delineation on the stage of the fine 'poesie' that fell to their parts as actors. He loved them for 'painting poesie,' for that picta poesis of theirs which trod the boards accompanied by the 'living voice,' and thus made a deeper impression than mere reading of poetry or merely having it demissa per aurem would ever effect.

If Davies simply meant that he loved Burbage for his paintings and Shakspeare for his verses, then the marginal note about Simonides (a common-place of the Renaissance) and the definitions there adduced would lose nearly all point.

My suggestion is not without import, for if it be thought probable that Davies did not profess his 'love' for Shakspere as a *poet* in this passage, there is certainly no other passage in Davies' voluminous works to show his admiration and love for the Stratford *Poet*.

Davies shows plainly that he has no 'love' for the poem of 'Venus and Adonis,' for he says, in 'Paper's Complaint' (1611, Grosart's edition, p. 231);—

'Another (ah, Lord helpe) mee \* vilifies
With Art of Love, and how to subtilize;
Making lewd Venus with eternall Lines
To tye Adonis to her loves designs.'

<sup>\*</sup> He writes as paper personified; 'mee' means paper.

Indeed, these lines, and especially the expression 'Ah, Lord helpe,' seem so very different from the way in which he elsewhere speaks of the player as his friend 'good Will,' that I am inclined to think that Davies did not attribute that poem to 'good Will,' but to the true author, whose secret he knew. For I can hardly believe that Davies, the fashionable writing master for so many high families about the Court, and also the possible writer of the trial exercises (with a line from 'Lucrece') on the cover of the Northumberland manuscript (teste Mr. Douse), would be quite ignorant of the authorship of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' such very favourite poems in the circles he frequented.

But it is in 'The Scourge of Folly' (1611) that we get the best reference to the Stratford actor, and there the praise given to him is very high, and without reserve or exception.

He is said to be no railer, as were so many in those days, both on the stage by gag and off the stage by pamphlets. He is said to have a 'raigning wit,' one which had in it a dignified and kingly excellence, and, indeed, Davies hints that he would have been a 'companion for a king' if he had not 'plaid some kingly parts in sport.' This probably refers to Shakespere acting the king in some play

which was distasteful to James I. or some of his courtiers, but the reference is obscure. There is an anecdote that he once put in a little suitable impromptu, or gag, in picking up Queen Elizabeth's glove as she crossed the stage where he was playing a king's part. But it is more likely that Davies is referring to something more near to the time (1611) when he wrote, than this old tale about Elizabeth.

Here, too, we have Shakspere's honesty praised and specified. It seems, according to my construction of Davies' words, that Shakspere was exceptionally honest in his obtaining and providing the plays which were to become the private stock of the company to which he belonged. In this particular company, I believe, if we read between the lines of the prefatory matter in 'Troilus and Cressida,' this stock would be in the hands or under the control of the 'grand possessors.'

Every company would require fresh plays now and then, or new plays, to keep up the public interest and the receipts. It was Shakspere's office to see after this, and, according to all the few hints we have extant, he did this part of his duties exceedingly honestly and well. He was thoroughly interested in it. It was his hobby, as Marston so clearly shows us in the portraiture of Luscus,\* and we also know from the same source how some of his stock was provided.

We must now leave Davies of Hereford and his important evidence, and proceed to collect the few scraps that are left.

The real Shakspere, the actor manager, has been twice depicted under the same fictitious name of Luscus, once by Marston in his 'Satires,' and once by Ben Jonson in his 'Poetaster.'†

The reason why Ben Jonson attacked Shakspere the actor I have always supposed to be because Ben's keen critical scent had detected in Corporal Nym one of the Stratford 'shreds' or 'locks of wool' which the player had contributed to the Baconian fleece, Ben's own view of the Poet-Ape's peculiar method apparently being that he supplied sometimes some of the 'frippery of wit,' and here and there a few shreds of his own besides.

In my last book I mentioned that Jonson, in making Luscus swear 'by the welkin,' was trying to raise a laugh against the Stratford player who had been responsible (as he thought) for Corporal

<sup>\*</sup> See 'Is it Shakespeare?' chapter vi.

<sup>†</sup> Cf. 'Is it Shakespeare?' pp. 28, 29, and chapter vi., and also the chapter on 'New Evidence from Ben Jonson' in the present work.

Nym and some of the other 'fripperies of wit' in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor.' I am glad to find that one of the soundest of all the German Shakespearians has since taken the same view of Corporal Nym's oath as I did,—I mean G. Sarrazin. And if we are right in our view that Shakspere did aim at Ben's first plays, and did parody their style and humours in the person of Corporal Nym, we certainly have a most interesting result. For we are able under Jonson's guidance (and he ought to know) to detach a few shreds and one character from the immortal plays, and to say of them, 'This is the work of William Shakspere, of Stratford-on-Avon.' And this which Sarrazin refers to occurs in those scenes of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' and other plays where I suspected Stratford allusions, Stratford names, and Stratford work, long ago.\*

Indeed, I think now, as I thought then, that the attempt to exclude Shakspere totally from the immortal plays is most absurd. I exclude him totally from 'Lucrece' and 'Venus and Adonis,' and from the 'sugared sonnets,' which certainly would not have proved very tasty to his friends,

<sup>\*</sup> Cf. G. Sarrazin, 'Kleinere Mittheilungen Jahrbuch d. d. Shakesp.-Gesell.,' vol xl., 1904, and 'Is it Shakespeare?' pp. 311, 312.

either of the stable yard or the tiring room. Nor do I think there is any clear evidence to show that Shakspere was a poet at all, unless we accept the local traditions or his tombstone; and even then the product is not of the high class we should naturally expect from such a receptive genius. But to exclude Shakspere from working at and patching up the various old plays he had scraped together is to go against all good evidence and against all the inferences from contemporary allusions, and is almost as great an error as the supposition that he wrote the last revision of 'Hamlet' and 'Love's Labour's Lost,' or conceived the wondrous imagery and romance of 'The Tempest' or 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'

I cannot answer for other Baconians, but my own opinion is that a considerable part of several plays in the First Collected Edition (1623) were not from Bacon's pen. Collaboration was such a usual method in those days that it was quite a common occurrence for two, three, or even four, writers to prepare a play for Henslowe or any other manager who wanted something new for his audience, with as little delay as possible. Why should not some of the plays in the First Folio have been got together in this manner by

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William Shakspere, that active manager and provider for his company? Why should he not procure reversions of old plays, and on occasion ask for the collaboration of Dekker, Hathaway, Drayton, or any other playwrights who were well disposed to his company? This does not seem improbable, and, indeed, agrees very well with the glimpse of the true Shakspere that is given to us in Marston's 'Satires' under the name of Luscus. This view certainly explains some great difficulties. It explains how the plays came to be accepted as Shakspere's plays without any protest against the title. They were accepted as his plays because he provided them for the company, but who worked them up, or what share each took in the authorship, was a bootless question to ask, however curious a man might be. Though I hold that there is a good quantity of non-Baconian work in the plays, I do not pretend to be able to point it out. It would be most hazardous work, for the only helps attainable now are parallel passages and expressions, odd or peculiar words, and a marked change of style. I know the last is thought to be a sure test if the critic is a good judge of style. It may be so, but I have seen so many evident failures, and Bacon was such a marvellous adept at changing his style

in accordance with his subject, that altogether the task seems hopeless.

However, there is no difficulty or doubt with reference to such early plays as 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and the comedies that Jonson aimed at, written just before his own satirical allusions. All these are Bacon's, and the proof is this, that they are evidently by the same author who wrote the famous poems 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' for the remarkable parallels in language, expression, and style clearly determine the matter, and I hold it proven that Bacon wrote these poems. Ergo I will add a passage from the Pall Mall Magazine of about three years ago, which seems proper for this chapter,—

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

I do not endorse the words 'sordid and squalid,' but the opinion expressed that we should now-a-days reject 'fictitious lives of an imaginary

Shakespeare' I fully agree with. There are some glaring biographies with Shakespeare's name on the title page, which pass current nowadays and are most misleading.

There is another passage from a contemporary which most undoubtedly brings before us Shakspere as an actor, and possibly alludes to his share in producing a play as well. I mean Kempe's well-known remarks about Ben Jonson and 'our fellow Shakespeare' in 'The Returne from Parnassus,' acted at St. John's College, Cambridge (circa 1601). Kempe, IV. iii., says,—

'Why here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down [i.e., the University pens]—ay and Ben Jonson, too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow,—he brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill [i.e., in 'The Poetaster'], but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge, [i.e., as Ajax or Ajakes in 'Troilus and Cressida'], that made him beray his credit.'

Here we have excellent evidence that there was some amount of dramatic sparring between Shakspere and Ben Jonson, but whether Kempe meant that his fellow actor had absolutely written (1) the whole of the play with the purge in it, or (2) only the parts referring to Ajax Jonson, or (3) had only given it forth as actor manager, can

never be definitely known. But this remains certain, that in some form or other Shakspere the actor did take a share in the 'Poetomachia,' and that he was against Ben Jonson. And yet those orthodox critics were right after all (though only by a fluke), who said there was no evidence of malignity between Ben Jonson and Shakespeare.

The malignity of Ben Jonson was really against Francis Bacon, lawyer and romantic dramatist, and constantly in the earlier plays, and once or twice in his epigrams, he indulges in something stronger than pleasant satire against that 'frolic' and 'merry' Knight-traveller Valentine-Puntar-volo-Amorphus.

This enmity seems to have arisen on Jonson's part, and it is only in his first printed play of 'Every Man in his Humour' that we fail to have constant satirical allusions to Bacon, which, indeed, were repeated as long as the 'Poetomachia' lasted.

As is well known, Jonson eventually became a friend, literary helper, and true admirer of the illustrious Bacon, but how and when this friendship was begun and cemented is not recorded, or even alluded to. I should not be surprised if the great Camden helped to bring them together.

Jonson shows no malignity, as far as I can discover, against Shakspere. There are allusions in 'Luscus' to his originally low social position:—
'Talk to tapsters and ostlers, you slave; they are in your element;—to his comparative want of education, for Ovid junior calls him 'good ignorance';—to his claim for armorial bearings, in several places;—to his second hand and second class wit, for his 'fripperies of wit' are in the epigram 'on Poet Ape,' as also is his wide spread plagiarism, for 'he takes up all';—and is dubbed elsewhere Pantolabus for the same fault ('Poetaster').

But in all these allusions there seems a complete absence of injurious spite or malignity. Jonson seems genial to him in his blunt way, and when later in life he had a word or two to say of 'our fellow Shakspere' in his 'Discoveries,' he expressed the high opinion he eventually held of his 'honest, open, and free nature.' Of his facility in improvisation,—and here Jonson seems to me to mean rather stage work than study work or playwright's work,—he speaks in high praise, and sums up generally,—'He redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.'

But to suppose that Ben Jonson ever gave

Shakspere the credit for being the author of 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' or of 'Romeo and Juliet' and the 'ecstasies,' seems simply ridiculous, and I do not find evidence sufficiently clear to warrant such an assertion among the many allusions made by Ben in his various moods of candour, banter, or illusion.

Facts about the Stratford actor are very few in number, but there is one more that I can offer, and I attach more importance to it than many of my fellow believers. It is this; -We know for certain the player's name and how he spelled the first part of it. If he had been called in Court as a witness, his name would have been sounded forth as William Shackspur; and the spelling of the first part of his name in his rare autographs is Shaks-. Neither he nor any of his family were known as Shakespeare; that was a name used by Bacon when he wrote 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' and dedicated them by that name to Southampton. The first known use of this name Shakespeare is of the date 1593, but I shall show there was a likelihood of its being used earlier still.

Some have spoken of Shakespeare as being the 'professional' name of the Stratford man, by which he was generally known in London, and

it has been suggested that Field, the printer, is responsible for the change of spelling. If Field altered it, I should say that it was through Bacon, who carefully prepared his first great poems for the press of Field.

An American has taken the trouble to look up Shakespeare's father and his name in the Stratford archives, with a view to see how this name was written. The result was:—69 times in the form Shaxpeare, 18 times in the form Shaxpere, 17 times in the form Shakespeyr, and 62 times in eleven other forms, but never once in the form Shakespeare or Shake-speare.

I am not able to verify the American investigation into the Stratford archives, but we all know, or ought to know, that of the four or five well-authenticated signatures of the player, all begin clearly with Shaksp—. The ending is less distinct, but the important result remains that the player did not sign his name in the form used for the dedication of his (?) immortal poems, and that his ancestors and fellow-townsmen did not use this form with the 'Shake' in it. More depends upon the evident mystifications concerning this name than is generally believed. The Shake-speare of Gray's Inn and the Shakspere, Shacksper, etc., of Stratford are very different

personalities. And there is the curious spelling Shakespheare in R. Carew and Camden, Shakesphear twice in Edward Phillips' 'Theatrum Poetarum,' and, still more extraordinary, we are assured that, in the deed under which the player purchased for £440 part of the tithes of Stratford, we find Shackesphere thrice, Shakesphere five times, Shacksphare once, Shakespeare once, Shakespeare once, Shakespeare once,

The reference given is Halliwell's 'Life' (1848), p. 210, but the edition which I possess, the sixth, gives a transcript of the deed where the name is spelled throughout as Shakespear. This I cannot explain, but I know well enough that Mrs. Stopes, Dr. Furnivall, and Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, are atrociously careless about this important point, as I shall show presently.

We should not forget that, if the Stratford actor made some considerable portion of his savings from his concealed connection with Bacon and Southampton, then these varied and semi ridiculous spellings might have been purposely inserted to conceal the distinction between Shakespeare of Gray's Inn and Shakspere of Stratford. Bacon, with his mighty, all embracing aims, might well have been facetiously dubbed Shake-spheare by his friends who knew his Pallas, i.e., Shake-speare

appellation, and I have elsewhere given some reasons for Greene calling him Shake-scene.

I will now say a word or two for some critics who are not careful enough about their spelling.

Mr. W. C. Hazlitt says\* that the 'Sonnets' of 1609 'ostentatiously' set forth the authorship of Shakspere. He is wrong—absolutely so—and it is assertions of this misleading character which throw so much dust in the eyes of the public, accustomed to gaze with open admiration when an expert speaks.

Mr. Hazlitt is an expert, and I have only just entered into controversy, and know far more about Milton than I do about Shakespeare; but an expert can be blind, or can shut his eyes to what is absolutely staring him in the face, and Mr. Hazlitt is in some such case when he says the 'Sonnets' 'ostentatiously' set forth Shakespere's authorship. Open your eyes, I say to him and to all; only take one look at the title page of the original edition of the 'Sonnets' (1609). You will see that the title page does most 'ostentatiously' and in the largest of type set forth that these 'Sonnets,' now first given to the public, are 'SHAKE-SPEARE'S Sonnets,' and not a single person of

<sup>\*</sup> Second edition, p. 230.

that singularly distinctive name occurs in the Stratford records of that period or any other period.

Look, again, at Dr. Furnivall, who says, in the Introduction to the 'Leopold Shakspere,' p. xxxi: 'The poems each contained a dedication signed with Shakspere's name.' This, again, is untrue to fact and misleading. They were signed 'William Shakespeare,' and as it is generally admitted that the poems had been carefully prepared and corrected for the press by the author, why does Dr. Furnivall say they were signed with Shakspere's name, and why was he the leading spirit of a Shakspere Society?

As for Mrs. Stopes, she is worse still, and on p. 83 of her 'Bacon-Shakspere Question,' when treating of allusions in chronological order, she says: '1609. Dedication by Thorpe to Mr. W. H. of "Shakspere's Sonnets," as they are explicitly termed on the laconic title.' What can we say to such a downright false assertion? If a lady were not in question, what Pascal said to a mendacious opponent would hardly be too strong. What would her old tutor, Professor Masson, so careful and judicious in his statements, say to his quondam pupil if he heard that she coolly sent such a statement through the pikes of the press?

The question of Shake-speare or Shakspere is

a much more important department of Baconian evidence than most people suppose. Shake-speare was Pallas-Bacon, the merry Knight of the Helmet, Sir Oliver Owlet, with one or two more aliases; Shakspere came from Stratford, and went there again to enjoy its bourgeois company till his death, a very different man.

I did not expect to make such a long chapter out of 'The True Shakspere' nor could I have done so without the prolix, but necessary, examination of his correct name and its spelling. So, leaving out all references to local traditions, which are mostly very unsatisfactory and largely posthumous, I will conclude with the last 'Shakspere find,' which proved so interesting to Dr. Furnivall, and a precious find which he held to his heart even when it had been shaken to pieces by the inextinguishable laughter of the press.

The 'find' came to light in this way,-

'That excellent antiquary and editor, the Rev. Dr. Andrew Clark, of Great Leighs Rectory, Chelmsford, sends Dr. Furnivall some interesting extracts from the Plume manuscripts at Maldon, Essex, written 1657-1663. Among them was the following,—

'He [Shakspere] was a glover's son. Sir John Mennes saw once his old father in his shop—a merry-cheekt old man that said "Will was a good honest fellow, but he darent have crackt a jesst with him att any time."

On this Dr. Furnivall remarks: 'This is the only known notice of the look of Shakspere's father, and his opinion of his gifted son, and is a great gain.'

On the next day we have another letter from Dr. Furnivall correcting one of the words of the 'merry-cheekt' old glover, which ought to have been 'darest,' not 'darent,' and thus makes the meaning just the reverse.

The Doctor adds a hope that,-

'this unique record of the appearance of old John Shakspere and what he said of his son will lead all folk who have the chance of seeing sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscripts to read them carefully through, in the hope that some thing about Shakespeare may occur in them.'

Alas, alas! the next issue of the Westminster Gazette dispelled all the hopes and illusions of the veteran Shaksperian, for under the heading of 'The Merry-Cheekt Old Man' appeared the following letter from 'A. G.,'—

'May it be permissible for one who is rather sceptical as to Dr. Furnivall's conclusions to remark that Sir John Mennes was born on

March 1, 1599, and that the father of Shakspere died in September, 1601?

'Hence it was at a very early age that the future Knight "saw once" John Shakspere "in his shop," apparently travelling from Kent especially for that purpose, accompanied by his nurse. This doubtless enhances the "great gain" of his report of "Shakspere's father, and his opinion of his gifted son," since this report may be regarded as the sweetly unsophisticated impression of the innocent little toddler.'

One would have thought this amusing knock-down blow would have settled Dr. Furnivall. Nothing of the kind! You cannot settle some Shaksperians either with rhyme or reason or common-sense, and so we have the indomitable veteran writing the very next day to the effect that he means to hold his own opinion still. He says,—'The anecdote may well be trustworthy, though assigned to a wrong source. Sir John may have told the story to Plume.' And he absolutely tries to drag Professor Dowden into the same waterlogged boat with him, and finishes—'I at any rate don't mean to give up that "merry-cheekt" old father cracking jokes with his son.'

What is the use of trying to reason with a man who won't be convinced?

I have had my own experiences of this kind of thing, when Mr. Churton Collins tried to upset my discovery of Milton's 'Nova Solyma' in the National Review not long ago, and I 'showed him up' pretty plainly in my answer as having made a mistake as foolish and as laughable as Dr. Furnivall's,-nay, even worse, for in his mistake the man was not even born. Mr. Collins submitted in silence, for the good reason that he had no valid answer. Perhaps it would have been better if Dr. Furnivall had done the same. But I have no hope of ever seeing such determined combatants lower their colours. How can we expect people to renounce their beliefs when the organs of their intelligence have become actually ossified by continued action in one direction? How can we expect more than we get at present?

I will end my facts about the real Shakspere by one I mentioned frequently in my last book. It is this: The first five letters of Shakspere's name are Shaks. These same letters began the names of his family and relatives, and Shakspere himself signed them three times in his will. The pronunciation is generally allowed to have been Shax. Now, in 'Willobie his Avisa,' which was published very soon after 'Lucrece' was written,

the author of 'Lucrece' is distinctly pointed at as Shake-speare; therefore the writer, whoever he was, certainly did not mean that the Stratford man was the author of 'Lucrece,' for that Warwickshire genius never possessed either a 'Shake' or a hyphen in his name, neither did any of his family.

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