscus (Shakspere) from the arguments and inferences therein contained. I hold the case that Ovid junior is Bacon to be one of the clearest and most direct proofs that Baconians possess, and as I think I can corroborate it from Dekker's 'Satiromastix,' which was the direct answer to Ben's 'Poetaster,' it is worth while to do so. There are two passages.†

The first is where Sir Rees ap Vaughan lays

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* 'Is it Shakespeare?' 1902, pp. 85-92, etc.

† Dekker's Works, vol. i., p. 252 and p. 262.

down the law for Horace (who stands for Ben Jonson on the hardest of foundations), and says, with the stage Welsh accent,—

'Moreover, *inprimis* when a Knight, or Sentleman of worship, does give you his passe port to travaile in and out to his company, and gives you money for God's sake; I trust in Sesu you will swear (tooth and nayle) not to make scalde and wry mouth Jestes upon his Knighthood, will you not?

'HORACE. I never did by Parnassus.

'TUCCA. Wut sweare by Parnassus and lye too, Doctor Doddipol?'

The second passage is where Tucca addresses Horace thus:

'Art not famous enough yet, my mad Horostratus, for killing a Player, but thou must eat men alive? Thy friends? Sirra, Wilde-man. Thy Patrons? Thou anthropophagite. Thy Mæcenses?'

Both these extracts refer, as I believe, to the 'wry mouth Jestes' made against Bacon as Ovid junior in 'The Poetaster,' and against Bacon and the courtiers in 'Cynthia's Revels,' by Ben Jonson, who thus turned his devouring satire against that merry Ovidian Knight of the Helmet, who had also befriended him as a Mæcenas, along with Southampton and others, and had probably

helped to get Ben's first good play accepted for Shakspere's company. 'The Poetaster' is also rather sneering towards the Stratford player, although in former days it was strenuously denied that Jonson ever expressed anything but good feeling for Shakspere.

But such statements are not up to date now. I would also add that the fact of the 'Knight or Gentleman of worship' being able to give Jonson a 'passeport' to his company (of players?) rather corroborates my view that Bacon was so connected with a certain company of players that they were called 'Sir Oliver Owlet's men.'

In 1601 complaint was made to the authorities that the actors at the Curtain Theatre directed their speeches at persons in the audience, or of the City, and the Lords of the Privy Council issued their mandate to certain justices of the peace of Middlesex, May 10 of that year, reciting that 'Wee do understand that certain players,' etc., 'do represent upon the stage, in their interludes, the person of some gent of good desert and quality,' etc., requiring that the justices 'take Bonds of the Chiefest of these actors to answer their rashe and indiscreet dealing before us.'

That Bacon was represented upon the stage by Ben Jonson on several occasions, and especially in

his early plays and in 'The Poetaster,' which was partly excised by the authorities about this time, will soon be a plain matter of dramatic history, or ought to be. I therefore think that the 'gent of good desert and quality' referred to above might be Bacon, though the theatre was the Curtain, for I know of no other 'gent' about whom the authorities would take so much trouble; for though he was only plain Mr. Francis Bacon, he was a 'gent' who was by no means slow in urging his high-placed relatives and friends to defend him from attack. We know, when Coke attacked him in open court, how he wrote at once to his powerful Cecil relations, and I think he would do the same if Jonson, or any other dramatist, represented him in an unbecoming manner 'upon the stage.'

The word 'gent,' too, reminds us of the dialogue between Queen Elizabeth and Lambarde about the play of Richard II. The author is spoken of by Lambarde as a 'most adorned gent,' and, as I have said elsewhere, it is that word that excludes Essex and Hayward, and points to Bacon.

Moreover, the omissions or suppressions from the first printed copy, the quarto of 1602, lend great probability to Bacon's special interference there. For a long and important passage dealing with law and law terms, and aiming at Bacon's

Cheveril conscience and other peculiarities, is omitted altogether.

The word 'knight' as applied to the two Ovids, senior and junior, was struck out of the several places where it first appeared, and was heard of no more. 'Knight' or 'the merry Knight' seemed to be almost a familiar name for Bacon, and nearly all Jonson's masks for Bacon are knights—Sir Puntarvolo, Sir Valentine, Sir John Daw, Amorphus. But in the word *misprize*, which was kept out of the first quarto with much else, we get one of the strongest allusions to Bacon-Shakespeare. I will therefore consider more closely *misprise* and its compounds in Shakespeare. This is essentially and originally a legal word, hailing from the early days when the statutes were in Norman-French, and *mesprendre* and *mesprision* meant that a mistake, misapprehension, or false and inferior estimate, had been made. '*Misprisio*,' says Cope, 'cometh of the word *mespris*, which properly signifieth neglect or contempt; in legal understanding it signifieth when one knoweth of any treason or felony and concealeth it.'

It occurs with its derivatives a dozen times in the earlier plays, such as 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'As You Like It,' etc., but not

once in the later plays. Ben Jonson in his 'Poetaster' plainly aims at the Baconian use, and probably this jeer prevented further use of the word by Bacon.

Anyhow, except in one instance in 'Troilus and Cressida,' which appeared so very soon after 'The Poetaster' that it seems to me to have been partly written before Jonson's attack, all the twelve instances of *misprize* occur before the allusion was printed and came to Bacon's knowledge. This is how Jonson brings the word in. Ovid senior is bitterly complaining of Ovid junior's devotion to the Muses, and especially such wanton Muses as were connected with play-makers and love elegies, and says to Lupus,—

'Why, he cannot speak, he cannot think, out of poetry; he is bewitched with it.

'LUPUS. Come, do not misprize him.

OVID SENIOR. *Misprize!* ay, marry, I would have him use some such words now; they have some touch, some taste of the law. He should make himself a style out of these,' etc.

But whoever may have appealed to the authorities, and whether the theatre was the Curtain or not where Jonson's plays were produced, still, my contention cannot be set aside,

viz., that Bacon was the principal lawyer assailed in the Jonsonian plays of the dates 1598-1601. And we know for certain, in addition to this, that Bacon *threatened* Jonson with the terrors of the Higher Courts, for Jonson put this fact down in black and white in his epigram 'On Cheveril,' who is Francis Bacon without a doubt, as I have shown *acrostically* elsewhere.

'On Cheveril.

'Cheveril cries out, my verses libels are,
And threatens the Star-Chamber and the bar.'

I may here add to 'The Poetaster' allusions recorded in my former book the following new ones,—

Ovid junior is called a 'Grammaticaster.' This is a word very applicable to Puttenham, and Jonson knew Puttenham to be Bacon, as I contend. He is also described as one famed for 'sufficiencies.' Why so, unless Jonson was thinking of the 'deficiencies' of which Bacon makes so much in his philosophical treatises? He is also called Callimachus (a poet who was overloaded with learning), young Phœbus, and lastly Phaeton (Bacon's own signature to the 'Florio' sonnet). All these point out one man only.

'The Silent Woman' (1609).

This play gave me Sir Francis Bacon in the person of Sir John Daw. I brought this strong identity before the critics in my last book, and none of them has challenged it, for the good reason, as I hold, that it cannot be controverted.

This identity has been also strengthened lately. Readers of the *Times* will know that now it has been discovered by Professor Sonnenschein that Portia's famous speech on Mercy came nearly word by word from Seneca's 'De Clementiâ.' Now, Jonson in 'The Silent Woman,' Act II., Scene ii., flicks at Sir John Daw for borrowing from Seneca and Plutarch, and being 'president' of the 'wits and braveries,' and all that is said in this scene points so clearly to Bacon that I leave it for the candid reader to peruse *in toto*. I will say no more here, except that the British Museum copy of Florio's Montaigne, for which over £100 was paid (as it contained a supposed autograph of Shakspere), affords good evidence that the marginal annotator had read Seneca's 'De Clementiâ,' for he detects Montaigne's allusion to it, giving the true source in his manuscript note, viz., 'Sen. Clementia, cap. 4.' The writing of this is not unlike Bacon's in the jottings we

have of his in the 'Promus.' Mr. F. P. Gervais, a barrister, has dealt with this 'Shakespeare's copy of Florio's Montaigne' in his work entitled 'Shakspere not Bacon': and if ever a work helped to prove the very opposite of that which its title promised, this is the book which heads the record.

But I must not conclude Ben Jonson's allusions without expressing my opinion that, of the many contemporaries of Francis Bacon who must have known the secret of the 'concealed poet,' it is Jonson who has left us the most numerous clues to the Baconian authorship, though, perhaps, none are quite so pointed and clear as those of Marston and Hall, described in my former book. They still hold good; but I have become better acquainted with Ben's allusions since then, and their number and importance cannot be long ignored.

I expressed my opinion that Ben had his tongue in his cheek in the famous Shakespeare eulogium in the First Folio of 1623, and I have since noticed that he played the same game with Michael Drayton in the prefatory part of Drayton's folio which came out in 1627.

It is too long to quote here, but it can be found in any edition of Jonson's works, in 'Underwoods,'

No. XVI., and it is worth reading carefully as a very clever piece of deception. In fact, it looks as if Ben was so pleased with his success in bamboozling the non-elect in 1623, that four years after he thought he would try his hand on another folio and another poet.

My confidence in my supposition has also been considerably increased lately by finding, to my great pleasure, that Dr. Garnett holds the same view of this curious composition that I do.

In his recent 'History of English Literature' (vol. ii., p. 255, n.), he says :—'His [*i.e.*, Jonson's] professed eulogium on Drayton appears to us a thinly disguised satire.'

The fact seems to be that there was about the same friendship between Jonson and Drayton that there was between Jonson and Shakspere, and Ben treated both in the same tricky way. But he was able to complicate matters and deceive his readers more easily in Shakspere's case, for he had two personages to work upon, or puppets to pull, in whatever way it pleased his ingenuity to contrive.

One man was alive, and one was dead. One Jonson was pleased to call 'my beloved Master William Shakespeare' and 'my Shakespeare . . . a monument without a tomb'; the other seems

to be the Stratford player. At first glance through the lines the impression arises that the Stratford Shakspere fills the whole canvas; but even as long ago as Dryden's time there were some, and Dryden was their exponent, who thought this Shakespearian eulogy somewhat scant and invidious. In fact, its peculiar structure was clearly not unobserved by Dryden's good eye. It began so strangely; Jonson wished to 'draw no envy.' Now, that was applicable to the living only, and was one thing which Bacon especially dreaded. And then, for the other that was dead, Jonson's great praise was bestowed on him when 'his socks were on,' or when his buskins were shaking a stage under his dramatic gestures and tread. *Then* this other fellow might indeed surpass 'comparison of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome sent forth.' Of course he could, for he would then be declaiming the wondrous rhetoric and poetry of him to whom Jonson had elsewhere ('Discoveries') given exactly the same praise in the same words; and that 'alchemist of eloquence' was none other than Lord Chancellor Egerton's successor, the illustrious Francis Bacon!

How is it that people of good mental ability seem nowadays, at least in this literary matter,

to have eyes and see not, to have ears and hear not? We hear some critics say that Shakespeare *had no learning*, when it is as plain as possible that, 'without learning, he cannot be read with any degree of understanding or taste,' as Prebendary Upton justly remarks. We hear another critic—and he a very cocksure one—declare that Shakspere of Stratford was well acquainted with the Greek tragedians, and came up from Stratford, leaving his newly born twins behind him, and carrying 'Venus and Adonis' in his pocket, to make his fortune in London. And what is still more strange, both these opposing sections of the orthodox party agree that after a few years this Warwickshire youth, who was not even a 'squire of low degree,' had so risen in the social estimation of the aristocracy that he felt himself privileged to ask one of the highest young noblemen in the land, whom he addressed as 'My Rose' and 'Dear my love,' to find a wife and marry without delay, or, as he puts it in the tenth of the seventeen persistent procreation sonnets to this 'beauteous niggard,' Make thee another self *for love of me.*

But let us get back to Ben Jonson, who was a very different kind of critic from Mr. Churton Collins, and a much better judge of Bacon than

Mr. Sidney Lee, who in such matters could hardly be able to call upon his own experience or taste to decide which conjectures were the rasher ones, and which were simply gammon.

Jonson's plays—I mean the early ones, and his 'Poetaster' especially—should be read from beginning to end, so that the delicate (and indelicate) allusions be not passed over unobserved. As a general result, I think it will be found that Ben Jonson knew both Bacon and Shakspere very well—the later socially and in a somewhat friendly spirit throughout his acquaintance.

Jonson and Shakspere appear to me to have enjoyed a long acquaintance not embittered by any, or hardly any, of those quarrels and scathing invectives which seem to have arisen sooner or later with all Jonson's comrades, not even excepting Chapman, of whom he often spoke so highly.

Jonson, it is true, made Tucca indulge in a bit of satire on the actors who wanted to be 'blazoned' and 'tricked' by the heralds, and the same character used rather abusive and contemptuous words to Luscus or Shakspere in 'The Poetaster'; but in the whole Poetomachia Shakspere the actor escapes with hardly a scratch.

But Bacon, we find, received a very different treatment until the time (*circa* 1619) when Jonson entered into the service of his then 'beloved master, Dominus Verulamius.' Jonson had, I think, early private grudges against Bacon for the bricklayer allusions in Puttenham's 'Arte of English Poesie' (extra pages); and besides that, Jonson belonged to the *classical* school of dramatists, and depreciated the beautiful *romantic* fancies of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and the disregard of the Aristotelian unities which some of the Shakespeare plays gloried in. He also disliked Bacon as a lawyer and as influential in the Star Chamber proceedings against men who were too independent in their speech and writings, among which men Jonson was certainly included, and had suffered for it. But it is enough for our purpose if we show that Jonson knew both Bacon and Shakspere very well, distinguished between them, knew their secret, and eventually discovered that Francis Bacon, his former despised enemy, had reached the highest pinnacle of literary fame, or, as he said in his own words, 'he [*i.e.*, Bacon] may be named and stand as the mark and ἀκμή of our language.'

This is a true saying and worthy of all acceptation, and goes a long way in proving that the

Baconian theory of the immortal plays and poems is the correct one.

The Jonsonian allusions to Bacon are all concealed under other names. But in one instance the cautious Ben combines the indirect allusions with a direct one, and, in my opinion, 'names' Bacon pretty plainly. This is in one of the two epigrams he wrote on Cheveril the lawyer. I cited them both in my former volume as alluding to Bacon, but since then the very name of Francis Bacon has been revealed as contained in one of the epigrams. I will therefore reproduce it for my present readers.

'EPIGRAM XXXVII.

'*On Cheveril the Lawyer.*

'NO CAuse nor chent fat, will Cheveril leese,
But as they come on both sides he takes fees,
And pleaseth both; for while he melts his grease
FoR this; that wins for whom he holds his peace.'

Here we may read FRA. BACON by using the capitals at the head of each line of the epigram, and by beginning at the last line and reading upwards. The letter O at the second place of the last line is a null, and therefore *non legitur*. I hold this to be an evident *intentional* cipher allusion, and cannot accept the plea that it is mere

chance or coincidence. The odds against such an allocation of letters being unintentional are enormous; and besides this, it is clear that a lawyer is meant, and also one who had threatened Jonson with Star Chamber processes for libel, as we see from the other epigram on Cheveril (LIV.). Now, Bacon suits both these requisites, and when we find his name written into the epigram as above, it amounts to nearly a certainty that he was the man meant.

I had not noticed this letter cryptogram when I quoted the epigram in 'Is it Shakespeare?' p. 92, but a contributor to *Baconiana* tried afterwards to get Bacon's name in a rather mixed up way from the pure acrostic of the epigram and the first letters of the title 'On Cheveril the Lawyer,' and I at once saw FRA. BACON much more clearly from the epigram alone. I hold this and the B. FRA. or FRA. B. of 'Lucrece' to be unimpeachable.

All the orthodox Shakespearians who have recently been bold enough to defend the Stratfordian authorship in public print have rested their case with supreme confidence on what they call the 'undeniable contemporary evidence' for Shakespeare the actor being the author of the plays and poems. This is their great card, and

their possession of it in their hands insures them the game. So they think, from their great champion Sidney Lee, who wrote to that effect to the *Times*, January 8, 1902, right down to C. Y. C. Dawbarn, M.A., who addressed the Liverpool Philomathic Society not many months ago (1904). The last gentleman puts the matter as plainly as it can be put. He says 'the great, the overwhelming argument on the Shakespearian side is the testimony of his contemporaries,' and he especially depends on Jonson, and so, indeed, do they all.

However, Ben Jonson will prove to be a broken reed that pierces the hands of them that rest on it. I claim to have shown that Jonson knew Bacon and Shakspere well enough — especially Bacon—and that Luscus, and Ovid junior, and Sir John Daw, and Cheveril the Lawyer, have been identified by me in 'Is it Shakespeare?' and that the evidence is so clear that no critic has ventured even to try to upset it. In fact, I have shown that Ben Jonson, Joseph Hall (the famous Bishop and critic), and John Marston, the lynx-eyed satirist, all three well knew that the actor from Stratford was not the new poet, but another man who wished to be unknown, but who nevertheless had 'showed his head' and his hieroglyphic to

such as were keen eyed enough to see it. No one dare absolutely name him, for young Francis Bacon had powerful friends, and had influence with the members of the Star Chamber and other aristocrats; but Marston had the courage to name his motto in an indirect and inconclvsive way.

And now I hope I have shown that Jonson was constantly bringing the plays of Shakespeare, and through them Bacon, upon the London stage in the years 1598-1602, both in the characters of Valentine and Puntarvolo especially, and in other more composite characters he also was obliquely (and so more safely) aiming at the same great poetical genius and alchemist of words.

So the chief argument of the orthodox Shakespearians now disappears altogether.

Before finally leaving Ben Jonson, I feel I ought to say a few more words in his defence against the oft-expressed opinion that Ben showed 'malignity' against the Stratford actor. My own view is that there is comparatively very little allusion to the actor manager throughout Jonson's works. The fact seems to be that Jonson never thought *him* to be a rival at all, or even to be a personage of much importance. I take Luscus in 'The Poetaster' to be one of the few allusions, and there he is called 'good ignorance' and a wearer

of the buskins, and is told to get the horses ready and not stand 'prating,' and that if he must talk he should 'talk to tapsters and ostlers,' for they were in his 'element.'

I can find but little evidence in the 'Poetomachia,' *v.* p. 128, that Shakspere incurred Jonson's enmity, but the little there is will be noticed in the chapter on 'The True Shakspere.' It is mainly connected with Corporal Thym and his 'humours.'

Jonson administered severe castigation to Marston, Dekker and others; but as for Shakspere, it seems most probable that he was the very man whom Jonson was sorry for, and excused as being brought into the controversy against his own wish.

There remain, of course, Ben's epigram 'On Poet Ape' and his 'De Shakespeare Nostrat.' in his discourses. But the first only makes a strong (and very likely a true) charge of plagiarism and of buying reversions of old plays, without any special bitterness or enmity, and the second is, for Ben, unusually favourable.

This much, however, is clear, that Jonson attacked Bacon both as a writer of plays and poems (Ovid junior and Sir John Daw), and as a lawyer (Cheveril, *v.* p. 170, etc.), and showed plainly that in the earlier part of his career

he did not like Bacon either in one character or the other.

Jonson did not like the Chronicle Plays of York and Lancaster, and all the noise and guns and stage thunder that accompanied them. He did not like such plays as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' or 'The Tempest,' beautiful as they have seemed to more recent critics; he scoffed both at their art and at their supernatural and hobgoblin accessories. Great critic as Jonson was in many respects, this strange fact remains, that he was quite unable to appreciate these finest examples of the romantic drama that the world has ever seen.

Monsters, and fairies, and spirits of the air, and the manifold transgressions of the unities of the classical drama, offended Jonson, whose mind was saturated with a classicism and an art which were totally alien to such romantic conceptions. I suppose this was what he meant when he told Drummond that 'Shakspere wanted art.' Jonson's view reminds me strongly of Gabriel Harvey's warning criticism on a much earlier occasion (1579-80); when referring to some 'elvish' composition which had been subjected to his criticism, he noticed the romantic element in it, and seriously called the author's attention to it, lest it

should turn out that 'Hobgoblin runne away with the Garland from Apollo.'

From Drummond's account of the conversations of Ben Jonson we learn that 'he wrote all his first in prose, for so his Master Cambden had learned him.' We have excellent examples of Ben Jonson's unusual method in 'The Staple of News,' iii., 1 and 2, compared with 'Discoveries,' iii. 407, where the blank verse of the former repeats the prose of the latter almost verbatim.

These examples, which carry conviction to the most prejudiced mind, have, curiously enough, only lately been noticed, although they have been in print from Jonson's time. Like most of the recent discoveries, they tend more in the direction of Gray's Inn than of Stratford-on-Avon. For Bacon was well acquainted with Camden, and could hardly be ignorant of Camden's peculiar view of constructing poetry, more especially when we remember him as Puttenham, an art-master of the subject in all its branches.

Now, the author of the immortal plays follows out Camden's advice in a more remarkable and persistent way than any other contemporary, and far more so than Ben Jonson, whose *two instances* referred to (though clear and certain) are nearly

all that occur. The manner in which the so-called Chronicle Plays of Shakespeare are built up, often word by word, from the 'Chronicles' of Holinshed and others is unparalleled among all the Elizabethan dramatists. Their author worked according to Camden's advice, if any author ever did. But was Shakspere on friendly or social terms with Camden? There is not a scrap of evidence favouring such a supposition. Was Bacon Camden's friend? Certainly, and they criticised each other's literary productions as well.

CHAPTER XII

'THE SWAN OF AVON'

This expression, used by Ben Jonson in his famous address in the First Folio, has done more to preserve the faith of the ordinary Shakespearian than any other proof or piece of evidence in existence. There is no doubt that Ben was a splendid mystery monger, and before I discovered how he kept his tongue most artfully in his cheek in other instances, I certainly took him seriously and historically in 'the Swan of Avon' passage.

But now I think there is much more in that term 'swan' than meets the eye or the ear, and whatever Jonson might mean by such a term, it is quite clear that the Stratford actor was a 'swan like scholler' in one sense; for Shakespeare's Folio, where 'the Swan of Avon' is first heard of, has certainly preserved from Lethe's lake, and delivered to immortality, many precious pages which otherwise would have decayed by the

remorseless process of swift paced Time, or been swallowed up for ever in the greedy lake of Lethe.

This swan story appears in Ariosto, and there is a fine illustration of swans rescuing some great names from the greedy current, and carrying them to the temple of immortal fame, which appears among the engravings of Harington's English translation, made in the sixteenth century's last decennium, and there is no doubt that this swan story was well known to poets and literary men of that time. Studioso, in 'The Returne from Parnassus,' refers to it thus,—

'Fond world that nere thinkes on that aged man,
That *Ariostoes* old swift paced man,
Whose name is Tyme, who never lins* to run,
Loaden with bundles of decayed names,
The which in Lethes lake he doth intombe,
Save only those which swanlike schollers take,
And do deliver from that greedy lake.'

Can it really be that Jonson, who would certainly know Ariosto's allusion, looked at Shakespeare as a 'swan like scholler' who in a certain sense had delivered a greater genius than himself from Lethe's lake, and *therefore* used his well known expression, 'Sweet Swan of Avon'? I referred to this in my appendix to 'Is it Shakespeare?' and gave there the Baconian passages as well;

* Ceases.

but at that time I only considered it a freak or curio, not worthy of serious notice in the book, and therefore relegated it to the company of the cranks. I have a better opinion of it now, since I have read the passage above about 'swan like schollers,' but of course it is a matter of pure conjecture. I do not wish to deny that the Baconian authorship of the plays is more *conjectural* than is the Baconian authorship of the poems and 'Sonnets,' and I also think it may be taken for granted that *several* writers had part and lot in the first folio, whereas *one* man was responsible for 'Venus and Adonis,' 'Lucrece,' and the 'Sonnets,' while Shakspere of Stratford had nothing to do with these. But even with the *conjectural* questions connecting Bacon with the plays of Shakespeare, it is surprising how the more one reads in scarce or obscure Elizabethan books, the more does fresh evidence seem to crop up. And this evidence always tends in the Baconian direction. That is my experience of it; and this personal fact, taken in connection with that other fact, that no Baconian convert has ever been known to desert his acquired convictions—these facts become a tower of strength to the heretic when the great array of all the orthodox talents would sweep him off the field in contempt.

The way Labeo gradually transformed himself into Bacon in Hall's satires and in Marston's sequel is only one case among many, and even in the much more dubious point of 'the Swan of Avon' the same may be said; there is always a tendency or hint in the Baconian direction.

For example, when I was orthodox I thought Jonson's address to 'the Swan' to be the one convincing argument that no Baconian could possibly get over. After that, going more carefully into the history of the production of the First Folio of 1623, its portrait, its editors, its preliminary assertions, and other suspicious circumstances connected with it, I began to attach less weight to Ben Jonson's laudations. I dared even to pass a jest upon the sacred Swan. Then I came across Sir John Harington's folio translation of Ariosto, so well known to Elizabethans, and so little known to us; there I both saw the swans and heard of their peculiar functions from the words of Ariosto himself. Here was a leap in the Baconian direction indeed, but it was by no means the last leap, for a few weeks afterwards these same swans made there appearance in 'The Returne from Parnassus,' and another luminous phrase, 'swan like schollers,' appeared, bringing it still nearer to the hateful Bacon. And now, last

of all, having searched well and arrived at the conviction that little or nothing more would be heard of these swans, I went to Oxford one day, and being in the Bodleian, I thought it would be a good opportunity to read John Weever's epigrams of 1599, a book so scarce that the Bodleian is the only public library that has a copy. I was disappointed at first, for I did not come across anything connected with Shakespeare except the address to him, which I already knew well from its being included in Ingleby's 'Shakespeare's Centurie of Prayse.' But towards the middle of the little rarity I found the swans, or something very like them; they were swans of Thames this time. They appeared in an epigram addresed to Edward Alleyn, the famous player and tragedian, and were headed,—

'In Ed. Allen.

'Rome had her Roscius and her Theater,
Her Terence, Plautus, Ennius and Meander;
The first to Allen Phœbus did transfer,
The next Thames Swans receiv'd fore he coulde land her.
Of both more worthy we by Phœbus doome
Then t' Allen Roscius yeeld, to London Rome.'

The interpretation or paraphrase which I offer, with due deference to critics more skilled in Elizabethan epigrams than myself, is as follows;—

Rome had her Roscius and her 'Theater,' the first her most famous Actor, the second her Dramatic Stage, which was supplied by the famous authors Terence, Plautus, Ennius, and Menander (Meander being, I suppose, a misprint). The first (*i.e.*, Roscius) Phœbus Apollo did transfer to Allen, and made *him* the Roscius of the Elizabethan actors. The next (*i.e.*, the 'Theater' and those who graced it by their plays), before Phœbus could land her or institute her in London, was received by the swans that haunt the banks of Thames—*i.e.*, those swans (players) that are wont to carry in their mouths the immortality placed there by the ever living words of the poet playwrights, the true sons of Phœbus, who are often not known, or landed or introduced to public esteem, because the swans of Thames, or the actors, bear away their immortal lines and their names, and carry them as did Ariosto's swans, to the temple of undying fame. But we, continues Weever, are 'of both more worthy,' and that by Phœbus' decree, who has given us the pre-eminence both in acting and in the Dramatic Muse. So Roscius must yield to Alleyn, and Rome must yield to London.

To 'repose eternity in the mouth of a player' is an expression of Nash's address before 'Menaphon'

as early as 1589, and as Ariosto's swans held eternity of fame in their mouths also, it is not hard to see how actors would metaphorically be called 'swans,' and London actors 'Thames swans.' And this seems to be what Weever is thinking of. But *whose* immortal lines were being carried in the mouths of the swan like players about the years 1595-1599 when Weever wrote? Who was the great representative of the London Theatre then, as Terence, Plautus, Ennius, and Menander, were of the Roman 'Theater' in her palmy days?

Why, surely that great poet and dramatic author known by the appellation of honey tongued or mellifluous or sweet 'Mr. Shakespeare,' the great playwright of the day, the author of 'Romea-Richard' and 'more whose names I know not,' to use the very words of Weever in his ode 'Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare,' which comes just before the one I am discussing.

But how could the 'Thames Swan,' Will Shakspere the actor, carry away William Shakespeare the author of 'Romea-Richard' in his mouth?

These swans always bore *some other* name to immortality, not their own. So Weever would be inconsistent with the swan theory if he thought that the 'Honie-tong'd Shakespeare,'

the author of 'Romea-Richard,' was one of the 'Thames swans,' or actors, whom he seems to refer to in his very next epigram. But if we read carefully Weever's first epigram, and every-one can do that, in Ingleby's 'Centurie of Prayse,' we shall not find a single hint that the William Shakespeare addressed therein is an actor or swan. On the contrary, every line speaks plainly that this 'Honie-tong'd Shakespeare' was a son of Phœbus Apollo, and of none other, and concludes by begging him to

> 'Go wo thy Muse more Nymphish brood beget them.'

I therefore take it as highly probable that Weever, when he uses the words 'swans of Thames,' refers to the actors of the Globe and other theatres of the riverside, who carried in their mouths the immortal renown of the chief playwright and poet of those days, and that Weever calls them 'swans' because of the fine Ariosto episode, which was common literary knowledge at that date. And the same reason would account for Jonson's term 'Swan of Avon,' which Swan also is spoken of by him as taking 'flights upon the banks of Thames.'

Ariosto specially mentions the swans as being 'two' only, and in the explanation of this allegory

in the beginning of the thirty-fifth book of his 'Orlando Furioso' he shows us that the swans correspond to the historians and poets, who alone can take up the name of a man and make his fame immortal. Now, if Bacon was to become immortal through poetry, it could only be so through Shakespeare, the Swan who held Bacon's medal or name in his mouth, and had flown away with it; so 'Swan of Avon' was a very appropriate name for Shakespeare to be addressed by, and quite in keeping with the rest of Jonson's mystifying address. As Harington's Ariosto (1591) is not a book easy of access nowadays, I will quote enough of it here to make the swan allegory easier to understand.

Ariosto's old man 'who figureth time,' and who casts into the waters of Lethe such heaps of names, is described in the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth books of the 'Orlando Furioso,'—

'Hardly in ev'rie thousand one was found,
That was not in the gulfe quite lost and drownd.
Yet all about great store of birds there flew,
As vultures, carrion crowes, and chattring pies,
And many more of sundrie kinds and hew,
Making lewd harmonie with their loud cries.
These birds tried . . .
To save some names but find themselves too weake.

* * * * *

'Only two Swanns sustaind so great a payse
In spite of him that sought them all to drown,
These two do still take up whose names they list,
And bare them safe away, and never mist.

'Somtime all under the foule lake they dived
And took up some that were with water covered,
And those that seemd condemned they reprievd,
And often as about the banke they hovered,
They caught them, ere they to the stream arrived.
Then went they with the names they had recovered,
Up to a hill that stood the water nye,
On which a stately Church was built on hye.

'This place is sacred to immortal fame,
And evermore a nymph stands at the gate
And took the names wherewith the two swanns came
(Whether they early come or whether late).
Then all about the Church she hangd the same,
Before that sacred image in such rate
As they might then well be assur'd for ever,
Spite of that wretch, in saftie to presever.

'But as the swanns that here still flying are,
With written names unto that sacred port,
So there Historians learn'd and Poets rare,
Preserve them in cleare fame and good report;
O happie Princes whose foresight and care,
Can win the love of writers in such sort,
As Cesar did, so as you need not dread,
The lake of Lethe after you are dead.'

CHAPTER XIII

THE 'SONNETS'

SOMETIMES, when reading the Shake-speare 'Sonnets' with renewed and increasing delight at the Philosophic Muse who has so wonderfully constructed them, an intense feeling of regret surges up at the thought of the similar sonnets that *might have* adorned and glorified the Victorian age as much as, if not more than, the originals adorned the age of Elizabeth.

If Mr. Herbert Spencer had only been endowed with lofty poesy, and could have loved *his* 'woman coloured ill,' perhaps even Shakespeare would have been excelled.

For what a 'woman' his 'Dark Lady' was, full of emotion and full of intellect as hardly ever one had been before. Like unto Shake-speare's mistress, she was no beauty; but, alas! unlike to Shake-speare, Mr. Spencer could not be love's slave to a plain woman. What sonnets we should have had

in the nineteenth century if only Herbert Spencer could have been seized with the poet's frenzy, and had been able to make *his* 'Dark Lady, George Eliot, the master-mistress of his passion. But, alas! she was too ugly, and we have this lamentable confession recorded by himself. 'Physical beauty is a *sine quâ non* with me, as was once unhappily proved where the intellectual traits and the emotional traits were of the highest.' And yet this autocrat of modern philosophers and this unapproachable Sibyl of modern romance stood by the piano together and sang. Surely they were in unison then; and Spencer, when telling us of this, remarks that her voice was low,—kept purposely lower than she could have raised it,—a charming thing in any woman. But their unison seemed to end when the song ended, and what the world has lost by Spencer's unfortunate revulsion of feeling when he gazed upon the Sibyl's portentous face can never be truly reckoned up. To take one item only, what marvellous children such a pair would have begotten!

Oh that it had been possible for Mr. Herbert Spencer to read with assent and enthusiasm the early 'Procreation Sonnets' of William Shakespeare of Gray's Inn! Oh that he could have, without any abatement of present fever, gone at