But how can this possibly be young William Herbert? For these seventeen belong indubitably to a period when he was only about eleven, or at very most twelve or thirteen years old.

I cannot give the whole evidence here, nor would any reader thank me if I tried, for it is internal evidence of a complicated but most positive kind. By a careful comparison of the language, tone and parallelisms, and characters of the Sonnets and early Plays and Poems, especially *Venus and Adonis*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and others of those so-called Shakespeare Plays, which were often acted and written long before they were introduced by pirates to the public, it comes out clearly and convincingly that the earliest Sonnets were written in the years 1591 to 1593, when, as I have said, Herbert would be a boy of only eleven or twelve.

Moreover, Mr. Tyler and all the "Herbertites" agree in saying that the first intimacy between Shakespeare and young Herbert must have taken place in 1598, when we know, on the best of evidence, young Herbert came up to live in London, having got his father's permission to do so "with much adoe." It is Rowland White, in the Sidney Papers, in his letters about the affairs at Court, who tells us this, and if the Sonnets, urging a lovely lad to marry, were written about 1593 at the very latest, what possible connection could they have with Shakespeare and William Herbert in 1598, five years later? I should mention here, that I have made a discovery in the Sidney Papers, which neither Mr. Tyler nor any one else, as far as I know, has noticed, viz. that young William Herbert was up in town for some months in the latter part of the year 1595, when he would be between fifteen and sixteen, and that his parents were contemplating his marriage and engaged in negotiations about it at that very time. This would have been a great help to Mr. Tyler's ingenious theory if he had known of it, and indeed when I discovered it first, and took it in connection with Sonnet CIV. and the *three years' interval* between the first acquaintance with the lad there mentioned, I thought for

a few moments very complacently that the chronological key of the Sonnets had been found at last, that Mr. W. H. was William Herbert, and that Southampton was thereby excluded from the Procreation Sonnets and all the others as well. But this state of mind did not last long. I looked again into Gerald Massey's scarce book, *The Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, privately printed in 1888, and there found again the evidence for Southampton in such overwhelming force that it could not be resisted. I am of the same opinion still, and although this evidence of Massey is based on the Shakespearian hypothesis, and his early date of 1590 does not seem so probable to me as 1591–93, there can surely be no shadow of doubt that Southampton was the youth to whom the early Sonnets were addressed, and that the Pembroke and Fitton (?) Sonnets come on later in the book, and later than 1594 in any case. But my great point is that Bacon suits both the Southampton theory and the Pembroke theory of the later Sonnets so very much better than Shakespeare does, that the Sonnets, both early and late, can be almost said to establish, through these two historic personages, the great fact we are seeking to prove, viz., that Bacon was their author, and not Shakespeare.

First let us take Southampton and the proofs about him, mainly from Massey, and from a concise summary in the *Athenæum* for April 28, 1866, which I give entire, as follows :—

"If Southampton is not the male friend addressed by Shakespeare in the earlier portion of these poems (the Sonnets), evidence counts for nothing. Why, he is indicated in general and in particular—as regards his class and his person—by the most certain marks. The friend addressed by the poet is young (S. 1), of gracious presence (S. 10), noble of birth (S. 37), rich in money and land (S. 48), a town gallant (S. 95), a man vain and exacting (S. 103).

"These general characteristics, though vague and impersonal, exclude a good many pretenders to the office of Shakespeare's friend. They exclude the whole class of actors, playwrights, and managers; the whole tribe of Shakespeare's kinsmen and towns-

men; and all the imaginary Hugheses, Hathaways, and Hartes. They confine our field of choice to men of the rank and character of Essex, Rutland, Pembroke, and Southampton, and such like. Passing in review men of this class we find one, and only one, to whom all the criteria above will apply. Essex was not single; Rutland had no previous connection with the poet, and had never publicly honoured him; Pembroke was a mere boy, to whom Shakespeare had not dedicated a book. In 1595 Pembroke, then William Herbert (Lord Herbert?), was only fifteen years old, and *his* mother was not a widow (and I may add, he was not an only son on whom the succession of the direct line depended). Every point in these criteria meets in Southampton."

This critic takes, it will be seen, 1595 for the date of the Sonnets; rather too late, I think.

Mr. Massey devotes many pages to this theory (pp. 52–66), and begins thus:

"The youth whom the poet first saw in all his semi-feminine freshness of the proverbial 'sweet seventeen,' and afterwards celebrated as a 'sweet boy,' a 'lovely boy,' a 'beauteous and lovely youth,' a pattern for rather than a copy of his Adonis, corresponds perfectly with Southampton in his seventeenth year. If we take the year 1590 for the first group of Sonnets, we shall find the young Earl of Southampton's age precisely reckoned up in Sonnet 16:

'Now stand you on the top of happy hours,'

which shows us that the youth has sprung lightly up the ladder of his life, and now stands on the last golden round of boyhood. (The years 1591–93 suit equally well.) The very first Sonnet addresses one who is the 'world's fresh ornament'—that is, the budding favourite at Court, the fresh grace of its circle, the latest representative there of youthful spring—'The Expectancy and Rose of the fair State!" Southampton was, in truth, the 'child of the state,' under the special protection of the Queen. He was recommended to her Majesty's notice and care by the loss of his father at so early an age, . . . as well as favoured with the best word of his guardian, Burleigh, who at one time hoped to bring about a marriage betwixt Southampton and his own grand-daughter. We shall see further that such was his place in her Majesty's regards, that an endeavour was made

by Sir Fulke Greville and others to get the Earl of Southampton installed as royal favourite instead of Essex."

Gerald Massey proceeds with his arguments and proofs at too great length to extract them here, but I will give the summary, asking the reader first to notice *how well Bacon would fit in* if we consider the proposed marriage with Burghley's grand-daughter above, and the endeavour to get Southampton into the place of favour that Essex held.

How badly Shakespeare fits in, too. What can Shakespeare, who has only been in London three or four years, and has hardly yet shaken off his dialect or the manners of the stable-yard—what can he possibly have to do with such matters of high statecraft and political influence? Why should he, of all possible people, write a series of elaborate "Procreation Sonnets" in order to induce a young nobleman of high prospects to marry the grand-daughter of the highest dignitary in the kingdom? What was Burghley to Will Shakespeare, or he to Burghley? And how on earth could the Warwickshire husband of Anne Hathaway, as yet only a rising supernumerary among a company of actors, "vagrants by law" and mostly out-at-elbows whether on the stage or off *—how on earth, I say, could he *dare* to make love to such a blooming scion of the aristocracy, and dare to make such a seventeen-fold suggestion, that he should marry at once and get a child "for love of *me*" (Sonnet x.), the *me* being in so extremely different a social position?

But if we take Bacon and put him in Shakespeare's place all fits in most admirably. There is no social bar between Francis Bacon, the clever son of the late Lord Keeper, and the young Earl of Southampton. They are, too, members of the same Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, and are likely enough to be brought into intimate contact, for Bacon, the older member of the Society, would be sure to call upon or at least cultivate the acquaintance of such a distinguished fresh-comer as was

* *Cf.* Ben Jonson's attacks in *Poetaster*, &c.

Southampton. Moreover, the beauty of the lad would draw Bacon to intimacy, if nothing else did. Who so likely as Bacon to try and foster a marriage that would unite the powerful families of Wriothesley and Cecil—unite his new friend Southampton to his old family patron Burghley and the Cecils generally, to whom, since the death of his father, Bacon had steadily and almost solely looked for help and patronage. And to get Southampton into Court favour instead of Essex would be indeed a double success, for Bacon and the Cecils would be rid of Essex, who was *then* a hostile influence to both, and Southampton, allied by marriage to Burghley (if it came off), would become a most powerful ally.

There was some use and purpose in Bacon circulating *among his private friends* such sugared sonnets to the "coming man," but where does Shakespeare come in? A few of the primary facts as substantiated by Mr. Massey, an orthodox Shakespearian be it remembered, are these:

(1) That Henry Wriothesley was the fatherless young friend to whom Shakespeare addressed his first Sonnets.

(2) That it was to him the promise of a public dedication of his Poems was privately made in Sonnet XXVI.

(3) That he was the living original from whom the poet drew his portrait of Adonis as the Master-Mistress of his passion.

(4) That he was the man who encouraged Shakespeare to publish his Poems, and the friend to whom the Sonnets were offered privately as the "barren tender of a Poet's debt."

(5) That a mass of the Sonnets belong to the time of the early Plays, and were therefore written too soon for William Herbert to have been the friend addressed in them.

And finally, he adds, "If evidence is to count for anything, we may now consider Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, to be sufficiently identified as the young friend and patron, who was both the object and subject

of the early Sonnets." I heartily endorse these last words, and so do most students of the subject now.

Mr. Massey has several other arguments besides the above, especially a curious solution of that well-known *crux* in Sonnet XX., which as originally printed was :

"A man in hew all *Hews* in his controwling,"

where the word in italics with a capital H is supposed to contain some hidden allusion which might possibly discover the secret. This I have left to be considered, with other solutions, when we are dealing with separate Sonnets.

Our critic is rather severe and sarcastic when he has to deal with those who reject Southampton. "Professor Dowden," he remarks, "has the temerity to assert that Henry Wriothesley 'was NOT beautiful,' for which gratuitous assertion he had no warrant whatever. He merely repeats without testing what Boaden had already said without proof. The Professor further declares that Southampton bore '*no resemblance to his mother*.' But if this were a fact, he had no knowledge of it—where is the fact recorded? 'Youngster,' said the impecunious manager Elliston to the author of *Black-eyed Susan*, 'have you the confidence to lend me a guinea?' 'I have all the confidence in the world,' said Jerrold, 'but I haven't got the guinea.' So is it with the Herbertites. They have any amount of assertion, but not the needful facts."

Those I have called the Herbertites Massey calls Brownites, and devotes a whole chapter to the *Lues Browniana*, with which disease he thinks all the champions of William Herbert are infected. Charles Armytage Brown wrote to prove the Herbert theory as early as 1838, and Brown and Massey were looked upon as the protagonists of their respective sides. But none of these combatants had all the facts, and for the matter of Southampton's "beauty" I am able to contribute some new ones.

Those Shakespearian critics (*e.g.* Prof. Dowden and others) who are opposed to the Southampton theory of

the Sonnets, and have declared that Henry Wriothesley was anything but a good-looking man, and therefore most unlikely to receive the almost extravagant praise of the Sonnets, seem to have judged by the engraved portraits of Southampton in later life. These certainly do not give him the appearance of an Adonis, and do not lead us to fancy that he ever was one. But such learned critics have gone wrong, as so often happens, through their lack of the necessary knowledge that would permanently settle the question. They can now, without any hesitation or any particle of doubt, be put right.

The young Earl of Southampton when he was between eighteen and nineteen *was* an Adonis, and there is the best possible proof of it. He accompanied, with many others of the English aristocracy, our great Queen Elizabeth when she visited Oxford in state in 1592. The Vice-Chancellor of the University gave the royal company a dinner, and John Sanford, who was chaplain of Magdalen, and evidently an excellent Latin scholar, gave an account of this dinner and the guests in a very rare tract of Latin verse of which only two copies are known.* The most distinguished visitors each have two or three lines of notice in the poem, and this is what the learned John Sanford says of the young Southampton :

> "Quo non formosior alter
> Affuit, aut doctâ juvenis præstantior arte ;
> Ora licet tenera vix dum lanugine vernent,"

that is, he was the handsomest personage of the whole company, though but a smooth-faced boy whose cheeks had scarce yet the downy promise of Spring. Here is Adonis drawn to the life.

Strange to relate, the other candidate for the "only begetter" of the Sonnets was also among the guests on this historic occasion, and young William Herbert, then but twelve years old, was privileged to sit down with his father and enjoy the good things provided by hospitable

* *Apollinis et Musarum* Ἐυκτικὰ Εἰδύλλια *in serenissimæ Reginæ Elizabethæ auspicatissimum Oxoniam adventum.—Oxoniæ* (1592), 4to.

Dr. Bond. The young boy is not without his line or two of praise :

> "Puer huc patrem comitatus euntem
> Sedit convivas inter, prænobilis hæres
> Indolis egregiæ, sed cui *stat messis in herbâ*."

This was a neat little piece of praise, for the words in italics were the family motto or emblem-device.

Here then in this account we have a well-authenticated date, 1592, and we know pretty well how all the parties we are particularly concerned in are spending their time except that will-o'-the-wisp Shakespeare, whom we can hardly ever follow up or locate.

As to dating the Sonnets as accurately as possible, it is important on the Bacon theory of authorship, for we do know, pretty well, from Spedding's exhaustive life of Bacon, what was happening to him each year from 1590 or thereabouts. But, on the Shakespeare theory, dating the Sonnets is not of much use, and indeed prominent Shakespearians, such as Mr. Howard Furness of the Variorum Shakespeare, and others, agree to this, for they tell us :

> "If we arrange dates to Shakespeare's Plays, what else is it but re-arranging that chronological table which by courtesy we now call a Life of Shakespeare, and which he who knows more about it than all the rest of us styles, as modestly as truthfully, merely outlines. Of the real Life we know absolutely nothing, and I for one am genuinely thankful that it is so, and gladly note, as the years roll on, that the obscurity which envelops it is as utter and impenetrable as ever." *

This seems an odd utterance, that a devoted Shakesperian should be thankful for knowing so little about Shakespeare's true life ; but I think he means this, that he is glad Shakespeare is not in the Poems and Plays personally or autobiographically, for he does not want the incidents of Shakespeare's possibly trivial life half-masked in the verse or action of the Plays ; he would much rather have the marvellous conceptions of Shakespeare's mind presented in their singular beauty as they are now, inde-

* *Merchant of Venice*, Var. Ed., p. 277.

pendent of any such autobiographical allusions, free expressions of the highest fancy, and absolutely unmasked and undisguised.

But no such difficulties or disappointments crop up on the Baconian theory—the clearer idea we get of the dates, the better proofs have we whereby we can judge whether Bacon wrote them or not; and personally I must say that making clear to myself the early date of the first seventeen Sonnets had much to do with making clear to me who their author was. If the earlier Sonnets were written about 1591–92, it is very hard to see how Shakespeare can possibly come in. But we shall hear more about dates when we take some of the Sonnets separately.

Enough has been said, I hope, to show that Southampton is the "lovely youth" addressed in the earlier Sonnets, and that certainly Francis Bacon was a *far more likely person* to write familiar and affectionate sonnets to a rising young aristocrat than was the nondescript supernumerary William Shakespeare. I shall try to prove this more conclusively still when I come to consider the correspondence (epistolary) that passed between Bacon and the Earls of Southampton, Pembroke, and Essex.

But I have a very good proof that Bacon *did* write sonnets, and, what is more, showed them to his friend Southampton for his opinion and judgment; and perhaps this is the best place to introduce it. I am also inclined to think that this very poem is extant, having been ascribed to Shakespeare on the authority of a commonplace book which is preserved in the Hamburg City Library. I shall give the poem and a fuller account when I deal with the correspondence of Bacon and Essex. Meanwhile, here is the evidence referred to above:

Bacon in his *Apology concerning the late Earl of Essex*, published in 1604, says:

"A little before that time, (the Trial) being about the middle of Michaelmas term, her Majesty had a purpose to dine at my

lodge at Twicknam Park, at which time I had (though I profess not to be a poet) prepared a sonnet directly tending and alluding to draw on her Majesty's reconcilement to my Lord, which I remember also I showed *to a great person, and one of my Lord's nearest friends*, who commended it: this, though it be (as I said) but a try, yet it shewed plainly in what spirit I proceeded," &c.

I suggest that this great person and great friend of Essex was none other than Southampton, and that Bacon showed him this sonnet as he had shown to him many another sonnet before, *privately* as among friends. The author of Shakespeare's Poems and Plays was apparently on terms of friendship and admiration with both Essex and Southampton before the disastrous Irish expedition and the subsequent rebellious uprising of Essex and his followers (Feb. 1601); but as Mr. Tyler says (*Sonnets*, p. 30), "there is reason to believe that as early as 1601 he became alienated from Southampton."

The Baconian hypothesis fits in best with these facts, for the guilt or innocence of Essex and Southampton was of vital importance to Bacon, whose whole political advancement and future prospects in life depended on it, while the actor-manager Shakespeare and his relation to Southampton would be looked at as merely that of literary client and patron, without any treasonable or political significance. After Elizabeth's death, and when James I. had shown his good inclination towards Southampton, and had set him free from his imprisonment, then it was that Bacon wrote to Southampton a remarkable letter (*cf.* Montagu's *Life of Bacon*, p. 98), in which he uses this expression, "I may safely be that to you now, which I was truly before." Bacon makes a strong appeal for renewed friendship, but it does not appear that the appeal was met in any particular way. It is supposed that the breach caused by Bacon's conduct at the trial of Essex was never quite healed. But under James I. they belonged to the same political party and had the same interests, and were both in favour of colonisation, and sat together on the Council of Virginia.

The lifelong intimacy and the early and very close relationship between Bacon and Southampton present no difficulties to the historical inquirer.

It is a different and wellnigh impossible task that faces us when we try to join together in early friendship, or even in mere casual acquaintance, two men so widely apart in the qualifications that make for intimacy, as were Southampton and Shakespeare. The suggestions that critics are often obliged to make to account, for instance, for the first introduction of one to the other are in general ludicrously imaginative. Indeed, the only point that the Shakespearians can score in this matter is, that the poems *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* are dedicated to Southampton, and signed by Shakespeare in his own name. But how easily might that have been a blind. Bacon might not wish to "show his head" until his beloved Southampton gave his consent, and Southampton may not have cared that Bacon should appear in the matter at all, lest the malevolent world should begin to wag its tongue about the "sugred sonnets" or something worse.

Of this one thing we may be pretty sure: the author of *Venus and Adonis* and the Sonnets was a man of elegant and courtly manners, who was at the time of writing much under the influence of Sidney's *Arcadia* and Sidney's other literary works. It should be noticed that *Venus and Adonis*, although not quite commendable from the moral-pedagogical point of view, and not quite a book for the young lady's boudoir, or even the drawing-room table, is most certainly not written in a low or vulgar strain of obscenity, and is far removed from the ribald licence that was too often permitted both in public and private in those more outspoken days. I believe Queen Elizabeth, old as she was, would have read of this Adonis, his boyish attractions and shame-faced manners, with the highest interest—nay, would almost have gloated over some of the more striking passages, for she had the blood of Henry "Bluebeard" Tudor in her veins, and was as fond of blushing beardless boys when she herself was approaching sixty, as an old maid of her last litter of

kittens—and let us hope with no more evil intent. I am not one to bring up fresh "scandal" against the Virgin Queen, and when I suppose the Queen to be an interested reader of *Venus and Adonis*, I take into account the manners of the time, and do not charge her Majesty with being any worse in her literary tastes than her lively maids of honour. I believe she was more foolishly vain than the majority of her sex, and looked for real love and adoration at sixty—but that was perhaps all, and her unique position may have produced and sustained that feeling. It has more than once crossed my mind that if Bacon really wrote *Venus and Adonis* with Southampton's beauty and Court prospects before him, the aspiring Francis must have plainly seen that such enticing descriptions of a handsome youth, with Southampton's name on the dedication-page, must evidently help to bring the latter to the Queen's notice and to further Court favour and comment; and this was exactly what Bacon wanted.

The Virgin Queen was certainly not too much of a prude to read *Venus and Adonis*. Even when quite a young girl she was perfectly ready, so it seems, for a game of romps with her good-looking and semi-paternal guardian if he came into her bedroom before she was up or dressed. She was no prude then, nor yet, we may take it, years and years afterwards, when her old lover Essex came in hot haste from Ireland, and came all travel-stained to seek his "sovereign," pressing into the royal presence before her Majesty was ready outwardly to receive him. Queen Elizabeth was, in spite of her imperious disposition and masterful activity in state matters, rather frivolous in her pleasures and recreations, and spent more time in seeing plays and frequenting what we should nowadays call "low-class entertainments," than cursory readers of history manuals would ever suspect. And that great Queen, who had heard in plain English on the stage what was the "privie fault" of "Cisly Bumtrinket," and perhaps laughed over it,* was not likely to throw aside

* Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*, 1600, 4.

Venus and Adonis from any feelings of prudery. Perhaps Bacon knew that, and saw the advantage to be gained.

The more I consider this "first heir" of the author's "invention," the more do I think it likely that Bacon wrote it when closely drawn to Southampton's company, friendship, and future prospects, rather than that Shakespeare should bring it up to town with him from his provincial home (as many believe, for it was an undoubtedly early work) and dedicate it to Southampton on the chance of his valuable patronage. It is said, I know, that the poem is quite alien to Bacon's serious and philosophic turn, but, as I have tried to show, Bacon in his early Gray's Inn days was not such a serious and staid personage as we mentally picture him to be later in life. Besides, I do not see that it is so very reprehensible even in the region of morals to write and dedicate such a poem as *Venus and Adonis* to Southampton. True, it was not a work to be written or dedicated *Virginibus puerisque*, but Southampton was neither one nor the other. He was quite of an age to be married; marriage was talked about, and the early Sonnets recommended it. If Alphonse Daudet dedicated *Sappho* to his sons "quand ils auront vingt ans," *a fortiori*, I say, might Bacon, who was neither the lad's father nor tutor, dedicate *Venus and Adonis* to Southampton, who was this very age.

Moreover, so many things seem to point to Bacon; the last stanzas of *Venus and Adonis* show the author to be somewhat of a misogynist in spite of his impassioned descriptions—which, by the way, are both here and in the *Lover's Lament* mainly occupied with the *male*—otherwise he would not depreciate and calumniate love as he does towards the end of the poem. The method here used strongly calls to mind the similar impeachments of love in the last Sonnets to the "Dark Lady." In both cases they seem somewhat uncalled for, especially in *Venus and Adonis;* and this very fact seems to show the true psychological character of the writer. It suits Bacon, as Aubrey describes him, very accurately, but not Shakespeare, who was a virile Benedict very early in life,

and had twins before he was in a position to maintain them.

But the Sonnets have a great deal to say about a "Will" or "Wills," and from the way these words are printed in italics and referred to in the Sonnets, it seems evident that a person (or persons) named William plays a leading part in the mystery of the Sonnets, especially of the later ones. It is enough to say here that nearly all the best Shakespearians of the orthodox party agree that William Herbert is the hero of the later Sonnets, and seeing that his unfortunate *liaison* with Mistress Fitton is a historical fact fitting in very well with the hazy circumstances of the later Sonnets, the number of critics is steadily increasing who believe that Mary Fitton is the "Dark Lady," the unlovely yet, in some way, fascinating charmer to whom both Shakespeare and Pembroke fell a victim. More recently, too, some family documents have been discovered in the muniment room of the Newdegate family, which was allied by marriage to the Fittons, and from these fresh corroborating evidence has been drawn. It had been supposed by that shrewd dramatic critic Mr. Archer that the "Dark Lady" in Sonnet CXXXV. was intriguing with *three* Wills at the same time, seeing that she was thus addressed:

> "Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy *Will*,
> And *Will* to boot, and *Will* in overplus."

Now William Herbert and William Shakespeare would account for two Wills, but who was the third Will? This was a mystery until the letters from the Newdigate chest revealed the fact that Sir William Knollys, who was Comptroller of the Queen's Household, and therefore brought into close relation to the maids of honour, was a great admirer of Mary Fitton, and had talked of marrying her when his elderly wife was out of the way. Here then was the third Will, and a most curious old gentleman he was to be let loose in a chamber full of frisky young maids of honour. But that is another tale, to be told in its proper place, under Sonnet CXXXV.

The Herbertites were naturally much encouraged in their opinions by such an unexpected corroboration as this. But they soon had their new confidence dashed to the ground by one of their own orthodox side. Mr. Sidney Lee had changed his camp, which used to lie under the Pembroke standard, and had joined the camp of Southampton; so at once he began to lay about him vigorously, and his orthodox fellow-Shakespearians who lived in his former camp went down like ninepins before a cunning thrower. Pembroke, said he, will not do at any price, or with any corroboration; why, Shakespeare hardly knew him, and the only positive proof we have of any connection between the two was the casual remark in the dedication of the first folio Shakespeare (1623), that Pembroke and his brother had "prosequuted" the plays and "their author living" with much favour, which most likely only meant the brother earls shared in the enthusiastic esteem which James I. and all the noblemen of the court extended to Shakespeare and his plays during the dramatist's lifetime.

I think that Mr. Lee had the best of this argument, and that it was, to say the least, most unlikely that Shakespeare, being the manner of man he was, with a wife and family at Stratford into the bargain, should have had such a peculiar and close intimacy with a prominent young nobleman and a maid of honour standing high in the Queen's favour.

To such difficulties are Shakespearians reduced, and in such suicidal contests do they indulge. For if the close intimacy of Shakespeare and Pembroke, as supposed to be revealed in the later Sonnets, is without any positive proof and against all probability, why then Shakespeare did not write these Sonnets, and thence assuredly follows the inference, neither did he write the Plays. For of this fact I am as confident as I can be, in a world where *il ne faut jurer de rien*, that whoever wrote the Shakespeare Sonnets was mainly responsible for the Shakespeare Plays.

But how everything becomes more reasonable and probable when the Baconian hypothesis is applied!

All the arguments derived from birth and social position which I used in the case of Southampton and Bacon apply equally well here with regard to all the three persons implicated—to Pembroke, to Bacon, and to Mistress Fitton. Bacon was evidently in a position about court, wherein he would have frequent opportunities of meeting and being intimately acquainted with both young Herbert and Mary Fitton. Shakespeare, on the other hand, would not, from his position, be likely to be closely intimate with any ladies of the court, or with any court noblemen either.

Now young "Lord Herbert," as he was called, was, as I have discovered, on a two or three months' visit to London between October and December 1595. He was fifteen, and was in town partly for the sake of a marriage being arranged for him, according to the following evidence which I have extracted from Rowland White's letters to Sir Robert Sydney at Flushing, giving him the court and general news.

A Letter from Roland White to Sir Robert Sydney (at Flushing)

"8*th Oct.* 1595.—My Lord of Pembroke . . . with my Lord Harbart (have) come up to see the Queen, and (as I heare) to deal in the Matter of a Marriage with Sir George Carey's daughter."

"16*th Nov.* 1595.—Lord Harbart in town still."

"15*th Dec.* 1595.—Sir George Carey takes it very unkindly, that my Lord of Pembroke broke off the match intended between my Lord Harbart and his Daughter, and told the Queene it was because he wold not assure him £1000 a Yeare, which comes to his Daughter, as next of Kinne to Queen Ann Bullen. He hath now concluded a marriage between his Daughter and my Lord Barkley's Sonne and Heire."

It is not at all unlikely that Bacon, being often at court, would make the acquaintance of the young lad *now*; especially if his mother, "Sidney's sister," was up with her son.

Thus after three years, young Herbert, in the spring of 1598 or perhaps a little before, comes up to live permanently in town. We know nothing of the way in which he spent the year 1598, although there is an allusion in a letter of Tobie Matthew dated Sept. 15, 1598, to the effect that a marriage was contemplated between William Herbert and Lady Hatton, who must have been considerably older than he was. During 1599 Herbert was frequently at court, and on Nov. 24 White records, "My Lord Harbert is exceedingly beloved at court of all men." I should think Francis Bacon was much more likely to be one of the company of "adorers" than was William Shakespeare. And in August 1600 White mentions him again thus: "My Lord Harbert is very well thought of, and keepes company with the best and gravest in court." This looks rather as if he were one of Francis Bacon's intimates. Anyhow, two months before, on June 16, 1600, there was a grand marriage festival, where Herbert and Bacon were both most likely prominent actors. Bacon was the cousin of the bride, Mistress Ann Russell, and Herbert was one of the two noblemen who conducted the bride to church. The Queen herself was there, and having come to Blackfriars by water, she was carried from the waterside in a *lectica* borne by six knights. Bacon is not named as one, nor was he a knight at this date, but it seems very possible from Sonnet CXXV. (the Canopy Sonnet), beginning, "Were 't aught to me I bore the canopy," that Bacon was privileged, as a cousin of the bride and one so well known to the Queen, to assist in bearing the canopy over the *lectica*, although he was not of such knightly rank as the other bearers.

There was every likelihood, too, of Bacon knowing Mistress Mary Fitton very intimately, although there is, I believe, no record of such acquaintance in print or in MS. Bacon had two rather lively cousins, the Russells, among the maids of honour, and through them and through his interest in court masques and plays Bacon would almost certainly be frequently thrown into the company of the good dancer, Mistress Mary Fitton, the

foremost among the Queen's maids in the mazes of the masques and dances. If she was a noted flirt, and a woman "coloured ill," yet it was not Will Shakespeare who was, in my opinion, the third "Will." I think Will Kemp the famous clown and jig-dancer was a much more likely man to complete the trio, though he was in a lower station than the other two aristocrats. He was not unknown at court, and had absolutely been bold enough to dedicate his book, the *Nine daies wonder*, to "Mistress Anne Fitton, Mayde of Honour to the most sacred Mayde, Royal Queene Elizabeth." Here Mistress Fitton's Christian name is given erroneously as Anne, for Mary was the only sister of the Fittons who was a maid of honour in 1600, and she is undoubtedly the one meant by Kemp. Kemp probably knew her well enough to dedicate his book to her, through having been her occasional tutor or prompter in dancing and posturing. So it looks as if the Sonnet was right about the third Will—if Will Kemp be meant—and that he really was somewhat intimate with this unconventional young lady, who tucked up her clothes and put on a man's long cloak and marched out to meet her lover—or her lovers, for she was certainly not confined to one. Anyhow, there seems excellent direct evidence as to Kemp in the following verse of contemporary court satire, probably written by T. Churchyard, which is found in an unprinted ballad of the year 1601 preserved among the State Papers (Eliz., vol. 278, No. 23), in which the maids' chamber, or the Queen's household in general, represented as a herd of deer, is the subject of the second stanza, the Lord Chamberlain being the subject of the first, Sir Robert Cecil of the third, and Raleigh of the seventh and last:

"Partie beard was afeard
When they rann at the herd;
The Raine dear was imbost,
The white doe she was lost;
Pembroke strooke her downe
And took her from the clowne
Lord, for thy pittie!"

A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, June 1901, explains thus: "'Partie beard' seems to be a nickname of the Comptroller of the Household, Sir William Knollys; the 'Raine dear' is the Queen (*la reine*), 'imbost' or embossed is a hunting term with the secondary meaning of enraged (cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV., xiii. 3); the 'white doe' is Mistress Fitton, and 'the clowne' is Shakespeare."

The writer of the above deserves credit for a useful literary find, and his explanation of the stanza given seems likely enough with one important exception. The "clowne" I suggest was Will Kemp, who always took the part of "clown" in Shakespeare's company, and elsewhere too. Shakespeare never was "clown" professionally, nor ever stigmatised as "clownish" as far as I know. He was the "gentle Shakespeare," "sweet Mr. Shakespeare," &c.

I do not think that the question of the supposed close intimacy between Herbert and Shakespeare and Mary Fitton need detain us much longer. There is really no good evidence to support it; and the necessary inference that the Queen's maid of honour was Shakespeare's mistress before she knew Herbert, or indeed at any time, is so extremely unlikely, that it would require the strongest evidence to make it at all credible.

Such a remarkable theory seems to have had its origin in the mysterious Mr. W. H., to whom the Sonnets were supposed to be addressed, or who was the sole cause of begetting or producing them in the brain of the author Shake-speare. But Mr. W. H. is only just possibly William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and may just as well be the Mr. W. Hall whom Mr. Sidney Lee brings forward —indeed, I think that the curiously coincident collocation of letters:

> "To the onlie begetter of
> these ensuing sonnets
> Mr. *W. H. all* happinesse
> and that eternitie," &c.,

rather points in the direction Mr. Lee has aimed at.

The following old jingle also seems to add probability to this :

"My love's *Will*
I am content to fulfil.
Within this rime his name is framed,
Tell me then how he is named?"

The answer, of course, is Will I am = William.

But though we cannot connect Lord Herbert and Shakespeare together by any contemporary history or satire, we can, as I believe and propose to show, connect Herbert and Bacon in a way so far quite unnoticed by any critic of the Sonnets.

I think we meet Bacon and Herbert in Sir John Daw (Bacon) and Sir Amorous La-Foole (Herbert), both characters of Ben Jonson's play *The Silent Woman* (1609). To see the full force of the allusions the play ought to be read through carefully, and I will also say here that the Silent Woman, who is called "Epicœne" in the *dramatis personæ*, and with whom both the gallant knights confess to have had a consummated *liaison*, turns out in the end to be a boy in woman's clothes. Sir John Daw shows Bacon's head on his shoulders as plain as a pikestaff. He had been giving his views (Act ii. sc. 2) of the poets, and had poured forth a succession of names after the manner of the list in *Palladis Tamia*, when Clerimont and Dauphine, characters in the play, discuss him thus :

Cler. What a sackfull of their names he has got.

Dauph. And how he pours them out! Politian with Valerius Flaccus!*

Cler. I wonder that he is not called to the helm and made a counsellor.

Dauph. He is one extraordinary.

Cler. Nay, but in ordinary : to say truth, the state wants such.

Dauph. Why, that will follow.

Cler. I muse a mistress can be so silent to the dotes of such a servant.

* Meres in his famous *Comparative Discourse* on the Poets (1598), which tells us so much about Shakespeare's plays, brings in Politian and other moderns along with the ancients as Sir John Daw does. I have often thought this part of the second Bodenham book might be Bacon's. Jonson seems to hint it here.

Daw. 'Tis her virtue, sir. I have written somewhat of her silence too.

Dauph. In verse, Sir John?

Cler. What else.

Dauph. Why, how can you justify your own being of a poet, that so slight all the old poets?

Daw. Why, every man that writes in verse is not a poet: you have of the wits that write verses, and yet are no poets: they are poets that live by it, the poor fellows that live by it.

Dauph. Why should not you live by your verses, Sir John?

Cler. No, 'twere pity he should. A knight live by his verses! he did not make them to that end, I hope.

Dauph. And yet the noble Sidney lives by his, and the noble family not ashamed.

Cler. Ay, he profest himself: but Sir John Daw has more caution: he'll not hinder his own rising in the state so much. Do you think he will? Your verses, good Sir John, and no poems.

Daw. "Silence in woman, is like speech in man;
Deny 't who can."

Dauph. Not I, believe it, your reason, sir.

Daw. "Nor is't a tale
That female vice should be a virtue male,
Or masculine vice a female virtue be:
You shall it see.
Proved with increase:
I know to speak, and she to hold her peace."
Do you conceive me, gentlemen?

Dauph. No, faith; how mean you with increase, Sir John?

Daw. Why, with increase is, when I court her for the common cause of mankind, and she says nothing, but *consentire videtur;* and in time is *gravida.*

Dauph. Then this is a ballad of procreation?

Cler. A madrigal of procreation; you mistake.

Epicœne, the Silent Woman. Pray give me my verses again, servant.

Daw. If you ask them aloud, you shall.
[*Walks aside with the papers.*

I shall not comment on this or many other passages of this play and other plays; it would take me beyond the subject in hand, and surely any one who knows a little of Bacon's early life and the scandals connected with it will not want a commentary, and the madrigal is in the metre of Bacon's single specimen, *The world's a bubble,* &c. I will give one more extract. They are discussing

the character of Epicœne (the Silent Woman with the boy's doublet and hose beneath her dress, Mrs. Fitton?):

Cler. And what humour is she of? Is she coming and open, free?

Daw. O, exceeding open, sir. I was her servant, and Sir Amorous was to be.

Cler. Come, you have both had favours from her: I know, and have heard so much.

Daw. O no, sir.

La-Foole. You shall excuse us, sir, we must not wound reputation.

Cler. Tut, she is married now; and you cannot hurt her with any report; and therefore speak plainly: how many times, i' faith? which of you led first? ha!

La-Foole. Sir John had her maidenhead,* indeed.

Daw. O, it pleases him to say so, sir; but Sir Amorous knows what's what as well.

Cler. Dost thou, i' faith, Amorous?

La-Foole. In a manner, sir.

Cler. Why, I commend you, lads, little knows Don Bridegroom of this; nor shall he for me.

Whether this Don Bridegroom was Captain Lougher or Captain Polwhele I shall not venture to examine, for genealogists cannot agree which had the precedence in marrying Mary Fitton.

However, whether these remarkable allusions stand or fall does not so much matter, for in either case we have a total exclusion of Shakespeare of Stratford from any connection with this evidently popular tale of the "scandal of the Epicœne woman." The date of this Jonsonian play should be noticed; it coincides with the publishing of the incriminating Sonnets.

But I must find a place for one more very short extract from Act iv. sc. 2. One of the characters thus addresses Sir John Daw:

If you love me, Jack, you shall make use of your philosophy now, for this once, and deliver me your sword.

Daw (*replies*). As I hope to finish Tacitus, I intend no murder.

What possible reason, one asks, was there for Ben to bring Tacitus in? he had absolutely nothing whatever to do with the plot or the incidents of the plays. True,

* This excludes the drab Lais.

but it was a fine hit at Bacon, and is a neat, manifold allusion of Ben's to (1) the tale of Queen Elizabeth, Bacon, the play of *Richard II.*, and Dr. Hayward. Here Bacon got out of a grave difficulty, when questioned by Elizabeth, by saying he did not find treason in the incriminated play, but felony—felony from Tacitus. Ben knew what he was writing about well enough, and so would the audience. It was also clearly an allusion to (2) some work on Tacitus by Bacon now unfortunately lost. There was a work entitled *Notes from the First Book of Tacitus, touching the Making or Breaking of Factions.* This was among Bacon's papers when Dr. Tenison made a list of what he had in a box in 1682. These Tacitus notes and many other papers on Tenison's list have now disappeared. Or it might be an allusion to (3) an English translation of Tacitus, presumably written by a Richard Grenewey, of whom nothing is known (in 1597). Some have thought this translation to be by Bacon on account of the many parallel passages in it and in *Richard II.* Perhaps Jonson knew. But anyhow, no one but Bacon suits this Tacitus allusion. In fact, Bacon is clearly aimed at in many ways, and such a series of apt satirical allusions as we meet with in the character of Sir John Daw could not, I venture to assert, be adapted to any contemporary personage except Francis Bacon, knight, lawyer, concealed poet, rising statesman, and "extraordinary counsellor." He and Sir John Daw alike filled all these positions. That Sir Amorous is young Lord Herbert is not quite so clear, and perhaps some may think that the circumstances of the play would agree with Southampton's love-escapades almost as well. But I think not so, for Southampton is not connected with a maiden in the Sonnets at all, but with a Lady of considerable experience in the bonds of love and possibly of wedlock too; while with Herbert and Mistress Fitton it was presumably a case of virgin love, and this apparently was Epicœne's case in the play. Moreover, I shall show that Ben Jonson in another play, later on, alludes to Southampton and his bosom friend Bacon, and

their common drab whom they shared between them—the lady here being of a very different stamp from a maid of honour. Moreover, Sir Amorous La-Foole does not present to us the character of a practised *roué*, or an associate with depraved women of the theatres; but rather appears to be a simple, sensual young gallant of not overmuch experience. And this hits off young Lord Herbert very well. Till he fell a victim to Mary Fitton's blandishments he seems, by what Rowland White and others tell us, to have been a young aristocrat who made a good impression at court, and was fond of the society of grave and notable men, but eventually showed that he had a nature of a warm and sensuous kind. No doubt the terpsichorean abilities of Mistress Mary Fitton had something to do with conquering his youthful modesty, for on June 16, 1600, he was present at the marriage of Mistress Anne Russell (one of the frisky, gambolling lambs that disturbed old Sir William Knollys), and helped to conduct the bride to church. This was indeed an eventful day for him, for Mistress Fitton was chief dancer in the Masque. An eventful day indeed! Some of its blushing secrets were doubtless kept ever hidden in his breast, for on March 25, 1601, Mary Fitton, the Queen's most notable and lively maid of honour, brought forth a male child, born dead. This tell-tale boy carries us back to that "leafy month of June" of the year before, when the marriage guests were all so merry, and when, no doubt, young Lord Herbert fell vanquished by Cupid's dart. However, before this he had not been a forward lover, and clearly we cannot connect him with any common "drab" or "loose-legged Lais." Let him tell his own tale as to that.

SONNET

By WILLIAM HERBERT, EARL OF PEMBROKE

[*Opportunities neglected*]

YET was her Beauty as the blushing Rose,
And greedy passionate was my desire,
And Time, and Place, my reconcilèd Foes,
Did with my wish and her consent conspire:

Why then o'er-reachless of my Love's fruition,
So eagerly pursued with rough intent,
So dearly purchast with performed condition,
Kept I my rude Virginity unspent?
Did shee not sweetly kiss? and sweetly sing?
And sweetly play? and all to move my pleasure?
And every dalliance use, and everything,
And show my sullen Eyes her naked Treasure?
All this she did, I wilfully forbore:
And why? Because methought she was an whore.

The sonnet seems to represent a real and striking incident, and the heroine seems educated, or at least highly accomplished—possibly it might be one of Mistress Mary's unsuccessful attempts. But no, her beauty was "as the blushing Rose." This will not suit, for Mr. Tyler, who has taken great interest in her, and has specially examined her monumental effigy in Gawsworth Church, found her to be a swarthy, black-haired damsel, with thick, sensuous lips. But on the other hand, during the circumstances described in Herbert's sonnet, I should say that a warm blush would naturally suffuse her cheeks, so she might have been like a deep-coloured rose after all. In any case I accept this sonnet—as I do the Shakespeare Sonnets—as Biography and not Idealism. I think it shows young Herbert to be a very different stamp of man from that *roué* the Earl of Southampton, who thought nothing of unseating his closest friend Bacon in the jousts of Venus:

"Ay me! but yet thou might'st my seat forbear."
—*Sonnet XLI.* 9.

As I have hinted several times, Ben Jonson knew as well as any one all the theatrical and general scandal of the town, and he seems to have taken delight in alluding to it in his various plays. He knew the character of Mary Fitton, and was well acquainted with the gossip about her at his Tavern haunts. He had a shrewd conjecture that young William Herbert was *not*

"The first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

And in any case he knew, for it was the public property of all the town gossips, that young Lord Herbert had found his lively maid of honour a "sea of trouble" to him—a sea that had given up its dead in sorrow and disgrace. It seems pretty clear that he used this knowledge, and tried to amuse the public with hidden allusions to it, in his *Silent Woman* of 1609, just about the time the Shake-speare Sonnets were brought to light. He introduces Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La-Foole in this play, and he did not make it a very hard riddle for the spectators to guess. We are not nowadays in a position to get as sure and certain a grasp of all that was meant as those who listened to the words and saw the actions of the players; but I do think we can grasp Jack Daw, take his theatrical feathers from him, and find —BACON.

For the sake of my American readers I will add yet one more piece of evidence connecting Sir John Daw with Bacon. At the beginning of Act V. of *The Silent Woman* one of the female characters of the play says, "Gentlemen, have any of you a pen and ink?" To this *Clericus*, another character on the stage, answers, "Not I in troth, lady; I am no scrivener. Then Sir John Daw intervenes with, "I can furnish you I think, lady." And the lady leaves with Sir John to get what she has asked for. Now it is a notorious fact that Bacon had a scriptorium and many busy penmen in it, and if scrivener's work should be required, it could be certainly furnished by Bacon. But it is when Sir John Daw and the lady have gone for the pen and ink, that the interesting American allusion is brought forward.

The other characters go on talking about Sir John Daw directly he has left the stage, and Sir Amorous La-Foole speaks of his "box of instruments," and also of "his brass pens and black lead, to draw maps of every place and person where he comes." Then says Clericus:

Cler. How maps of persons?

La-Foole. Yes, Sir of Nomentack when he was here, and of the Prince of Moldavia and of his mistress, Mistress Epicœne.

Now how many Englishmen, I wonder, know the history of Nomentack? Very few indeed. But Americans who are interested in early Virginian records will remember him well enough.

Nomentack, or more properly Namontack, was a trusty servant of the well-known Indian chief Powhattan, who was the father of the still better-known Princess Pocahontas. Nomentack is said to have been a man of "a shrewd and subtle capacitie," and when Captain Smith thought of returning home, this "trustie" native was allowed by Powhattan to go to England, while one of the Smith's men agreed to stay with the Indians, as a kind of exchange of hostages. Hardly anything seems recorded of Nomentack's stay in England. All we know of him is that he was murdered by an Indian at the Bermudas in 1610 when returning to his country with the English expedition.

Now as *The Silent Woman* was first acted in 1609, the dates agree exactly, for Nomentack had only just come and gone again, and who was more likely to take an interest in this American Indian from Virginia than Sir Francis Bacon, who was a member of the *Virginian Trading and Discovery Adventurers* at the very time? Indeed Bacon had taken interest in Indians before this in 1595. For when Raleigh had brought an Indian from Guiana in Queen Elizabeth's time, who but Bacon straightway utilised the fact in his *Masque of the Indian Prince*, who had come from the mouth of the Amazon to be cured of his blindness in the sunshine of the Queen's favour and in the healing light of her kindly eyes. The Masque was played on Nov. 17, 1595, when Raleigh and the Indian had only very recently arrived. So Bacon struck the iron while it was hot. He seems, according to Ben Jonson, to have done the same in 1609 with regard to the Virginian Nomentack, for why in the world should Nomentack's name be dragged thus into the play, except as a hint that Bacon was being aimed at as a celebrity known for his interest in matters Virginian at the time. This knowledge of Bacon's habits seems to have died out in the

present day. Spedding in his immense and exhaustive work never alludes to it. But I have noticed one or two things which throw a good light on it. Bacon's receipts and disbursements for the months of July–September 1618 have been fortunately preserved among the State Papers. We read there in the column for disbursements prepared by his secretary :

Sept. 1, 1618. To one that went to Verginia by your Lordship's order £2 4 0
Sept. 11, 1618. To George the Verginian, by your Lordship's order 0 10 0

And in 1620, in a speech in Parliament, Bacon, while referring to the importance of the plantation of Virginia, said : "Sometimes a grain of mustard seed proves a great tree. Who can tell ?"

Though it is hardly known or mentioned, the fact remains that Bacon held very strong views as to the importance of maintaining and increasing our plantations in America, and that he worked hard, both by his influence and by his money subscriptions, to lay the foundations of a strong colony beyond the seas. The grain of mustard seed has indeed become a great tree, and I think the millions of English-speaking people who now dwell beneath the branches of it, will rejoice to hear that the very greatest master of their native tongue wished to make them a strong nation, and foresaw their future greatness. And he not only wished, but gave effect to the wish, for there is evidence beyond all suspicion, as given above, that in the course of one fortnight he helped to send off a new colonist (and men were wanted then), and to relieve by his charity a needy Virginian.*

Among the other estimable and surpassing qualities of Francis Bacon was this one—he was a true and foreseeing patriot. He, Southampton, Herbert, and other sub-

* Since writing the above I have read the first volume of the Cambridge Modern History—*The Renaissance* (1902). I was both surprised and pleased to find in the chapter on the New World (pp. 62–66) the highest praise awarded to Francis Bacon, for the great, wise, and almost prophetic interest he took in the New World and its future. We are told that "American man in his physical and ethnological aspect strongly attracted Bacon's attention."

scribers to the expeditions to the New World, together with Raleigh especially, must be reckoned among the true founders of the United States. Was this vast American continent to become mainly English or mainly Spanish? that was their feeling, and they worked both in purse and person for English predominance. But my American cousins have taken me a long way from Ben Jonson, and I must return.

And just as Ben Jonson tried to amuse the gossips among his audience in 1609 with allusions to Bacon, Herbert, and Mistress Fitton, who had lately been married, so I think that in one of his later plays, *Bartholomew Fair*, in 1614, he treated his audience to a pretty plain exposition of that remarkable triangular love-picture of Bacon, Southampton, and the First Lady of doubtful character, which meets us in the Sonnets.

Jonson has two characters in this play, *Bartholomew Fair*, whom he names Damon and Pythias, and describes them as "two faithful friends of the Bankside," who "have but one drab." Considering the mention made of Burbage and the Bankside, and that it was Jonson who put in this remark, and that he, by our hypothesis, knew pretty well what was going on, it seems likely enough that the strange tale of the Sonnets *is* here alluded to. But the strangest part of the history is, that if the facts of the Sonnets were known well enough in 1614 to form part of a stage allusion like the above, how are we to account for the 1640 edition of the Sonnets being so manifestly ignorant of the true state of the case as to suppose all the Sonnets to be addressed to a woman?

This Damon and Pythias allusion of 1614 is noticed by few critics; but Elze, Dowden, and Tyler seem to think that Shakespeare and Herbert may *possibly* be meant. No one has ever thought of suggesting Bacon for Damon and Southampton for Pythias, but when I tried it, I found the phraseology of the passage so curiously suggestive that I give the summary here.

After some quarrelsome words to each other, in which Damon (Bacon ?) says: "*Thou hast lain with her thyself,*

I'll prove it in this place," they subsequently go off to breakfast together. (*Exeunt.*) Presently Leatherhead, who is the showman of the Fair, says :

> "Now here come the friends again Pythias and Damon,
> And under their cloaks they have of bacon a gammon."

The two friends Damon and Pythias now observe the presence of Hero (their " drab "), and Damon (*i.e.* Bacon) says : "'*Tis Hero.*" To which Leatherhead replies :

> *Yes, but she will not be taken*
> *After sack and fresh herring with your*
> *Dunmow bacon.*
>
> Pythias. *You lie, it's Westfabian.*
> Leatherhead. *Westphalian, you should say.*

These " bacon " allusions are, to say the least, unexpected, and seem forced in for a purpose, but I do not press them as either direct or convincing—they are perhaps only an odd coincidence. *Westfabian* seems puzzling—I have met with the word elsewhere in Jonson's plays but cannot find the reference. Doubtless it referred to some current joke of the period.

Hero, the drab of Damon and Pythias, seems to have been, like most gay women, rather particular in her eating. No bacon flitches even of Dunmow will take her fancy. Bacon at best was peasants' food, yokels' food. She has been used to sack and fresh herring, and such other appetising " snacks " as gallants are wont to regale their lady-loves with at the best places of " ordinary " resort. This sounds more like an allusion to some Lais or some fast citizen's wife, who enjoyed life when her husband was away, than to the Queen's young maid of honour. Moreover, Sonnet CXXXVIII., by its variations as published in 1599 in the *Passionate Pilgrim* by the pirate Jaggard, shows the lady *not* to be young, though she was fond of saying so.

I claim, having now brought these various distant and delicate, or rather indelicate, allusions into as clear a light as my limited knowledge of Elizabethan literature will allow, that a fair case is made out for Sir John Daw and Damon being Bacon, and Sir Amorous La-Foole

Herbert. In that case Hero would be the common drab, the loose-legged Lais whom Marston tells us about in connection with the fair-haired Cyprian, gallant Briscus. She might even be the brunette (Brownetta), the " chough with a white bill," the Dark Lady with a white face (powdered ?), who seems to have made her husband a cornuto without much fuss about it. Anyhow, we have Marston's authority that this Lais was the one " for whom good Tubrio took the mortal stab " ; and if Tubrio in this phrase be not poor Marlowe, I know not who he can be. So Hero would be a good name for Jonson to have chosen, if he knew that Marlowe had been her Leander and lost his life for her sake.

But the Epicœne or Silent Woman seems a different lady, who married after the scandal, and Sir Amorous seems a different personage from the Pythias or Briscus, who both stand better for Southampton. Here Herbert and Mary Fitton take their places very suitably, while neither of them would suit the characters of Briseus and the " drab " Lais depicted by Marston in 1598, for the date is too early for young Herbert, who had not yet come to town permanently, and Mary Fitton at that date was a young maid of honour standing well with her Queen. But I say again these matters are neither so clear nor so important as is the evidence for Francis Bacon's identity in these shady concerns ; and *that* I claim is fairly established.

And there is some novel evidence adduced concerning Mistress Fitton and the Dark Lady and their distinguishing characteristics in our remarks on Sonnet CXXXVII. But I would add here that since I wrote my extract above from the *Silent Woman* I have carefully examined Mr. Tyler's researches into the history of Mistress Mary Fitton in Chap. VIII. of his *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, and find they corroborate Ben Jonson's broad allusions of 1609, both chronologically and generally, to such an extent as almost to settle the question whether *Epicœne, or the Silent Woman*, refers to Mary Fitton or not.

I am surprised that neither Mr. Tyler nor any other

investigator has brought this play to bear on the vexed question of the Sonnets. Mr. Tyler's researches into Mistress Fitton's biography are much too long to quote here, but his whole Chap. VIII. (pp. 73–92) is worth reading in this connection. He shows she was married to Captain Polwhele in 1607, when between twenty-nine and thirty years of age, and that she had probably been married when very young and the marriage made null or disallowed. Ben's play came out in 1609, and he refers to the *Epicœne* woman as being married: "Tut, she is married now, and you cannot hurt her with any report"; and the Sonnets had come out this same year, all tending to corroborate the Bacon-Herbert-Fitton allusions, which Jonson, though not alone in the knowledge, was alone in daring to express. Moreover, there is testimony extant of the very best kind which, although only negative, yet goes far to show that the theory of the *Shakespeare* and Herbert intimacy has little or no foundation.

John Aubrey, the Wiltshire antiquary, has a great deal to say about the various members of the Pembroke family—one of the chief in Wiltshire—and also many anecdotes about Shakespeare. In fact, lively gossip about both appears prominently in Aubrey's *Lives of Eminent Persons*, but nothing is said about their being acquainted or associated with one another. If there had been a tradition of any such connection, Aubrey would almost certainly have heard of it and recorded it, as he was an inveterate gossip-monger. I think, therefore, Shakespeare may be dismissed, but not Herbert (*pace* Mr. Lee), for besides the proof from Pembroke's letters, which we shall hear presently, it does not seem to me altogether impossible that Bacon, who could never pass by a jest, should have scribbled on the cover of his private MS. copy of the Sonnets (or on some page of his copy)—in joking allusion to the *only* lover of Mary Fitton who succeeded in becoming a father—those mystifying words, "To Mr. W. H., the Sole Begetter." What if this copy fell into Thorpe's possession and accounted for his odd

dedication? I have referred to this more fully in my note to Sonnet CXXXVIII.

Neither can we dismiss Herbert on Mr. Lee's assertion that he did not possess the requisite goods look or youthful beauty. We know differently, and prefer the statement of a contemporary, Francis Davidson, who says in his dedication to Pembroke of his *Poetical Rhapsody*:

> "Whose outward shape, though it most lovely bee,
> Doth in faire Robes, a fairer Soule attire."

But surely we need not dwell longer on this point just now. That Shakespeare the play-actor should have a mistress among the maids of honour, and that Pembroke, the supreme aristocrat and rising favourite at court, should have first joined himself in the closest bonds of far more than ordinary friendship with an older man in a much inferior social position—an intimacy more like love than friendship—and then, treacherously unfaithful to the closest of bonds, robbed the actor of his mistress, and admitted the paternity of the bastard that ensued—well, to state it is enough almost to refute it. And, as we said, there is no evidence whatever for such a peculiar friendship, or indeed for any particular intimacy between Shakespeare and Pembroke at all. But the author of the Sonnets seems to allude to such things personally, and the author of the Plays, who is the same man, not only returns to the theme in *Much Ado about Nothing* (ii. 1), but has given a variation of the same subject in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The orthodox Shakespearians have been put to such straits that many of them have declared that the Sonnets dealing with this triangular tragedy are merely poetical conceits with which Shakespeare amused himself and his private friends, but had no facts behind them. My point is, that if we take Bacon as the writer of the Sonnets and Plays, the whole matter is moved from the region of the wellnigh impossible, to the region of reasonable probability, and more so still when we come to Pembroke's written letters.

So that there may be no mistake about my views

regarding Southampton, Pembroke, and the author of the Sonnets, I will here say categorically that I am quite opposed to the opinion of those critics who hold that there is but one male friend in the Sonnets—a Mr. W. H., corresponding to William Herbert. And I am also quite opposed to the view that the Earl of Southampton was the one male friend in the Sonnets, and that William Herbert was *not* in the Sonnets, and in no close intimacy with the author at all. I hold it to be a fundamental fallacy, and an irretrievable error, to try and read one friendship backwards or forwards through all the Sonnets, when there are two entirely distinct series. Both of these noblemen were patrons of literature; both were personal friends of the author, Southampton being the first by many years—at least five, and more likely eight years.

The earlier Sonnets, which were consecrated to Southampton by the personal love of the author, are profaned by being mixed up with the latter Sonnets as commonly interpreted. Those who begin with Herbert and the date of 1598 are bound to read the Sonnets backwards, and only, as Gerald Massey well says, "obfuscate the Sonnets and confuse the minds of their readers." I still think Massey's Southampton proof in his scarce book of 1888 the best extant for the early Procreation Sonnets, and putting Bacon for Shakespeare, as I do, it seems strengthened rather than otherwise.

As for Essex, the third nobleman who was so closely intimate with Francis Bacon, there are but few possible allusions in the Sonnets, and these indirect and doubtful. But the Plays, as is well known, have several direct and undoubted references to Essex, especially that one in *Henry V.* which augured a glorious return of Essex from Ireland, with the rebellion crushed, and all London enthusiastically greeting the conquering hero—a most useful passage for dating the play. And then there is the play of *Richard II.* and the long tale of how the Queen suspected treason in it, and how much it was supposed to help the rebellious faction and rising of Essex and his followers. But in the whole story there is not a single

word about Shakespeare's authorship of the play, nor is his name even mentioned. This seems unaccountable if Shakespeare were even only the suspected author or adapter; whereas we know what an awkward matter it was for Bacon when he was called upon to deal with it officially. He even suggested that people might say it was one of his own tales.

But beyond such suggestive evidence as we get from the Plays, there was in 1601, just after the tragic execution of Essex, which had been carried out without a word of reprieve from the imperious and sensitive Queen, a poetical essay on *The Phoenix and Turtle*, published in an appendix to Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr, or Rosalind's Complaint* (1601). This "deep-brained poem" was signed in full William Shake-speare, and although it is a most enigmatic composition, and was evidently to be so intended, yet there is no better solution before the public than that of Dr. Grosart, who was the first to suggest that the Phœnix was Queen Elizabeth and the male Turtle, Essex. These two were known to be lovers, and just then (1601) there was no other tragical event which was so likely to form the subject of this strange allegory, if indeed it had personal allusions at all. But in any case, I venture to say that this most peculiar and able poem seems much more akin to Bacon than to Shakespeare. Mr. Lee cannot make more out of it than any one else can, and adds, "Happily Shakespeare wrote nothing else of like character."

I think it was far more likely to come from the fertile brain of him who was cogitating at an early age upon such subjects as the Greatest Birth of Time, the Male Birth of Time (*Partus Masculus Temporis*), and other recondite and allied matters, than from the active and shrewd money-getting *factotum*, "Shaxper, late of Stratford-on-Avon." Moreover, it is signed Shake-speare, with a decided hyphen. We are not surely to be classed with cranks if we suggest that there may be some mystification here. This is by no means the only place where this suspicious and uncalled-for hyphen appears. It is

as large as life on the title-page of SHAKES-SPEARE'S Sonnets in the original edition of 1609, and Ben Jonson is, I think, clearly aiming at this hyphen when he speaks of Cri-spinus or Cri-spinas in his *Poetaster*.

Finally, as far as Essex and Shakespeare are concerned, it is admitted that there is not a scintilla of evidence that they were ever known to each other, or even brought casually together on any occasion. On the other hand, Francis Bacon and his brother Anthony were for many years most devoted friends of Essex, and the correspondence between them by letter and in other ways is extant and well known.

We have next to deal with letters that passed between Bacon, Southampton, Pembroke, and Essex, and therefore will say nothing more of the letters of Essex at present.

CHAPTER X

THE PROOF FROM CONTEMPORARY LETTERS AND BOOKS

It is always a great advantage in a difficult controversy like the present one to get upon firm and undisputed ground. The disturbing thought has sometimes crossed my mind that perhaps, after all, this Bacon *v.* Shakespeare war was really only a *Skiamachia*, a contest in which, for the most part, only hazy and indefinite personalities were concerned. Especially in the Sonnets it has often seemed as if the chief personages could hardly ever be detected walking in the clear light of day upon the common earth, but seem always, more or less, creatures of hypothesis or of the historic imagination. For instance, what do we really know of Mr. W. H. except *per hypothesin?* May not the Sonnets be, as some have suggested, poetic conceits, Platonic idealisms after the Italian school then in fashion, or the mere vapourings of a "Pupil Pen" of some youthful genius in those Renaissance days when such poets were very plentiful? When, too, I saw biographies of Shakespeare which filled six or seven hundred pages of close type, and afterwards found out by careful search the very few personal memoranda these bulky "Lives of Shakespeare" were built up on, I began to think seriously that there must be more fiction and imagination in such productions than honest, sober fact.

These various considerations very nearly induced me to lay aside all thought of entering upon such a shadowy realm. But in the course of my reading I met with several letters which had passed between Bacon and Essex and Southampton, and also letters of Pembroke and Essex to Cecil. The originals had been preserved either at Hatfield House in Lord Salisbury's custody, or with the public records of our country in the State Paper

Office, or in the British Museum. Here I felt I was dealing not with the shadows, but with the very substance of history. Here at least I was on *terra firma*. Such records and such custodians were beyond suspicion. They provided me with useful and suggestive evidence for Bacon which I had not noticed elsewhere. So I regained fresh confidence; and in spite of the manner in which heretical opinions are generally received by critics, I will go on my way, unpromising as it is, for I think we are here dealing with one of the most interesting and amazing problems of literature.

The first letter that I bring forward shall be one from Pembroke, dated June 19, 1601, a few months after the Mary Fitton scandal. His short time of imprisonment in the Fleet for his serious offence—for such it was where a maid of honour was the victim—had been endured, and Pembroke was anxious to obtain permission to go abroad and put his troubles and disgrace behind him for a time, until the scandal had blown away. The Queen seems to have given him the required permission to go, and then revoked it. So he writes a letter to that important political personage Cecil, Lord Burghley's son, containing the following passage, curiously connected with our subject:

"I cannot forbeare telling of you that yet I endure a grievous Imprisonment, and so (though not in the world's misjudging opinion) yet in myself, I feel still the same or a wors punishment, for doe you account him a freeman that is restrained from coming where he most desires to be, and debar'd from enjoying that comfort in respect of which all other earthly joys seeme miseries, though we have a whole world els to walk in? In this vile case am I, whose miserable fortune it is, to be banished from the sight of her, in whose favor the ballance consisted of my misery or happines, and whose Incomparable beauty was the onely sonne of my little world, and alone had power to give it life and heate. Now judge you whether this be a bondage or no: for my owne part I protest I think my fortune as slavish as any man's that lives fettered in a galley. You have sayd you loved me, and I have often found it; but a greater testimony you can never show of it then to use your best means to ridd me out of

this hell, and then shall I account you the restorer of that which was farre dearer unto me than my life."

Now a comparison of the wording of this letter with several of the Shakespeare Sonnets brings to notice many unexpected analogies. If this resemblance stood alone, not much perhaps could be made of the likeness between Sonnet XXXIII., line 9,

"Even so my sun one early morn did shine,"

and "the onely sonne of my little world" in the letter. But the most remarkable analogy and correspondence is with Sonnets LVII. and LVIII. Mr. Tyler has worked this out carefully and at some length in his book (pp. 60, 61), and being a most orthodox believer in the traditional authorship of the Sonnets, ends thus: "These various resemblances are remarkable and striking, and as the letter was written from London, the possibility may suggest itself that, if it was written by the hand of Pembroke, *it was really composed by Shakespeare.*"

The words I have italicised seem very suggestive to me of something that clearly did not enter into Mr. Tyler's thoughts. I should say it was *not* Shakespeare that composed a feigned letter for his friend, for from all we hear and know he was about the last person to write a long letter, feigned or not, to any one; but I should say it was far more likely to be *composed by Bacon.* Why, he was the very man who delighted in this rather peculiar vein of literature. We have several examples of his handiwork admitted to be genuine by the best and most unimpeachable authority—Bacon's own statements and confession. And there are many more of this same semi-fictitious character, which, although never acknowledged by Bacon, have been accepted by Mr. Spedding as bearing so palpably the marks of Bacon's style, that these are given to him in that carefully edited work, Spedding's *Life and Letters of Francis Bacon.* Who so likely as Bacon to write a letter for his friend Pembroke, when he was so worried and so anxious, to put things in the best light

for Cecil and the Queen to read? Indeed, Bacon had done the same thing several times before on behalf of his friend Essex, and perhaps for Southampton too, and must have been quite an old hand at it. The choice of Cecil, Bacon's cousin, as the recipient of the letter seems also to point to Bacon. But enough has been gained if we have succeeded in placing ourselves on the firm ground of an undoubted letter of Pembroke still extant, and in finding an evident connection both of phraseology and thought with the Shakespeare Sonnets. And as we are told on very high authority that there was only the slightest intimacy between Pembroke and Shakespeare—just an official recognition, perhaps, and no evidence of anything further—we are led to look for a more likely man upon whom to father the inspired epistle to Cecil; and I think all who are unprejudiced will look (*oculis irretortis*) in one direction only, and find their quest.

Next let us come to the letters of Essex. Here again we are upon firm historic ground, and we shall find Bacon pointed out as the far more probable author of the Sonnets.

We will begin with the evidence of a strict Shakespearian, who was known to be intensely anti-Baconian. It can therefore be accepted with the greatest confidence as not being prejudiced evidence in Bacon's favour. Our authority is dealing with the "sugred sonnets" and the "private friends" who knew of them, and he considers that Essex was one of these private friends. Seeing that Bacon knew Essex so very intimately, of course I quite agree. He goes on thus:

"In the letters and verses of Essex will be found thoughts and expressions which almost prove his acquaintance with the Sonnets in MS. In a letter to the Queen, written from Croydon in the year 1595 or 1596, there occurs a likeness remarkable enough to suggest that Essex was a reader of the Sonnets as they were written. The Earl speaks, in absence from the Queen, when he is about to remount his horse for a gallop. He writes: 'The delights of this place cannot make me unmindful of one in whose sweet company I have joyed so much as the happiest man doth in his highest contentment, and *if my horse could run as fast*

as my thoughts do fly, I would as often make mine eyes rich in beholding the treasure of my love.' It is superfluous to point out the resemblance to the thought in two of the Sonnets."

I suppose Sonnets L. and LI. are meant. He then takes another letter:

"In Essex's letter of advice to the young Earl of Rutland, 1595, there are one or two touches that look like reminiscences of the early Sonnets. Shakespeare says to his young friend, Sonnet LIV., after speaking of his outward graces:

> 'Oh *how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,*
> *By that sweet ornament* that truth doth give,' &c.

Essex tells his young friend—'Some of these things may serve for ornaments, and all of them for delights, but *the greatest ornament is the inward beauty of the mind.*

"Again, in a letter to the Queen dated May 1600, Essex writes: 'Four whole days have I meditated, most dear and adored sovereign, on *these words* that there are two kinds of angels—the one good, the other evil; and that your Majesty wishes your servant to be accompanied by the good; which sounds very like an echo of the 144th Sonnet. Of course the Earl might have seen this Sonnet in *The Passionate Pilgrim* the year before, but I hold that his acquaintanceship was much closer than that; here is yet stronger proof.

"In Shakespeare's Sonnet XXXV., the speaker *excuses* the person addressed *because* '*all men make faults,*' and in a Sonnet written by the Earl of Essex 'in his trouble,' the speaker says '*All men's faults do teach her to suspect.*' . . . The thought and expression of Shakespeare must have been in the mind of Essex to have been so curiously turned."*

My comment on the above is this: whether the likenesses be strong or faint, they point to Bacon much more than to Shakespeare. Especially is this so in the case of the letter to the young Earl of Rutland in 1595. This letter is really one of a set of three addressed by Essex as advice to the young Earl of Rutland when going on his travels. Now, these are all shown clearly by Mr. Spedding to be full of Bacon's phrases and turns of thought, and to have been *written by Bacon for Essex;* and therefore Mr.

* Massey, *Sonnets*, 1st ed., p. 464.

Spedding actually includes them, in brackets, in his edition of Francis Bacon's *Letters and Life* (ii. pp. 6–20). So Bacon was making use of his own unpublished MS. of the Sonnets, which he had a perfect right to do, or else he had been favoured by Shakespeare with *his* copy and was plagiarising from it, a thing neither likely nor proper.

Spedding also mentions in the very next pages a letter of advice from Essex to Sir Fulke Greville. This too, he says, is "such a letter as Bacon would undoubtedly at this time have wished Essex to write and the Queen to know he had written." Moreover, it is "so very Baconian in matter and manner that I see no reason why every word of it (the opening and closing paragraphs excepted) might not have been written by Bacon himself in his own person." These and other feigned letters of Bacon, purporting to be between Essex, himself, and his brother Anthony, of which he admitted the authorship soon afterwards, show the great literary versatility of the man, his secret and deceiving ways, and, may I not add, *give further plausibility to his having written the dedications of the Poems signed William Shakespeare, as well as the Poems themselves and the Sonnets.* But our Shakespearian Massey having thus unwittingly brought evidence against his own theory, proceeds to further instances:

"There is a copy of verses in *England's Helicon* (1600), reprinted from John Dowland's '*First Book of Songs; or, Ayres of four parts, with a Tableture for the Lute.*' It is an address to 'Cynthia':

'My thoughts are winged with hopes, my hopes with love:
Mount love unto the Moon in clearest night!
And say as she doth in the heavens move,
In earth so wanes and waxeth my delight.
And whisper this—but softly—in her ears,
How oft Doubt hangs the head, and Trust sheds tears.

And you, my thoughts that seem mistrust to carry,
If for mistrust my Mistress you do blame;
Say, tho' you alter, yet, you do not vary,
As she doth change and yet remain the same.
Distrust doth enter hearts but not infect,
And love is sweetest seasoned with suspect.

If she for this with clouds do mask her eyes,
And make the heavens dark with her disdain ;
With *windy sighs* disperse them in the skies,
Or with *thy tears* derobe them into rain.
Thoughts, hopes, and love, return to me no more,
Till Cynthia shine as she hath shone before.'

"These verses have been ascribed to Shakespeare on the authority of a commonplace book, which is preserved in the Hamburgh City Library. In this the lines are subscribed W. S., and the copy is dated 1606. The little poem is quite worthy of Shakespeare's sonneteering pen and period. And the internal evidence is sufficient to stamp it as Shakespeare's, for the manner and the music, with their respective felicities, are altogether Shakespearian of the earlier time. . . . The line

'And love is sweetest seasoned with suspect,'

surely comes from the same mint as

'The ornament of beauty is suspect.'
—*Sonnet LXX.*

Also the line,

'And make the heavens dark with her disdain,'

is essentially Shakespearian ; one of those which occur at times, —such as this from Sonnet XVIII. :

'But thy eternal summer shall not fade.'

Then the 'windy sighs' and the *tears for rain* are just as recognisable as a bit of the Greek mythology. Here is one of the poet's pet trinkets of fancy ; with him sighs and tears, 'poor fancy's followers,' are sorrow's *wind* and *rain*—

'Storming her world with *sorrow's wind and rain.*'
—*A Lover's Lament.*

'The *winds thy sighs.*'
—*Romeo and Juliet*, iii. sc. 5.

'We cannot call her *winds* and *waters*, *sighs* and *tears.*'
—*Antony and Cleopatra.*

'Where are my *tears?* *Rain*, *rain*, to lay this *wind.*'
—*Troilus and Cressida.*

'Give not a windy night a rainy morrow.'
—*Sonnet XC.*

(*i.e.* give not a night of sighs a morning of tears.)

'The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears.'
—*Romeo and Juliet*, ii. sc. 3.

In these last the mental likeness is very striking. I have not the least doubt of the poem being Shakespeare's own, and my suggestion is that it was written for the Earl of Essex, at a time when the Queen, 'Cynthia,' was not shining on him with her favouring smile, and that Essex had it set to music by Dowland to be sung at Court."

Most likely Cynthia does refer to the Queen; it was a very frequent and popular name for her. I do not know whether anything further has been discovered about the authorship, since the above was written so long ago as 1866. The mere initials W. S. do not make a very strong peg to hang a Shakespearian theory upon, and perhaps W. S. is now identified thoroughly—if so, Shakespeare and Bacon are both alike impossible—I know nothing beyond the above statement of a Shakespearian expert. My comment again is, how much better Bacon fits in with all the circumstances. For we know that Bacon did compose a poem just when Essex was in danger of losing the Queen's favour, and that the object was "directly tending and alluding to draw on her Majesty's reconcilement to my Lord (of Essex)," which Bacon himself tells us he "showed to a great person and one of my Lord's nearest friends," doubtless Southampton, "who commended it." It was meant to reach the Queen, and no doubt in some roundabout way this was arranged, for I do not find it stated absolutely that Bacon showed it to the Queen. It would come best from Essex. Anyhow, there is a chance that we have here something by Bacon which experts pronounce to be genuine Shakespeare.

But the best proof that Francis Bacon was a poet, and a busy one too, when he was enjoying the friendship of Essex and Southampton in the days of his early manhood, is contained in a letter to Essex from Bacon at the end of 1594. Bacon admits the fact himself in an undoubtedly genuine letter preserved to us by his literary executor Rawley.* I hardly see what better, or more

* *Resuscitatio*; Supplement, p. 85.

direct, evidence we can have. I therefore reproduce it here *literatim :*

To my Lord of Essex.

My singular good Lord,

I may perceive by my Lord Keeper, that your Lordship, as the time served, signified unto him an intention to confer with his Lordship at better opportunity; which in regard of your several and weighty occasions I have thought good to put your Lordship in remembrance of; that now, at his coming to the Court, it may be executed: desiring your good Lordship nevertheless not to conceive out of this my diligence in soliciting this matter that I am either much in appetite or much in hope. For as for appetite, *the waters of Parnassus are not like the waters of the Spaw, that give a stomach; but rather they quench appetite and desires,*" *&c. &c.*

There is not much of the "concealed Poet" in this expression. He admits that he has been quenching his thirst from the waters of that Castalian fount which springs from the foot of Mount Parnassus—or in plainer English, he admits that he has been writing poetry, and assumes pretty clearly that Essex knows the fact. And seeing, moreover, that only a short time before Essex's great friend Southampton had received a dedication copy of *Venus and Adonis* with this motto prefixed:

"Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castaliâ plena ministret aquâ,"

where full draughts of the same Castalian waters of Parnassus are the author's beverage—I think we can shrewdly guess, and so no doubt could Essex, that both letter and Virgilian motto were in the fine Roman hand of Francis Bacon. Both Essex and Southampton must have known the Mystery of the Sonnets and Plays, and probably several other contemporaries, including Ben Jonson, also knew; but it was a subject on which reticence was the best policy for every one concerned. Nothing but peril and vexation could arise from stirring in such a matter, and no good object

could be gained by it. Even Ben Jonson's semi-concealed Aristophanic banter was threatened with the Star Chamber, so every one seemed to take the wise policy of a still tongue.

There are other letters also between Bacon and Essex found among Bacon's papers and published by Rawley, and it looks very much as if Bacon wrote both the letters and the answers; but we need not dwell on this subject. Bacon's "slimness" in such things is admitted.

Let us now pass to the third noble friend, Southampton, who was so closely allied in friendship with Bacon from his early days at Gray's Inn until the Essex treason case. Then the two friends stood on opposite sides—Bacon a prosecutor, Southampton a defendant pleading almost for his life. This was a terrible time for Bacon, and he became most depressed and pessimistic; there are signs of this evident enough both in the Sonnets and the Plays. Bacon became very unpopular for the part he took in the matter; ill reports were spread against him—*mendacia famæ* he calls them—and his life was threatened, as he tells the Queen. All this appears to be hinted at pretty plainly in those Sonnets where he speaks so gloomily of "*being the prey of worms, my body being dead*," and "*the coward conquest of a wretch's knife*" (LXXIV.), and in that deeply pessimistic Sonnet a little earlier (LXVI.). Many of the Plays, too, are attributed to a "Dark Period," but of course the Shakespearians are obliged to give this "Dark Period" to Shakespeare, who to all appearances never had one.

The result of the treason case was that Essex was beheaded, and Southampton imprisoned without apparent hope of release. But when the Queen died her successor, James VI. of Scotland, who had friendly feelings towards the party to which Southampton belonged, released him, and reinstated him in his old position and privileges. Bacon, with a view to conciliate his former friend, wrote him a letter (April 10, 1603) just before his release from prison, and referring to their altered position to each other of late, said: "This great change hath wrought

in me no other change towards your Lordship than this, that I may safely be now that which I was truly before." However, it does not appear that the former very close friendship was ever reached again. The Bacon-Southampton correspondence that has been preserved is much smaller than would have been expected. Perhaps Sonnets took the place of letters. The Shakespeare-Southampton correspondence is of course *nil*.

"Of Bacon's personal relations with the Earl of Southampton we know little or nothing. The intimate connection of both with the Earl of Essex must, no doubt, have brought them together; but no letters had passed between them that I know of, nor has any record been preserved of any other communication." * But it seems that Bacon used his private influence after the trial with the Queen, and was helped by Cecil, and the Earl was "saved" as far as his life went. In drawing up the "Declaration of Treasons" Bacon had mentioned Southampton's name as slightly as it was possible to do, evidently acting on the proverb "*The least said the soonest mended.*" I think Bacon often acted on this principle, and that herein we find a reasonable and sufficient explanation of several incidents in his life hard to understand otherwise. For instance, what can be the reason that he never utters a single syllable about Shakespeare or Ben Jonson—no letters seemed to have passed, their very names are unrecorded? I suggest the explanation just referred to—there were literary mysteries and dead secrets connected with Bacon and known to these two, and so a strict reticence was adhered to. If Bacon had in any way referred to either or both of these famous men, his remarks would have been most surely weighed and considered, and that was just what Bacon did not want. The same explanation suits the absence of all correspondence (save the one letter preserved by Bacon and quite innocuous) between Bacon and his intimate friend Southampton, to whom, as our theory goes, he addressed those intense Sonnets. They

* Spedding, *Letters and Life*, iii. 75.

were probably torn up and burnt so that no suspicions might arise—no scandal be revealed.

The play of *Richard II.* and its connection with the foolish attempt of Essex and his party would be one reason why Bacon should not mention Shakespeare or bring him into any relation with himself. In fact, the way Shakespeare is ignored throughout all the official proceedings connected with this supposed treasonable play points out, in my opinion, that he was known *not* to be the author, and in no way really responsible for the play which so greatly offended the Queen. What if the Queen got to know that Bacon was the real author, and that he had to turn "Queen's evidence," so to speak, against the rebellious noblemen Essex and Southampton, who were his dearest friends! Bacon's whole future depended on the course he might take. He was either an utterly ruined man, or else, by his compliance with the Queen's orders, there was a chance of still maintaining his position.

The Sonnets, and the scandal half revealed in them, were also causes which would tend to make open correspondence between Bacon and Southampton avoided by both as much as possible. It has often been a subject of great surprise that Bacon did not reveal the secret of authorship at least shortly before he died. No obvious objection has been adduced. The scandal seems a possible reason, Southampton and Pembroke and others connected with them being alive.

Ben Jonson knew the "secret" at an early date, and the evidence for that is given in the present volume. But it seems pretty clear that it was not long before Bacon and the "grand possessors" of the Shakespeare Plays induced that needy though vigorous and independent personality to come over to their side and help them to keep the secret.

Let us next, still keeping on the *terra firma* of undoubted and extant letters and books, hear what Francis Bacon says in them about his own literary powers and qualifications. In a short autobiographical passage in

the preface to the *Interpretation of Nature*, written about the year 1603, Bacon says :

"Whereas I believed myself born for the service of mankind, and reckoned the care of the common weal to be among those duties that are of public right, open to all alike, even as the waters and the air, I therefore asked myself what most could advantage mankind, and for the performance of what tasks I seemed to be shaped by nature.

"But when I searched, I found no work so meritorious as the discovery and development of the arts and inventions that tend to civilise the life of man . . . moreover, I found in my own nature a special adaptation for the contemplation of truth. For I had a mind at once versatile enough for that most important object—I mean the recognition of similitudes—and at the same time sufficiently steady and concentrated for the observation of subtle shades of difference . . . I had no hankering after novelty, no blind admiration for antiquity," &c. &c.

These extracts seem to point to just such a man as we should expect the author of the Shakespeare works to be—a man naturally supplied with the best tools for successfully carrying out the highest efforts of poetic and dramatic "invention." If Sir Henry Irving should retort that such mental tools are no use for the Drama unless one has practical knowledge and frequent practice in stage work and stage machinery, we have a good answer which, strange to say, was quite ignored, and I understand *denied*, by Sir Henry, viz., the fact that Francis Bacon was a man who especially had these practical requirements from the share and interest he took in masques and interludes, both at Gray's Inn and among his aristocratic friends and at court. So that Bacon's own account of his special capabilities goes some way to prove the Bacon theory not altogether unreasonable or impossible.

And in a letter to Lord Burghley in Jan. 1592 he explains what a wide and comprehensive range of mental action he was contemplating. "I have taken all knowledge to be my province." Surely then Poetry and the Drama—the glories of the human intellect in the best days of Greece and Rome—would not be excluded ; nor

Sonnets, the present glory of Italy and the rising fashion of the Elizabethan poets. This very letter, as it proceeds, reminds us of a Sonnet (No. II.) which would be composed about the same year (1591–2), and was addressed presumably to a young man of about twenty. He warns him how rapidly a man ages, and tells the youth that when he is just double his present age of twenty, all his youth and beauty will be practically gone, or of no value. The Sonnet begins :

> "When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
> And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
> Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
> Will be a tatter'd weed of small worth held."

But this is an unusual view to take, even for such irresponsible beings as poets are ; at forty many, or indeed most, men think themselves hardly past their prime.

But what says Bacon in this letter to his uncle of the same year 1591–2 ? "I wax now somewhat ancient ; one-and-thirty years is a great Deal of sand in the hour-glass." Is thirty-one in any degree ancient ? Surely not. But Bacon thought so. Do forty winters furrow the manly brow in such deep trenches that youth's proud livery is all departed ? Surely not so. But the writer of Sonnet II. thought so. The inference is not absolutely certain of course, but it looks pretty obvious that the writer of the letter was also the writer of the Sonnet.

Then there is the "Sonnet to Florio," which Florio himself describes as written by "a gentleman, a friend of mine that loved better to be a Poet than to be counted so." This Sonnet has been attributed to Shakespeare, on internal evidence, by two good critics, Professors Minto and Baynes ; but Bacon is much more likely than Shakespeare, for we know of no bashful reticence or concealment about Shakespeare and *his* poetry. The Johannes Factotum, the Shake-scene, the Poet-ape, was not likely to efface himself, or even to wish to do so, whereas Bacon says *he* was a "concealed poet." We will give this in full, for the book in which it occurs is so rare that no one except Minto seems to have quoted the

Sonnet, or to have said more than that it was very fine, and possibly Shakespeare's. It occurs just after the preface of Florio's *Second Frutes*, London, 1591–4, being the sole laudatory poem in the book, and by the date presumably earlier than *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. Professor Baynes says that "Mr. Minto's critical analysis and comparison of its thought and diction with Shakespeare's early work tends strongly to support the reality and value of the discovery." It is entitled:

PHAETHON TO HIS FRIEND FLORIO.

Sweete friend whose name agrees with thy increase,
How fit a rivall art thou of the Spring?
For when each branche hath left his flourishing
And green-lockt Sommers shadie pleasures cease:
She makes the Winter's stormes repose in peace,
And spends her franchise on each living thing:
The dazies sprout, the little birds doo sing,
Hearbes, gummes, and plants doo vaunt of their release,
So when that all our English Witts lay dead,
(Except the Laurell that is evergreene)
Thou with thy Frutes our barrenness o'respread,
And set thy flowrie pleasance to be seene.
Sutch frutes, sutch flowrets of moralitie,
Were nere before brought out of Italie.

—PHAETHON.

John Florio says in his dedication of *A Worlde of Wordes*, 1st edition, 1598, that he had lived some years in the "paie and patronage" of the Earl of Southampton. Referring to the Sonnet in the last book, *Second Frutes*, and some criticism that had been passed upon it, he says "to the reader":

"There is another sort of leering curs, that rather snarle than bite, whereof I could instance in one, who lighting upon a good sonnet of a gentleman, a friend of mine, that loved better to be a Poet than to be counted so, called the auctor a rymer, notwithstanding he had more skill in good Poetrie, than my slie gentleman seemed to have in good manners or humanitie. His name is H. S. Doe not take it for the Roman HS, for he is not of so much worth, unlesse it be as HS is twice as much and a halfe as halfe an As."

The British Museum has a copy of Florio (edition 1598) which once belonged to Dr. Farmer, who has written on the fly-leaf: "Perhaps *Henry Salesbury* is meant by *H. S.* in the preface. He published *Gram. Britan.*, 1593, dedicated to the Earl of Pembroke, Daniel's patron." And Florio calls H. S. a grammarian-pedante (in the preface).

The author of the Sonnet of 1591 might be Bacon or Samuel Daniel—both seem averse at that time to publishing their effusions—and both from their connection with the Pembroke and Southampton families would have every reason to know Florio well. Daniel seems the more likely, as he sent sonnets for Florio's later works. But there is this to be adduced in favour of Florio's allusion being to Bacon, that he uses words in this dedication of 1598 almost recalling the dedication of *Lucrece*. The words in *Lucrece* are: "What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have devoted yours." And Florio says: "In truth I acknowledge an entire debt, not only of my best knowledge but of all, yea of more than I know or can to your bounteous Lordship . . . to whom I owe and vow the years I have to live." *

A strong objection which occurred to me was that the Sonnet followed the Italian model as Sidney always did, and that Shakespeare never did follow this model. But as in 1591 no poet had yet deviated from the Italian model, the objection did not seem insuperable. So it comes to this, that we have recently found a very fine Sonnet written by Shakespeare at or before the certain date 1591, and addressed to John Florio in praise of a book containing dialogues and aphorisms in parallel columns of English and Italian to help those speaking the one language to acquire a knowledge of the other. But at this early date, 1591, Shakespeare was hardly free of Burbage's stable-yard, or at most had not got much

* Since I wrote the above I have read carefully Professor Minto's Appendix B. in his *Characteristics*, 1885, pp. 371–382, and I withdraw my suggestion that Daniel *may* have written the Sonnet. After going through Appendix B. there seems no room for Daniel or any one else except the author of the Shake-speare Plays and Poems. A more convincing piece of literary proof I have not read for a long time.

beyond "Hamlet revenge" in the Ghost part of the Ur-Hamlet. What had William Shakespeare, late of Stratford-on-Avon, to do with Italian dialogues and aphorisms? These elegant matters were of interest to a courtier and aristocrat, and were most useful to lard their conversation and epistles, to give the fashionable unction that bespoke the travelled gentlemen—they would interest Bacon. and no doubt he would transfer some to his note-books. Aphorisms especially were in his line, and Bacon would enjoy the friendship and the conversation of the learned and resolute teacher, John Florio, as being an old *protégé* and dependant of the Southampton family; but I doubt very much whether Shakespeare would have cared particularly for either the man or the book. And we must not forget that Florio told us plainly in 1598, that this friend of his who wrote the Sonnet was a *gentleman* "that loved better to be a Poet than to be counted one." This suits Bacon exactly, but does not suit Shakespeare at all. In 1591, I should say, there was not much of the "gentleman" about Shakespeare.

But this is not the only apparent connection in verse between Bacon and Florio. There are some lines attached to another and later work of Florio—I mean his translation of Montaigne's Essays in its second edition of 1613. This has been attributed to Shakespeare by good critics, but if my contention holds good, it will have to go to Bacon along with the other in Florio's *Second Frutes*. It is in the same Italian form of the Sonnet as is the earlier one of 1591, probably adopted in compliment to Florio. It is little known, and may therefore well be quoted here to accompany the other. It was unsigned, and indeed so cramped in at the foot of the page, that there was hardly room for any subscription by the author.

It was entitled:

CONCERNING THE HONOR OF BOOKES.

Since Honor from the Honorer proceeds,
How well do they deserve that memorie
And leave in bookes for all posterities
The names of worthyes, and their vertuous deedes

When all their glorie els, like water weedes
Without their element, presently dyes,
And all their greatnes quite forgotten lyes :
And when and how they florisht no man heedes
How poore remembrances are statutes toomes
And other monuments that men erect
To Princes, which remaine in closed roomes
Where but a few behold them ; in respect
Of Bookes, that to the Universall eye
Shew how they liv'd, the other where they lye.

The punctuation is peculiar, and the poem has apparently not been revised for the press. If it be Bacon's, the great interest he evidently took in Montaigne's Essays may be the cause of his contributing this solitary belated poem in 1613, his last attempt before the Psalms in 1624. Florio excuses, in a notice to the reader, the errata, which he confesses he had not properly attended to on account of his engagement at court which absorbed all his time. Again I enforce the argument that these hangers-on at court, and these foreigners attached to the households of noblemen, were much more likely to be acquainted with Bacon than with Shakespeare.

To take another instance. The Earl of Essex had in his service an Italian fencing-master named Vincentio Saviolo, who wrote a book, printed in London by John Wolfe in 1595, entitled, *Vincentio Saviolo his Practice. In two Bookes. The first intreating of the use of the Rapier and Dagger. The Second of Honor and honourable Quarrels.* It was dedicated to Robert, Earle of Essex, and Ewe, &c.

Now in the Shakespearian play of *As You Like It*, written some time before 1600, the scene of Orlando's encounter with Charles, the Duke's wrestler, and the description by Touchstone of the different kinds of Lies, Retorts, and Replies were clearly drawn from Saviolo's courtly book. But who was the most likely man to possess and read this Italian's expensive and well-illustrated book? Would it be Bacon or Shakespeare? Bacon was the intimate friend of Essex, quite at home with foreigners, be they Italians like Florio, or Spaniards like Perez, or Frenchmen like La Jessée. He was a

frequenter of courts from his boyhood, and took a natural interest in the etiquette and codes of honour and "nice conduct" of an "honourable Quarrel" which were necessary parts of a courtier's education. But what were such things to William Shakespeare? It was much more important for him to know how best to recover a debt, or invest his savings.

But there are also poems never attributed to Shakespeare which we can justly give to Francis Bacon in preference to any one else. There is *The Device of the Indian Prince*, referred to and examined at length at the end of vol. viii. of Spedding's *Bacon;* herein we find a canzonet describing the Queen of a land "between the Old World and the New." This poem recalls the Shakespearian Sonnets, and also the description of "the fair Vestal thronèd by the West," which most lovers of poetry know well enough where to look for. But as *The Device of the Indian Prince* is not on many book-shelves, the poem shall be judged as a whole. Here it is:

"Seated between the Old World and the New,
A land there is no other land may touch,
Where reigns a Queen in peace and honour true;
Stories or fables do describe no such.
Never did Atlas such a burden bear,
As she, in holding up the world oppress;
Supplying with her virtue everywhere
Weakness of friends, errors of servants best.
No nation breeds a warmer blood for war,
And yet she calms them by her Majesty:
No age hath ever wits refined so far
And yet she calms them by her policy:
To her thy son must make his sacrifice
If he will have the morning of his eyes."

The son referred to in the last two lines was the Indian Prince, who was born blind, and the verses (in sonnet form) are the words of the oracle declaring how his cure was to be effected. This same blind Indian Prince is supposed by some Baconians to appear in the centre of those remarkable typographical head-pieces which appeared at the top of the first page of many

of the Shakespeare books in their original form, as the Sonnets, the first folio, and others, and also in some anonymous works, now known to be by Bacon, such as *An Apologie of the Earle of Essex* (London, 1603–4).

This is a curious subject for inquiry, and stands on a different basis from Mrs. Gallup and her fellow-cipherers, but in this present volume I do not propose to discuss it. The speech of "Seeing Love," a prince of greater territories than all the Indies, attired with feathers and armed with bow and arrows, is well worth referring to in Spedding's *Bacon*, viii. p. 389. It seems to me to be a covert Baconian attempt to gain the Queen—but it is accredited to Essex by all the extant evidence. If really by Essex, I agree with Spedding that it is impossible to distinguish Essex from Bacon in style.

There is one more poem absolutely attributed to Bacon even by contemporary authority, I mean the "Farnaby" poem, *The world's a bubble*, which is a paraphrase of a Greek original, and has been already referred to when discussing the scholarship of the Shakespeare Works. No one but Bacon has been claimed as the author of this, and no one has ever said it might be Shakespeare's. In the first verse we have this excellent distich :

> "Who then to frail mortality shall trust
> But limmes the water, or but writes in dust."

Keats's well-known epitaph was :

> "Here lies one whose name was writ in water,"

and I suppose most of us would refer the fine thought to Shakespeare alone :

> "Noble Madam,
> Men's evil manners live in brass ; their virtues
> We write in water."

But we see that the idea appears in Bacon's supposed contribution as above, and also in Bacon's acknowledged writings in the following form :

> "High treason is not written in ice, that when the body relenteth, the impression goeth away."—*Charge of Owen* (1615).

And again this "re-appears" (*pace* Mr. Massey) in Shakespeare as:

> "This weak impress of love is as a figure
> *Trench'd in ice*, which with an hour's heat
> Dissolves to water, and doth lose his form."
> —*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iii. 2.

Such varied and intricate identities of thought tend undoubtedly to show that Bacon and Shakespeare at least were of one mind as to this poetical fancy. So there are five Poems quite outside the ordinarily accepted Shakespeare Poems and Sonnets, viz., the "Essex," the "two Florio's," the "Indian Prince," and the "Farnaby," which have every appearance of being the "concealed work" of Bacon. So that it appears neither impossible nor "irrational" that the Shakespeare Sonnets may be his concealed work also.

Let us now approach these perplexing enigmas.

CHAPTER X

THE SONNETS

"A sonnet is a moment's monument,
Memorial from the soul's eternity. . . .
A sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The soul—its converse to what power 'tis due."

—D. G. ROSSETTI.

AT the very beginning there naturally rises the general question, "Do you take the autobiographical view or the impersonal one?"

The first, decidedly, is my answer. Nearly fifty years ago a famous Professor of English Literature, who is still (1902) alive and of most active intellect, put the autobiographical view very plainly, and if anything it is clearer now than it was then. He says:

"Criticism seems now to have pretty conclusively determined that the Sonnets of Shakespeare are, and can possibly be, nothing else than a poetical record of his own feelings and experience—a connected series of entries, as it were, in his own diary—during a certain period of his London life. . . Whoever does not to some extent hold this view, knows nothing about the subject. . . These Sonnets are autobiographic—distinctly, intensely, painfully autobiographic—although in a style and after a fashion of autobiography so peculiar, that we can only cite Dante in his *Vita Nuova* and Tennyson in his *In Memoriam* as having furnished precisely similar examples of it." *

In the Shakespeare Plays we never can be quite sure whether the author is alluding to himself or his friends, or not; but in the Sonnets we feel we are dealing with the author in person. Hence their especial value.

The other view is the Impersonal view, or, as it has

* D. Masson, *Shakespeare and Goethe* (*Essays*), 1856–58, pp. 22–24.

been called, the German-subjective-transcendental-symbolic view. This view excludes autobiography or any personal allusion whatever. There are no half-measures here. One critic says: "*After a careful reperusal I have come to the conclusion there is not a single Sonnet which is addressed to any individual at all.*" This same gentleman holds that the "Two Loves" of Sonnet CXLIV. are "the Celibate Church on the one hand, and the Reformed Church on the other," and much more in a similar strain. This dogmatic nonsense so enrages a rival critic of the Personal school, and so amuses him at the same time, that he says of such stuff: "It is good enough surely, if boundless folly can reach so far, to tickle Shakespeare in eternity, and make him feel a carnal gush of the old human jollity."

The latest important work on the Sonnets takes a wise middle course, and is not blind either to the transcendental beauties or to the autobiographical facts. This is Mr. Wyndham's edition of the *Poems of Shakespeare* (1898). In his general introduction he most lovingly and lucidly examines the beauties of the various Sonnet sequences, and has laid more open to general view their many transcendental and introspective musings. He evidently estimates some of the Sonnets as the richest ore that has ever been drawn forth from the difficult mines of metaphysical meditation, and it seems as if his estimation could hardly be put aside by any rival sonnets, ancient or modern. My greatest surprise is that he marries these wonderful conceptions to the man William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon without the slightest whisper of any forbidding of the banns.

The Sonnets seem to be conceived in a lofty tone and written in an aristocratic atmosphere, and the same holds with the Love Poems.

I hold firmly that all the earlier Sonnets have to do with the Earl of Southampton, and that Mr. Tyler's famous exposition of the Sonnets one by one, in which he advocated the Pembroke theory throughout, though most ingenious and, as I know, convincing to many able

Shakespearians, cannot possibly stand against the adverse evidence. He has depended too much on the Mr. W. H. of the Dedication—a very unsafe prop or foundation. It is highly improbable that Thorpe, when he wrote the Dedication, had any real knowledge of the true author. If he had known that the author had written them to or for William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, he certainly would not have put down in the very front of his venture, "Mr. W. H."

Initials, too, are very unsafe foundations whereon to build—*e.g.* Daniel's *Delia* was in its first edition dedicated to M. P. The following editions were dedicated to the Countess of Pembroke, Mary Pembroke. How natural to insist that therefore M. P. stood for Mary Pembroke, but it seems that it stood for a friend of Daniel's named Pine.

Perhaps this is the proper place for giving more fully my own view of the famous Dedication of the Sonnets, and Mr. W. H., "the onlie begetter." Some years ago I was reading the "Isham reprints," as they are called, a modern reproduction of certain unique books discovered by Mr. Charles Edmonds in a lumber room at Lamport Hall in 1867. One of them, a work by Rob. Southwell, S.J., contained a dedication to a certain Mathew Saunders, Esq., couched in the following terms: "W. H. wisheth with long life a prosperous achievement of his good desires," and speaking of the MS. from which the work was printed W. H. says: "Long have they lien hidden in obscuritie, and happily (haply ?) had never seen the light, had not a meere accident conveyed them to my hands." I thought of Mr. W. H. of the Sonnets at once, and going into the matter further I found that Southwell's poem was procured by William Hall and printed for William Hall by G. Eld, who also printed Shakespeare's Sonnets and other publications for Thorpe. It also then struck me that Hall's name was written in full in front of Shakespeare's Sonnets, although I had never noticed it before—

"To the onlie begetter of these insuing Sonnets,
MR. W. H. ALL HAPPINESSE," &c.

The next thing was to look up Thomas Thorpe's other dedications and examine their style. I found he was facetious and colloquial when addressing friends or equals, but most obsequious when addressing superiors and noblemen, such as Lord Pembroke, the William Herbert (as is supposed) of the Sonnets.

Thorpe wrote a dedication for Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, 1600 (ed. Blount), a facetious piece of bombast, in which he makes a pun on Blount's name (blunt) and calls him "Ned." He also wrote dedications to Healey's *Epictetus* in the editions of 1610, 1616, and 1636 (*penes me*), one to John Florio (1610), and the others to Lord Pembroke. I seemed to detect in all a somewhat affected vein of writing, and my interpretation of the famous dedication of the Sonnets was that Thorpe wrote it with punning humour to Mr. W. H.ALL, who had "procured" the MS.; and since the first Sonnets were all about "begetting" a child to make the father's name endure, so he in his humorous vein calls Mr. Hall the "onlie begetter," and wishes him "happinesse," and that he too would become a father and thus enjoy "that eternitie promised" to fathers by our ever-living poet. And when Thorpe says "ever-living poet," it looks like a sly hit at the immense importance the poet gave to his own "eternal lines":

> "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
> So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."
> —*Sonnet XVIII.*

Here was an "ever-living poet" indeed.

Mr. Hazlitt in his last work on *Shakespear* gives great credit to Thorpe for bestowing such an appropriate epithet as "ever-living" on Shakespeare, and in thus anticipating the verdict of later men; but it does not seem that Thorpe was delivering an early verdict on the immortality of Shakespeare either as a dramatist or as a poet. I admit that Thorpe as a keen man of business was quite aware of the literary value of the Shake-speare MSS. if they could be obtained, and I have thought for a long time that in that singular preface to the *Troilus and*

Cressida of 1609 we have possibly the bombastic and affected handiwork of T. T., and Mr. Hazlitt, I see, "*affirms*" it; by which he means, I hope, that he *will not swear* that T. T. is the author. Therein Thorpe (if it be he) undoubtedly predicts the future value of the Plays in the hands of the "grand possessors," but Thorpe was more likely to mean a commercial value than a literary one, and his remarks there do not seem to invalidate my suggestion as to the interpretation of the "onlie begetter." Indeed, Mr. W. H. appears to have been a "lion's provider" or literary jackal to Thorpe, who would be just as likely as not to call him in one of his facetious moods, "my Jack 'all." But enough about this enigmatical W. H.—he has been long enough a bone of contention between the Herbertites and Southamptonites. He has to descend somewhat in the social scale, as it seems; but I believe he knew Marlowe, Blount, Florio, and Chapman, and had good chances for MS. finds.

Whether William Hall was a bachelor, or a childless widower, or a man with a large family I have no means of knowing. I only tentatively suggest that Thorpe wishes him "happinesse" as the "onlie" man fortunate enough to be the "begetter" of such a precious literary bantling as the MS. of the Sonnets, a child promising an "eternitie" of fame, according to the rosy view of "our ever-living poet," as he confidently calls himself.

I do not gather that either the author of the Sonnets or Thorpe thought definitely that the Sonnets would be immortal; it was rather the Poems that were to be thus highly favoured. As for the Sonnets, they were anonymous adjuncts not intended for the public eye; they were ambassadors coming privately to announce or accompany a Mighty Power able to immortalise the beloved one—a Power of Verse and a Monument of Glory that, like the Pyramids, should stand on such firm and broad bases (Sonnet CXXV.) as to be indestructible by the fiercest assaults of Time or Fortune. The Poems were published in 1593 and 1594, and appear to have had the author's

revision; the ambassadors accompanying them were withheld from vulgar gaze, and although two of the suite were captured by unfair means and exhibited in 1599, the others kept the strictest incognito for another ten years, and then Thomas Thorpe and some others of his tribe (perhaps Edward Blount was one) brought them out from their hiding-place without so much as saying "by your leave," as far as we know. It is these ambassadors, and their mission and message, that must now take our attention.

In dealing with the Sonnets, I shall try to read Bacon into them wherever he seems to have a proper claim to be there, and shall give some general views as to dates and sequences. But I shall not attempt to take them one by one and explain them in accordance with my preconceived theory: they are far too obscure and difficult for such a treatment to be anything but a failure. Mr. Tyler tried this plan with a skill and perseverance that few could equal, but the result gained was not worth the labour. There are certain enigmas in the Sonnets, especially the Rival Poet or Poets, and the "Dark Lady," or the "woman coloured ill," which I think no one can pronounce to be solved, or ever solvable with our present imperfect knowledge and data.

Here I simply give my preference, but by no means my conviction. I sometimes think the "Dark Lady" may have existed for Francis Bacon when Mary Fitton was a mere unformed girl at school. Gregor Sarrazin, a very capable German critic, places the "Dark Lady" episode chronologically as beginning about 1592, and he sees clear signs of the episode in the plays of *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and in *Romeo and Juliet*, all very early plays. Thus he holds that Mary Fitton, the maid of honour, born 24th June 1578, and therefore in 1592 a girl of only fourteen, could not be the lady of the Sonnets or early Plays, could not have been the original of Rosaline or of the other graceful and quick-witted damsels who so often appeared in doublet and hose. Certainly there may have been an earlier

flame who was the original of the many early allusions and reminscences in the plays mentioned above, which are supposed now to date much about the years 1591–1593. This would make the author a younger man than was previously supposed, and would carry us back almost to the time when Shakespeare had not been very long in London, and had not yet become acquainted with Southampton. Thus the Shakespearian authorship would be rendered more unlikely than ever, for how could Shakespeare at that time have had any intrigue or even acquaintance with a lady of the type of the early Plays and Sonnets? For these types of delicate and aristocratic womanhood cannot possibly have had plebeian models. He might have known a Doll Tearsheet or a merry wife of a London citizen, but a Rosaline, a Beatrice, or a Juliet—never!

But Bacon had the *entrée* into the best society—into Court society—among his cousins who were maids of honour, from his boyhood upwards. Was not he the Queen's "my young Lord Keeper"?

However, there is this to be considered as against Sarrazin's shrewd objection to Mistress Fitton. These early plays were being continually altered (*more Baconico*), and the "Dark Lady" types may have been later additions to the plays, suggested by Mistress Fitton's remarkable personality. The originals, unrevised, and produced before Mistress Fitton came to Court in 1595, may have been quite devoid of such allusions. But when, as was the case with *Love's Labour's Lost*, the play was revised for performance in 1597 before the Court, then the episode would be appropriately newly introduced, and Bacon and his friends, who were acquainted with what had been going on, would enjoy the allusions immensely, and all the more for the lady herself being present in the court circle. This play was the first of the Shakespeare Plays that was not anonymous. It was given to William Shakespeare. It was beginning to be necessary to name some author, so as to prevent curious inquiry.

As to the Dark Lady, Mrs. Charlotte Carmichael Stopes says :

"It is much more likely she was the educated wife of some wealthy city burgess, an acquaintance of Shakespeare's, to whose home, business, or friendship took him, and in whose parlour Shakespeare envied the virginal jacks for kissing 'the tender inwards of her hands.' Such a one, for instance, as Jacquinetta Vautrollier, the wife of Richard Field the printer, a Frenchwoman, therefore probably dark and fascinating, who dwelt in Blackfriars near the theatre. To such a home it would be quite natural that Shakespeare might take his friend, and that the friend should charm the hostess, and displace the poet in her attentions. Field was a Stratford man and a friend of the poet. He printed Shakespeare's first poem, but transferred it soon, never printed another, and signed the 1596 petition against the existence of the Blackfriars Theatre." *

Mrs. Stopes has also, as she thinks, discovered Mr. W. H. He was really the Sir William Harvey who married Southampton's mother in May 1598. She died in 1607, and left the best part of her stuff to her son, but the greater part to her husband, Sir William Harvey. Mrs. Stopes thinks a copy of the Sonnets was included in her household stuff, and that Sir W. H. read them and thought them worthy of being printed, and took them to Thorpe, who, seeing a W. H. on them, thought they had been addressed to Sir William Harvey himself. As to the W. H. on them, it stood most likely for *William* and *Henry*, and was inscribed in a true lover's knot. To lead Thorpe into error, and critics into confusion worse confounded, it was only necessary that some one of the initials W. H. should have become owner of the MS. And this happened in the case of Sir William Harvey.

I am afraid I cannot follow Mrs. Stopes in her high imaginative flights, and the William and Henry initials in a true lover's knot savour more of the transpontine drama and melodramatic sentiment of the Victorian age than the Elizabethan.

* *Athenæum*, March 26, 1898.

I think, however, after all, that we may safely say that we are considerably nearer to the personality of the so-called "Dark Lady" than we were twenty years ago or more, when that excellent critic Professor Dowden said, "We shall never discover the name of that woman who for a season could sound, as no one else, the instrument in Shakespeare's heart, from the lowest note to the top of the compass. To the eyes of no diver among the wrecks of time will that curious talisman gleam."

Some believe confidently that we have recently found out the name of the lady who is the "Fit one" for *all* the circumstances. I cannot go quite so far as that. But I do think we are on the right track with regard to the lady who was so much in our poet's thoughts between 1597 and 1601, or perhaps even a little earlier. Mary Fitton came to Court as we know in 1595, being then "sweet seventeen," and there would be plenty of time for Francis Bacon—a former gallant of the Inns of Court, a relative of some of the maids of honour, and one possessing by birth and his circle of noble friends an *entrée* to the highest society—to form an acquaintance with a lively, musical, masque-loving, forward girl as we have every reason to believe Mary Fitton was. She would doubtless be present, and Bacon too, when *Love's Labour's Lost* was performed before the Queen at the usual Christmas court festivities in 1597. If these two were among the audience, they were also, on that occasion, on the stage as well, thinly disguised, to those who knew, as Biron and Rosaline.

The play had been revised and enlarged especially for this great court function, and some of Biron-Bacon's finest love-speeches and descriptions had been added for the occasion. These additions in the author's later and improved manner have been acknowledged by critics, who have also said that in Biron were to be caught the true accents of the author himself—Shakespeare as they all thought. But no further explanation could they give, and one of the best of them could only say, referring to the splendid speech on Love by Biron in the fourth act,

"We must take Biron-Shakespeare at his word, and believe that in these vivid and tender emotions he found, during his early years in London, the stimulus which taught him to open his lips in song." *

This critic and most of the other authorities take the original *Love's Labour's Lost* to be one of the very earliest of the Plays, and date it 1589 from certain internal evidence of a very strong character. I think this may be taken as almost an ascertained fact, and is of itself as good a Baconian argument as any I know of. For that Shakespeare should begin with such a play and such a subject, dealing, I mean, as it does with aristocratic court life in France, and in that part of the kingdom where Bacon had been, seems out of all probability. The first *Love's Labour's Lost* of 1589 could have nothing to do with Mary Fitton, who would then be an unformed girl of about eleven. She, clearly, could come into the play only when, after some years, it was revised, augmented, and played before the Queen and the court ladies in 1597–8 at the Christmas festivities.

But there might have been a different and original "Dark Lady" in the 1589 play and in the other early plays written before 1595, when first we hear of Mary Fitton at Court. Some of the German critics have thought that there was such a lady, and that Shakespeare's Aspasia was not an Englishwoman but an Italian, who was not beautiful, but well-educated and very musical, and that she left a deep impression on the poet, which he revived in his Cleopatra and Cressida. One German, Gregor Sarrazin, holds it not impossible (*nicht für unmöglich*) that Shakespeare met her in Venice when on his travels, and that the whole story was enacted in Italy and not in London. At first sight this must seem utterly absurd to the ordinary Shakespeare reader; but it is not so absurd to such Shakespeare students as are acquainted with the marvellous general and *local* knowledge of Italy displayed in the Plays. The author must have been on the spot, we are inclined to say, again and again when

* G. Brandes, *William Shakespeare*, i. 56.

he criticises so excellently the artistic work of Giulio Romano, and seems almost to have read his epitaph—when he speaks of the "traject," the common ferry which trades to Venice (Italian *tragitto*, Venetian *traghetto*), which appeared in all the Quartos and Folios as "tranect" and nonplussed the commentators for a long time. At length it was found out what the author meant and how correct he was, and what a local colour he could give. Surely the author must have visited these scenes in person, otherwise how could he have been so accurate? Thus many Shakespearians say that their great Idol *did* visit Italy, and they give him from the autumn of 1592 to the summer of 1593 for the tour. He was then free, they say, for all the theatres were closed on account of the plague.

It is not at all likely that Shakespeare would visit Italy alone, although poor students and others often made their way there on foot. If Shakespeare went at all he would go with his fellow-actors, so as to make a little money to pay expenses. That is possible, for to the Englishmen of that day Italy was the goal of their longing as travellers. It was a land where was the joy of life. Venice attracted the average man more even than Paris. Shakespeare may have gone to Venice and met a dark lady there; but we have not a scrap of direct evidence about it. If Shakespeare did not go during the plague year, he could hardly have gone at any other time.

Now with Bacon all is very different, and his opportunities much greater for visiting and knowing about Italy. Between 1579 and 1584 Bacon might have gone to Italy again and again for anything we know to the contrary. In that period we hardly know anything about his doings. He was presumably studying law at Gray's Inn, but lawyers have holidays and go abroad as well as other people. George Brandes says Bacon is "known to have visited Italy." * I cannot corroborate this, but I think it is likely to be correct. But even supposing Bacon never found time to visit Italy, there was his brother Anthony,

* Brandes, *William Shakespeare*, i. 135.

and many intimate friends, who knew Italy as well almost as they knew their own country. From these Bacon could get any knowledge of local matters that he might require. But the subject need not be pursued further; enough has been said, I hope, to show that Bacon was a much more likely personage for "Dark Ladies," whether maids of honour or "Italian black-eyed devils," than was that "young man from the country" who left his twins behind him. Bacon was much more likely to know about Italy and its beautiful language than was the Warwickshire lad who was mainly master of his own *patois* only.

The first thirteen Sonnets, or indeed the first seventeen, form the most certain and easy sequence of the whole collection. They were written, as everything seems to show, about the year 1591 and 1592, and the author had been evidently reading the *Arcadia* of Sidney, which was published in 1590, and had extracted much of the matter of the first thirteen Sonnets from that work. It looks as if the author had been asked to try his "pupil pen" in turning Sidney's prose into sonnets, so many and close are the parallels.* Sir Walter Scott thought that Sidney must have read the Sonnets, but from what we know of Bacon the reverse is much more likely. Bacon read the *Arcadia*, just as in after years he read Holinshed, and then turned it into magnificent poetry. Bacon's great natural gift, early and late, was that of adorning and glorifying as if by a magical alchemy the prose of other people. Whatever expressions other people might use, in whatever way they might present a tale or history, Bacon was able either to exalt or embellish.

Besides, who more likely to read, and be interested in, the *Arcadia* than Bacon? We should not expect the burgesses of Stratford, or their family either, to rave about the beauties of that elegant composition. The question of fines for not removing the dirt from their doorways was a much more burning question with some of them. But Bacon was a courtier and an elegant gentleman, to whom

* *Cf.* Massey's *Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, priv. edit. 1888. pp. 73, &c.

such a work would appeal. After he had written the first thirteen Sonnets, it is probable that Sidney's next work, the sonnets in *Astrophel and Stella*, fell into Bacon's hand in 1591 or thereabouts (published in 1591), for *after* Sonnet XIII., *but not before*, we find clear traces of likeness to and borrowing from this later work of Sidney.

As to the subject of these first seventeen Sonnets, called "Procreation Sonnets," we have the best of evidence. For there was a scheme in hand as early as 1590 to induce the young Earl of Southampton to marry. He was Burghley's ward, and it was the interest of that astute politician to capture the young nobleman and his political influence for his own family faction. He therefore desired a marriage between the rising youth and his own granddaughter. Bacon belonged to Burghley's faction, and it would further his worldly prospects very much if he could show that he had done *his* share in bringing the young Earl up to the marriage mark. So he opened fire on his young acquaintance, who had not long joined his own Society of Gray's Inn, and delivered thirteen similar shots in succession and eventually reached seventeen. But though skilfully aimed they failed to effect their purpose.

By a singular coincidence there was, nearly eight years afterwards (1598), another rising young nobleman whom his friends were persuading to marry at a similarly early age, and what is still more strange, to another granddaughter of the same Lord Burghley. This was William Herbert, at that time known as "young Lord Harbert," his father being alive. *This* was the youth, say the Herbertites, to whom the Procreation Sonnets were addressed in 1598. This was the Mr. W. H. of the dedication—and no other youth will suit. "Why," say they in derision, "in 1598 the Earl of Southampton was a man of twenty-five with a full beard: how could Shakespeare possibly call him his 'cherub' and his 'darling boy'?" But these Herbertites have gone wrong in their dates, and 1598 is an impossible date for many of the Sonnets. There are such clear parallels and allusions to *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, and to the sending of this poem to

Southampton in 1593–4, and to the early plays, in many of these Sonnets, and in the Procreation Sonnets too, that such ones cannot have been written later than 1594 as an extreme limit. But they say Herbert first came into residence in town in 1598, and that there was the early marriage episode with Burghley's grand-daughter, and then was Shakespeare's first acquaintance with him. Chronology upsets this altogether. I helped the Herbertites by three years, without intending it, when I discovered the new fact that young Herbert was three months or more in London towards the end of the year 1595, and that his relations were even then trying to marry him (*really* a cherub and darling boy of about fifteen) into the Carew family. But these three years, and these strangely similar circumstances, are not much good to the Herbertites. They want eight years at least, and the dates must be carried back before *Lucrece*, and even 1595 is no use in such circumstances.

However, the Shakespearians must fight their own battles, and meet their own difficulties.

I suggest, to return to my present object, that there is not much "difficulty" in our believing that Francis Bacon, of Gray's Inn, wrote the Procreation Sonnets I.–XVII. to his young acquaintance the Earl of Southampton about the years 1591–2, after a close study of Sir Philip Sidney's recently published and fashionable works.

I also have a strong impression that it was Daniel's *Delia* which supplied Bacon with a model for the form of verse, which is English and not the ordinary Italian form. This was a new departure, dating about 1592, or earlier if Daniel's sonnets had been seen by Bacon in MS. But the date would not be *before* 1591, for the Sonnet to Florio is of that year, and is in the ordinary Italian style then in vogue.

Sonnets XVIII.–XXVI. form another pretty plain sequence. Some were sent to Southampton with *Lucrece* or perhaps a little earlier, so the date would be about 1594. Some might have been sent with *Venus and Adonis* (1593). The last four lines of Sonnet XVIII. were more likely, I

think, to accompany *Venus and Adonis;* for, besides Southampton's name being immortalised and rescued from Death in the dedication, he himself was figured in the young Adonis :

> "Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
> When in eternal lines to time thou growest ;
> So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
> So long lives *this*, and *this* gives life to thee."

The words I have put in italics could hardly refer to the Sonnet itself, which was of a private nature and only meant for a small circle of friends. Bacon was doubtless as proud of the "first heire" of his invention in poetry, as he was of his first heir in philosophy, *The greatest Birth of Time.*

A likely date for many of the Sonnets is midsummer or autumn 1593, when the theatres and law-courts were closed for the plague, and Bacon was lying somewhat of an invalid at Twickenham, and able to do little else but compose verses. It has been remarked that there is a decidedly autumnal tint about many of these Sonnets, and for some reason in Sonnet CIV. the word *Autumne* is put in italics in the original edition, being the only one of the four seasons mentioned in the Sonnet which receives that destinction.

The succeeding autumn of 1594 would also be very suitable for some of the Sonnets, for we hear : "Mr. F. Bacon was now at Twickenham Lodge, where he had been some time alone." He writes on 16th Oct. 1594 : "One day draweth on another, and I am well pleased in my being here ; for methinks solitariness collecteth the mind, as shutting the eyes does the sight." And a little later, viz. on 25th Jan. 1594–5, Bacon at Twickenham writes to his brother Anthony : "I have here an idle pen or two. . . . I pray send me somewhat else for them to write out," &c.* These were his scriveners, who had, we fancy, a good deal of work to do, now and then, on the Shakespeare Plays and Poems.

Bacon, too, was about this time getting worried and

* Birch, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, i. 189, 198, &c.

depressed because neither his chief hope Essex, nor his friend the Vice-Chamberlain—who, by the way, was Sir Thomas Heneage, who had just become Southampton's father-in-law—seemed to be able to induce the Queen to give him promotion. All this would affect Bacon and his literary work about this time. But there was no autumnal decay about Shakespeare's present prospects; he was flourishing like a green bay tree, and putting by money every year.

Sonnets XXVII. and XXVIII., the next two, from their striking parallelism to *Lucrece* and *Romeo and Juliet*, fall about the same period—perhaps the same autumn. The author had paid a visit to his friend, and had come back tired and worn-out, not being, just then, very strong, if my contention be correct, and the journey might well be from Twickenham to London, or wherever Southampton happened to be. The Sonnets of this early period show a very melancholy feeling in the author; the thought that the Beauty of Nature and all the fair "shows" of the world are but passing shadows, and that Time, the great and cruel tyrant, wipes them all away. From the sequence XVIII.–XXVI. I will extract, for the sake of a few annotations,

SONNET XXIII.

As an unperfect actor on the stage
Who with his feare is put beside his part,
Or some fierce thing repleat with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his owne heart;
So I for feare of trust forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine owne love's strength seeme to decay,
O'ercharged with burthen of mine owne love's might:
O let my books be then the eloquence,
And dumb presagers of my speaking brest,
Who pleade for love and look for recompence,
More then that tonge that more hath more exprest.
O learne to read what silent love hath writ,
To heare with eies belongs to love's fine wiht (*sic*).

The meaning seems to be that the author is too much overcome by nervous hesitancy to do himself justice in

declaring his love for his friend. He cannot trust himself to say all that is in his breast (line 5), and in his dedication, which is one of the ceremonial parts of love's rite (line 6) he fears to make it complete and "perfect" by his own true name at the foot. Personally his feelings are so strong that they overcome him to weaken the expression of the love he really has (lines 7, 8). He begs that his books, his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, may be eloquent for him in their way; they are *dumb*, and therefore when they interpret the feelings of his speaking breast, there will be no tremor of the voice or choked utterance (lines 9–12). My love, he says, thus expressed by my "dumb presagers," is of course a *silent* love, and your ears cannot catch its quality, but you have eyes to read, and eyes often play the finer part in Love's domain (lines 13, 14).

May it not also be that the poet describes his love as *silent*, because he speaks not of or from himself, and therefore is personally *silent?* Another man, the man William Shake-speare, speaks in person and signs the books.

Bacon seems to suit this Sonnet much better than any one else, and I think the same may be said even more strongly of Sonnet XXVI., which is the concluding Sonnet and *l'envoi* of the sequence. This is the Sonnet which has such a striking resemblance to the written dedication of *Lucrece*, and where in the very last line he speaks of *showing his head*, and indeed it comes to *showing his tail* too, as I have previously endeavoured to place before my readers. I will quote the last six lines because I have a commentary of my own:

> "Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
> Points on me graciously with fair aspéct,
> And puts apparel on my tattered loving,
> To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:
> Till then I dare to boast how I do love thee,
> Till then not show my head where thou may'st prove me."

I think the poet refers to his auspicious star the Earl of Essex, by whose guiding influence he hoped to "move

up" considerably in the political world. As for the "apparel" to be put on his tattered position it would be robes of high office—high legal office—which he hoped the persistent efforts of his patron and friend would enable him soon to assume. These would hide the tattered poverty of the portionless younger son and the struggling lawyer, and would make him worthy of his loved one's respect. And *then*, when that position was gained, the poet might "dare to boast" of his hitherto concealed friendship and love, and "show his head"—his monogram in *Lucrece*—to prove his identity, $\mathrm{F}^{\mathrm{R}}_{\mathrm{B}}$ or FRA. B.

I may be altogether on the wrong track. If so, there is a remarkable series of coincidences here, all pointing to Bacon: that fact can hardly be denied in any case.

SONNETS XXVII. AND XXVIII.

These two Sonnets refer to a journey taken to a place some distance from London, in which the writer became "weary with toil," and his "limbs with travel tired." Fortunately we can here fix with a great degree of probability what this particular journey was, and also that it was Bacon who was the weary traveller.

We arrive at it in this way. The preceding Sonnet, XXVI., was the Sonnet that accompanied *Lucrece*, as we have just seen; and since *Lucrece* was registered in the Stationers' Company's books under date May 5, 1594, we may place the date of the Sonnet in the earlier months of 1594. Since the order of the Sonnets is (with a few exceptions, arising possibly from misplaced leaves) generally chronological, we may expect the date of the next Sonnet, XXVII., to be somewhat later, in the summer perhaps of the same year, for summer vacation was the time for travel. And that is just what we find to be the case, for in July 1594 Francis Bacon took his "northern journey" for a political purpose in the Queen's interest, and of course in the interest of Essex as well. He, however, was unfortunate with regard to his health during the journey, and on the 20th July 1594 wrote from Huntingdon to the Queen telling her that he was delayed there; but his

illness did not confine him long, for we find him in London again by the end of the month, and well.*

This then is the journey that suits these two Sonnets excellently, and we must remember that we know of no journey of Shakespeare with such accuracy of date.

Further on in the Sonnets (XLVIII.–LI.) we have another allusion to a journey that the poet was taking, but whether that was this "northern journey," or some other journey for Essex specially, cannot be decided. Bacon tells us in his *Apology for Essex*, "It is well known how I did many years since dedicate my travels and studies to the use of my Lord of Essex." By "travels" he may mean here "labours," but no doubt he often travelled about for Essex in the modern sense of the word. But the chief proof connected with these Sonnets is that Bacon's northern journey exactly fits in, while there is nothing whatever of Shakespeare's journeys that we know with any certainty.

SONNETS XXIX.–XXXVII.

These Sonnets seem to refer to a period of disgrace, and consequent depression, in the writer's life—he has had disappointments—"I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought" (XXX.). He had depressing thoughts of death (XXXII.), and the great scandal of his "bewailed guilt" makes a gulf of separation between them, for now his friend cannot, having regard to his own position and credit, publicly make a show of kindly affection to him (XXXVI.; *cf.* also CIX.). Still the poet takes comfort from his own heart-union with his friend (XXXVII.), though he cannot let the world know it (XXXVI.). Again Bacon suits better than Shakespeare. Bacon felt keenly the failure of his hopes of advance through Essex, and possibly there was a scandal just now too, for Bacon writes to Cecil as if he had shielded him more than once.

From Sonnet XXXII. we can get a probable date, which would be 1598–9; for John Marston began his literary career in 1598 by publishing *Pygmalion's Image*,

* *Cf.* Spedding's *Life and Letters*, viii. 305.

which was of the style of *Venus and Adonis*, and was received with much favour and laudation as soon as it was out. If our date be correct, four years had passed since *Lucrece* had been offered to Southampton in 1594. The poet at that time promised to give further and better proofs of his love and of his immortalising verse, but years had passed and he remained dumb. This is referred to in several Sonnets, and various excuses are given. In this particular Sonnet (XXXII.) the excuse is that he had been outstripped by others, and that his Muse had not grown as he had thought and boasted that it would. But he hints (line 12) that though their style may be better than this, yet they cannot surpass his love for his friend. He seems to augur his own approaching death, and begs this request of his friend :

> "O then vouchsafe me but this loving thought :
> Had my friend's muse grown with the growing age,
> A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
> To march in ranks of better equipage.
> But since he died, and poets better prove,
> Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love."

Since *Lucrece* had been dedicated to Southampton in 1594, the principal poets who had given anything really good to the world of letters had been Chapman, Daniel, and Marston. The first two of these "rival poets" are referred to, as I believe, in the Sonnet-sequence (LXXV.–LXXXVI.) further on. Here it is Marston and his *Pygmalion's Image* which is alluded to. Marston speaks of his

> "Stanzas like odd bands
> Of voluntaries and mercenarians :
> Which like soldados of our warlike age,
> *March rich bedight in warlike equipage.*"

So here in all probability we have the source of the similar and parallel line in the Sonnet. I believe Mr. Tyler has the credit of first noticing this, and he justly says : "The analogy is too close to be easily explained away. But, it may be said, is it not possible that Marston borrowed from Shakespeare ? To this question the answer must

be given, that the congruity which is absent in Shakespeare is clearly seen in Marston." * The "bringing a dearer birth" to march in better-equipped ranks can scarcely seem altogether suitable, while Marston's simile is entirely suitable. Therefore we may say pretty confidently that Marston's poem preceded this Sonnet, and so the autumn of 1598 or 1599 is a probable date of the writing of this Sonnet. This is the very period when, as we know, Bacon was greatly depressed and thought much about death—perhaps suicide—and wrote to the Queen and others about the untrue libels (*mendacia famæ*) that the vulgar people were spreading against him, and that his life had been threatened. But all this is referred to in another sequence (LXXV.–LXXXVI.), to which this Sonnet may also well belong. There we see the same prospect of death, and the same kind of reference to other poets (*alien* poets) who are better than he is, and before whom his Muse is "barren" and dumb. He calls his muse or verse a "birth." This brings to mind Bacon's *greatest Birth of Time*, his early *opus magnum*.

But it must not be forgotten that Nash in his preface to Greene's *Menaphon* uses the phrase "march in equipage of honour" in 1589, so thus Sonnet XXXII. may have taken the phrase from him before Marston wrote his lines.

SONNET XXXVI.

It is mentioned elsewhere how strange a thing it is that we hear of no personal relationship between Bacon and Southampton. It surprised Spedding very much, and when I first looked into the index of Spedding's *Life and Letters of Lord Bacon* for the volume containing the years 1561–1595—being the first thirty-four years of Bacon's life—and could not find the name of Southampton in the index at all, I confess I was equally, if not more, surprised. I had reason to be more surprised than Spedding, for he, who knew Bacon's correspondence better than any man in the world, did not know, as I do

* Tyler, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 1890, p. 37.

now, of Bacon's love for Southampton and of his dedication to him of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*.

It appears from Spedding's exhaustive researches that there is no record of any letters or any other communications having passed between them until the letter of 1603, when Bacon was over forty-two years old and Southampton over thirty. And yet, putting aside the whole history of the close Platonic friendship revealed in the Sonnets, there was, as Spedding admits, such an intimate connection existing between both of them and Essex, that they must have been brought together frequently and on intimate terms.

Why then this burning of all letters, or, if not burnt, why this absence of all correspondence between such important personages, when, as we know well, Bacon had preserved hundreds of letters from far less interesting people? And why, when Bacon was drawing up the "Declaration of Treason" in the Essex rebellion case, did he mention Southampton's name as little as he possibly could? This Sonnet XXXVI. supplies the answer, especially the last six lines:

> "I may not evermore acknowledge thee
> Lest my bewailèd guilt should do thee shame,
> Nor thou with publike kindnesse honour me,
> Unlesse thou take that honour from thy name;
> But doe not so, I love thee in such sort,
> As thou being mine, mine is thy good report."

And if we compare this with Sonnet LXXXIX., where he speaks of his "offence" and lameness, and says he will try to behave as a stranger to Southampton:

> "I will acquaintance strangle and looke strange;
> Be absent from thy walkes; and in my tongue
> Thy sweet belovèd name no more shall dwell
> Least I (too much prophane) should do it wronge;
> And haplie of our old acquaintance tell,"

by the comparison we shall see plainly why Southampton is so persistently ignored by Bacon, and also, why the mystery of the Plays and Sonnets was never revealed.

It might "haply of their old acquaintance tell," and also it would "take honour from his loved one's name."

This is a cryptic expression quite in Bacon's style, and helps considerably the increasing body of evidence that we have gathered. For it points to Southampton, since the anagram of his *name* was

Henry Southampton = Thy Stampe-*Honour*.
or
Henrie Southampton = The Stampe in Honour.

There were also two other published anagrams of his full *name*, and in both of these *Honour* occurs prominently—

Henry Wriothesley Earle of Southampton.
Anagrams.
1. Thy *Honour* is worth the praise of all men.
2. Vertue is thy *Honour:* O the praise of all men.*

All this looks very much as if the *name* from which *honour* could be taken was Henry Southampton. This was the same young nobleman whom Nash addressed towards the end of 1592 in *Pierce Penilesse* as "The Matchless image of Honour" and "Jove's eagle-borne Ganymede." I do not attach reproach to the term Ganymede applied to Southampton by Nash in 1592, though it is not a pleasant name for a lad in any rank of society, and it is just possible that Nash knew of Francis Bacon's intense admiration for the young Earl. But it is one thing to be called a Ganymede when you are one of "the glistering attendants of the true Diana" (Elizabeth), and it is another and a very different thing to be called a Ganymede when you are a prominent member of the King's own set in the scandalous Court of the succeeding monarch, James I.

When Algernon Swinburne in his Essay on George Chapman speaks of Carr as "one whom we are accustomed only to regard as the unloveliest of the Ganymedes whose

* These anagrams come from a book in the Grenville Library, entitled: "The Teares of the Isle of Wight shed on the Tombe of their most noble, valorous, and loving Captaine and Governour, Henrie, Earle of Southampton:" London, 1625, 4to.

Jupiter was James," we know very well what is meant by it, nor are we in any doubt when we read in the same essay that James I. was "a king who combined with the northern virulence and pedantry, which he may have derived from his tutor Buchanan, a savour of the worst qualities of the worst Italians of the worst period of Italian decadence." But when Nash speaks of young Southampton (his own Mæcenas) as "Jove's eagle-borne Ganymede," he is, I think, only using a flattering classical allusion (flattering, because Ganymede was a very beautiful youth) in a perfectly respectful manner.

It may well be the same with Bacon and Southampton in the intense language of the Sonnets. It may be quite harmless as between the intellectual and pushing Francis Bacon and his younger aristocratic friend the literary Earl, and I have a strong feeling that it was so throughout their close acquaintance; but some incidents may have shown the natural bent of Bacon's passion even to the young Earl, and I cannot help feeling that the Sonnets refer more than once to a real scandal in the background. Moreover, such an occurrence or such reports of one, whether true or not, would help to explain in some degree Bacon's very tardy success in mounting the ladder of ambition. When we consider the high rank to which he was born, and the persistent place-hunter he always was, it does seem to require some explanation why he should be allowed to pass the age of forty-six before anything like a real rise was given to him. But more light will be thrown on the Dark Lady and the Southampton-Bacon scandal when we come to Sonnets XL.–XLII.

SONNETS XXXVIII.–XXXIX.

These two seem to go together, and not to be connected with their immediate antecedent or consequent Sonnets. Possibly an odd leaf of the MS. containing these two Sonnets got moved from its proper place. They both belong to Southampton, and seem to belong to the period before any intrigue, depression, or scandal had

come about. He will praise his beloved friend in worthy verse, for his friend is as himself :

> "And what is't but mine own when I praise thee?
> Even for this let us divided live,
> And my dear love lose name of single one
> That by this separation I may give
> That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone."

Now Bacon uses this very same idea of the first line in a letter to his cousin Cecil. "I write to myself in regard of my love to you, you being so near to me in heart's blood, as in blood by descent." * This idea of the personalities of two lovers being mutually inter-transfused was very common in the Italian sonnets of the period, and arose no doubt from the study of Plato, which made such great advances in Italy just before this generation. Shakespeare would not be likely to hear so much about it among his Stratford or theatrical friends, as would Francis Bacon among the court gallants.

Perhaps the enigmatical four lines that follow mean that the name Bacon is to be lost as between them, but that thus separated he can and will give deserved praise to his beloved friend—but by another name or in another way.

Sonnets xl.–xlii.

These Sonnets are very important with regard to the relations between the author of the Sonnets, and the friend who robbed the poet of his mistress, and "heaved" the owner out of his "seat." I am afraid we have nothing to do here with any Dark Lady of the Court, any maid of honour, any lively, forward Mistress Mary Fitton, or indeed any "real lady" at all. All the incidents and allusions seem to point to a "common drab" of a very pronounced kind.

Anyhow, the chronological order of the Sonnets, which none of the best critics ever venture to deny, exclude Mary Fitton here, for she was too young, and had not long been at Court; and it is Southampton who is the

* Abbott's *Francis Bacon*, p. 173.

fascinating Adonis who carries the lady off from a former lover, with that "lascivious grace" which the poet and "unseated lover" was fain to forgive. But we know of no scandal between Mary Fitton and Southampton; it was Pembroke some years later that brought her to grief. Moreover, the atmosphere of these Sonnets is hardly a court atmosphere. It seems much more like the atmosphere that John Marston so skilfully puts into his canvas when he depicts in his *Satyres* the baser vices of society as then existing.

It is well known that in Southampton's youth he was a licentious *débauché* of an extremely attractive personality. I often think that John Marston alluded to him and his drab in those *Satyres* that were burnt by the Archbishop's order in the Stationers' Hall. Who else could the following lines so well hit off? *Sat.* II. 107:

> "In faith yon is a well-faced gentleman;
> See how he paces like a Cyprian!
> Fair amber tresses of the fairest hair
> That ere were wavèd by our London air;
> Rich lacèd suit, all spruce, all neat, in truth.
> Ho, Lynceus! what's yonder brisk neat youth
> 'Bout whom yon troop of gallants flocken so,
> And now together to Brown's common go?
> Thou know'st I'm sure; for thou canst cast thine eye
> Through nine mud walls, or else old poets lie:
> 'Tis loose-legged Lais, that same common drab,
> For whom good Tubrio took the mortal stab."

What if this "loose-legged Lais" should turn out to be the earlier Lady of the Sonnets after all? She was a strumpet who wore men's breeches, as Marston signifies afterwards. Indeed, some solution of this kind clears up many little difficulties with regard to the peculiar phraseology here and there to be noticed both in the Sonnets and the Plays. It helps to throw light on the Proteus of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the Protean Form in Sonnet LIII., with its "substance" and "shadow," and yet more light on the ladies with doublet and hose [and codpiece], who make a decidedly unfitting appearance in some of the scenes of the Shakespeare Plays. Women did dress up

as men in those days, and got a reputation for doing so, not always of a very savoury character. There was Long Meg of Westminster, known to lovers of black-letter catch-pennies; there was Moll Cutpurse, known on and off the stage by most scandal-mongers, a little later, but only a few years, than the date of these Sonnets. Indeed, Dr. Brinsley Nicholson suggested that the "loose-legged Lais" of Marston's satire was none other than Moll Cutpurse the hermaphroditic courtesan, and he took "good Tubrio" in the lines quoted above to be poor Kit Marlowe, who lost his life of intellectual promise all through some "lewd love" and bawdy quarrel. But Marlowe was stabbed in 1593 and Moll Cutpurse was born about 1584, so if Moll was the cause of the fatal quarrel, she was indeed a precocious young member of the profession, for she could not be much more than nine or ten years old, although she was doubtless over seven. But surely Dr. Nicholson's suggestion, though worthy of respect seeing from whom it comes, will never do; it would out-gallop Mrs. Gallup, for while she only says that Bacon was Queen Elizabeth's son, and a very voluminous writer, the Doctor's suggestion would lead us to infer that Bacon took young Moll Cutpurse into keeping when she was about thirteen, she having been under Marlowe's protection some three or four years previously, and then, when certainly under fourteen, left Bacon and gave herself up to Bacon's Master-Mistress the fair-haired Southampton (fair Briscus). Whether the young lady wore frocks or breeches at this early age is doubtful; but one would say breeches, from what the lynx-like eyes of Lynceus saw.

But a truce to such suggestions; "this way madness lies," and a kind of Italianated sexual perversion, of which in these days we can hardly credit the existence. But it was by no means rare in the days of Bacon and Southampton, and in the neighbourhood of the theatres and the gardens, which so easily brought vicious people together. One has only to read Marston, Hall, and the others who satirise and deplore the vices of the age, to come to a very sad conclusion as to the real amount of vice in Elizabethan

London.* We must remember these satirists are not unworthy of credit; they are educated University men for the most part, and some, such as Hall, afterwards Bishop of Exeter, and a good Bishop too, were eminent for their private virtues.

But not much that is clear can be gained by dwelling on each Sonnet as it comes in order. There is too little to fasten on with any degree of certainty. There seems an allusion to a journey the poet took to some place in Sonnets XLVIII.–LI., and we know that in July 1594 Bacon took a long journey to the North, and was stopped at Huntingdon by a painful illness, and came back and rested at Cambridge and took his M.A. This may be the journey referred to here, as it is in Sonnets XXVII. and XXVIII. Anyhow, we know of no journey of Shakespeare for certain, as we know Bacon's journey. Sonnets LII.–LV. may be apportioned to Southampton, and dated before 1598 rather than after. We have in LIII. the *Proteus* of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Adonis*, and the hues or "hews" and "shadows" of beauty which lent such charm to Southampton's youthful face in the writer's eyes. And, as I have said elsewhere, it is not improbable that Meres saw Sonnet LV. in MS. before 1598 and moulded his Latin praises on it, as that the reverse should have happened, as the ordinary theory maintains, and the Sonnet be thus made later than Meres' book. Sonnets LVII. and LVIII. have been already referred to in connection with Pembroke's letter to Cecil, which was meant for the Queen's eye, and possibly written by Bacon, and was in any case suspiciously like these Sonnets in its wording. After these Sonnets we have a long sequence (LIX.–LXXIV.) dealing in a depressed tone of pessimistic philosophy with the ravages of Time, and with a world made all awry (LXVI.), and culminating in a hint of possible suicide or assassination (LXXIV.). Now all this is, I maintain, decidedly Baconian, and *not* Shakespearian.

* In fact, Marston puts the case very tersely thus:

"Ganymede is up and Hebe down."

—*Scourge of Villainie*, line 49.

In Nov. 1599 Bacon writes to the Queen, "My life hath been threatened, and my name libelled." He also writes about the same time to Cecil, "As for any violence to be offered to me, wherewith my friends tell me to no small terror that I am threatened, I thank God I have the privy coat of a good conscience." He also writes thus to Lord Henry Howard, "For my part I have deserved better than to have my name objected to envy, or my life to a ruffian's violence."

I will only consider in detail four lines of this section:

SONNET LIX.

"If there be nothing new, but that which is,
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
Which labouring for invention, bear amiss
The second burthen of a former child!"

Here, I contend, we have several ideas and phrases which point distinctly to the philosopher Francis Bacon, and are very remote from Shakespeare.

The first two lines remind us of Bruno's philosophy, which had become somewhat the fashion with the cultured aristocrats and the Sidney set since Bruno's visit to England in Elizabethan days. This is not by any means the only allusion to this somewhat mystical and prophetic philosophy in these Sonnets, for in three later ones, CVI., CVII., and CXXIII., we have similar ideas put into the verse.

Bacon would be no stranger to this intellectual atmosphere, and could breathe freely in it. I doubt very much whether Shakespeare could. Then there is that word "invention," which Bacon had almost made his own; he was always "labouring for invention," from his youth upwards. And then consider that fourth line; it was a "Birth"—the "Greatest Birth of Time"—with which he, so confident in his own powers even at an early age, proposed to enlighten the world and to show forth a conqueror over the Domain of Nature, and afterwards he returned to the subject in his *Masculus Partus Temporis*, the first germs of his *Magna Instauratio*. By his "Male Birth of Time" he means something "generative" or "fruitful," as opposed to the barren philosophy of Aristotle.

This evidence, though only indirect and inferential, seems to me strong.

The possible connection between Bacon and Bruno must not be despised. Bruno was in London from 1583 to 1585, living with the French ambassador, and Sir Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, Lord Burghley, and other members of the cultivated aristocracy connected with the court circle, knew Bruno well. Bruno was a very little time in London before he went to Oxford to maintain his Copernican theories against the conservative dons of that august University. The occasion was a function of honour to Albert Alasco, Count Palatine of Poland; and Lord Leicester, who was Chancellor of the University, went down from London with Alasco and a company of court notables (*nobilium cohors*) to do the honours. How likely that Bacon should be one—how next to impossible that Shakespeare should be there. Bruno's friends in England were also Bacon's friends. Hardly a man could be named more likely to be conversant with Bruno's works than Bacon, or less likely than Shakespeare, who did not leave Stratford till Bruno had left England. Yet Bruno's peculiar philosophical ideas are deeply imbedded in the Shakespeare Plays and Sonnets. Nor are we without a sort of corroborative evidence which, considering the little we really know of Bacon between 1580 and 1592, is worth recording here. Mr. Nicholas Faunt writes to Anthony Bacon, 6th May 1583, just about a month before the Bruno court function at Oxford, and tells him that his brother Francis now was "sometimes a courtier." This is in our favour, for Bacon, who took all knowledge to be his province, would clearly like to travel down with a fashionable court company to Oxford to hear Bruno if he could bring it about.

The next section is

SONNETS LXXV.–LXXXVII.

Here the poet makes excuses for his verse being so "barren of new pride (LXXVI.) and tongue-tied" (LXXXV.). He complains that his "sick Muse doth give another place,"

and there are several allusions to a rival poet (one or more). To this vexed question of the rival poets, I can add but little to help the solution, nor does it affect the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy to any great degree.

Marlowe has had an ingenious defender, but his erratic course was ended in 1593, and this date being before *Lucrece* was published seems to exclude him from any rivalry; but Chapman and Samuel Daniel have each had very expert defenders as well, and perhaps we may say of them that "honours are easy" in the earlier Sonnets, but Chapman gains points towards the finish, and wins the rubber on Sonnet LXXXVI. The date involved is the main and only point connected with the Baconian theory, and it comes out 1598 or 1599, a very suitable date as will appear.

Sonnet LXXVIII. begins thus:

> "So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse,
> And found such fair assistance in my verse,
> As every *alien* pen hath got my use,
> And under thee their poetry disperse."

"Alien" is one of the few words put in italics in the original, and some allusion seems intended. I suggest that *alien* points to *Alleyn*, the actor-manager and partner with Henslowe, who had the Rose Theatre from 1592. Thus some poets or poet-dramatists connected with Alleyn's theatre are most likely meant. Chapman would suit, and Samuel Daniel as well. But in Sonnet LXXXVI. we get a rather strong proof that Chapman is alluded to *there* at any rate, and we get the date 1598–9, which agrees very well with the date we inferred from the parallel Sonnet XXXII., which recalled Marston's *Pygmalion's Image*. It would take too long to give the whole proof and the parallel passages which Professor Minto and Mr. Tyler have ingeniously worked out, but they show that this Sonnet refers to Chapman's *Iliad* in fourteen-syllable verse (1598)—"the proud full sail of his great verse"—and also to Chapman's *Shadow of Night* (1594). The poet says of these two of Chapman's attempts, "I was not sick of any fear from thence"; that is, he was not put

to "silence" by either the *Iliad* or the *Shadow of Night*, and then gives the real reason :

> "But when your countenance fil'd up his line,
> Then lack'd I matter ; that enfeebled mine."

Neither Minto nor Tyler has tried to explain this reference to Southampton's "countenance," nor is it known that the Earl gave Chapman any special mark of favour about this time.

But I have a suggestion to make, which would be in keeping with the rest of the explanation of the Sonnet. I think these last two lines of the Sonnet refer to Chapman's other fine poem of 1595, entitled *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*. This most sensuous love-poem was undoubtedly of the same class as *Venus and Adonis*, and it was a dangerous rival in its passionate raptures and glowing description of voluptuous male and female beauty. It took away for itself the very "matter" of verse that the poet wanted to give a second immortal picture of Southampton, as he had more than half promised his patron. Adonis was the "counterfeit" of Southampton, and when a second counterfeit of Southampton's manly beauty appeared in finer and fuller form in Chapman's *Banquet of Sense*, then our poet felt he had indeed a rival who had taken the very ground from under him :

> "But when your countenance fil'd* up his line,
> Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine."

The fact is that Chapman in *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* had practically expanded a portion of *Venus and Adonis* dealing with the five senses (lines 433–450), in the middle of which portion appears the line :

> "But O, what banquet wert thou to the taste ;"

which would suit very well as one of the lines which the rival poet filled up, for *Ovid's Banquet* is mainly a discourse to Corinna (Julia) of the five senses, which are all mentioned in the passage of *Venus and Adonis*.

An ingenious writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* for June

* *Fil'd* (orig. ed.) = *filled*. *Lack'd* in next line shows this.

1901 has given several reasons for supposing Daniel to be the rival poet. There are clearly more rival poets than one according to the explicit statement of the Sonnets themselves. Daniel is most likely one of them, as I have already suggested. This section also contains a line which is a difficult one for Shakespearians, but suits the Bacon theory well.

"I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,"

is the first line of Sonnet LXXXII. But what force or meaning can this have coming from Shakespeare? Southampton and Shakespeare's Muse were married poetically as far as the name of the Earl in the dedication and the signature of the poet in full at the foot of it could celebrate the fact. The banns were fully published, and no one at that time seems to have thought of forbidding them for any fault or error of name. But the case was very different with Southampton and Bacon's Muse. There was no poetical marriage here, nor were any banns published here, or even the two names coupled together in any way in the Temple of the Muses. So Bacon could truly say *his* Muse was not married, whereas Shakespeare could not say this.

As to the last Sonnet of this section (LXXXVII.), beginning:

"Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,"

it is so thoroughly permeated with abstruse legal allusions, that unless the reader is well acquainted with what is known to lawyers as the "doctrine of uses" and that smaller branch of the subject dealing with "failure of consideration" he will be sure to miss the best points of the Sonnet. But who except the shining lights of the Inns of Court troubled about such matters, or, indeed, ever referred to them? Surely not the Stratford player. What omnivorous general reader knows anything about such matters even now? The inference seems inevitable and insuperable, but the orthodox look at it and—pass on.

SONNETS LXXXVIII.–CV.

These nineteen Sonnets seem to refer to Southampton as beginning to lead a gay life at Court, and as also getting entangled in general scandal as a libertine. The date may be 1595–6, and in part of this period, as we know, Southampton was away from England with Essex. Sonnets XCVII. and XCVIII. fit in very well with this absence and separation from Bacon.

As the "lameness," which the author of the Sonnets admits as an affliction of his, is mentioned in this section (Sonnet LXXXIX.) as well as elsewhere (XXXVII.), it will not be amiss to consider it more closely. Whatever it was, the defect was with him, as with Byron, a subject about which he had unpleasant feelings of shame.

Capell and other Shakespearians have conjectured that Shakespeare was literally lame, while others have thought of the lameness only in connection with Shakespeare's morals. Mr. Swinburne, in his *Report of the Proceedings, &c., of the Newest Shakespeare Society* (April 1, 1876), introduces Mr. D. reading a paper on "The Lameness of Shakespeare—was it moral or physical?" Mr. D. assumed at once that the infirmity was physical. "Then arose the question—In which leg?" and then the discussion proceeded in far more earnest, courteous, and serious fashion than is ever granted or allowed or practised when dealing with Baconian heretics.

As Mr. Algernon C. Swinburne, besides being a most distinguished poet and man of letters, is also a high Shakespearian authority, I will give his report in full of Mr. D.'s paper. It was first printed in the *Examiner* of April 1, 1876, and never having been reprinted as far as I know, I think it will interest my readers. It must be remembered that Mr. Swinburne only professed to act as the secretary or reporter of the Society, and therefore cannot be held responsible for Mr. D.'s views, but I do not think he would have published them, unless he thought some good Shakespearian object would be

obtained by their publication. I therefore reproduce them:

"Mr. D. then brought forward a subject of singular interest and importance—'The lameness of Shakespeare: was it moral or physical?' He would not insult their intelligence by dwelling on the absurd and exploded hypothesis that this expression was allegorical, but would at once assume that the infirmity in question was physical. Then arose the question, 'In which leg?' He was prepared, on the evidence of an early play, to prove to demonstration that the injured and interesting limb was the left. 'This shoe is my father,' says Launce in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; 'no, this left shoe is my father;—no, no, this left shoe is my mother;—nay, that cannot be so neither:—yes, it is so, it is so; *it hath the worser sole*.' This passage was not necessary either to the progress of the play, or to the development of the character; he believed he was justified in asserting that it was not borrowed from the original novel on which the play was founded; the inference was obvious, that without some personal allusion it must have been as unintelligible to the audience, as it had hitherto been to the commentators.

"His conjecture was confirmed, and the whole subject illustrated with a new light by that well-known line in the Sonnets, in which the poet describes himself as 'made lame by Fortune's dearest spite,' a line of which the inner meaning and personal application had also by a remarkable chance been reserved for him (Mr. D.) to discover. There could be no doubt that we had here a clue to the origin of the physical infirmity referred to: an accident which must have befallen Shakespeare in early life while acting at the Fortune Theatre, and consequently before his connection with a rival company—a fact of grave importance till now unverified. The epithet 'dearest,' like so much else in the Sonnets, was evidently susceptible of a double interpretation. The first and most natural explanation of the term would at once suggest itself; the playhouse would of necessity be dearest to the actor dependent on it for subsistence, as the means of getting his bread; but he thought it not unreasonable to infer from this unmistakable allusion, that the entrance fee charged at the Fortune may probably have been higher than the price of seats in any other house. Whether or not this fact, taken in conjunction with the accident already mentioned, should be assumed as the immediate cause of Shakespeare's subsequent

change of service, he was not prepared to pronounce with such positive confidence as they might reasonably expect from a member of the Society; but he would take upon himself to affirm that his main thesis was now and for ever established on the most irrefragable evidence, and that no assailant could by any possibility dislodge by so much as a hair's-breadth the least fragment of a single brick in the impregnable structure of proof raised by the argument to which they had just listened.

"There was much further discussion, and a paper by Mr. G. on the quarrel between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, which unfortunately had to be postponed."

CIV. is an important Sonnet, for it supplies a chronological allusion, and these are scanty enough in the Sonnets. Three years have passed since "first your eye I ey'd," it says. Now this peculiar phrase about the eyes recalls the early Procreation Sonnets, I. and XVII., in both of which the youth's eyes are specially marked for admiration, and such very early Sonnets could not refer to Pembroke, as we showed. This Sonnet CIV. also speaks of the friend's "sweet hue," and "hue" is a Southampton word exclusively, so we get the date about 1595.

Sonnet CVII. is also a crucial Sonnet as to date. The two important lines are:

> "The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
> And the sad augurs mock their own presage."

From these words some critics date the Sonnet before the Queen's death (1601), and others after the Queen's death (1603). It is pretty certain that the mortal moon stands for Queen Elizabeth; no title was more popular for her with the poets. But what does "hath her eclipse endured" mean? Is it her death that is referred to, or has she endured and passed through an eclipse—a time of dark danger—with Essex, and is now shining brightly again? On first reading Death seems meant, but a consideration of contemporary parallel passages points clearly away from Death and fixes the Sonnet at about 1601, the date of Southampton's imprisonment, apparently hinted at in the "sad augurs" whose presage about his success and Essex was so miserably wrong. The author of

Henry V. would be a "sad augur" now in 1601. But for the Queen to endure an eclipse need not mean her death. Bacon himself shall prove this beyond controversy. In his *History of Henry VII.* he says: "The Queen hath endured a strange eclipse." He also writes in 1594 to Lord Keeper Pickering: "If this eclipse of her (Majesty's) favour were past." * About the year 1599 Bacon writes to the Queen: "I beseech our blessed Saviour . . . that I may never live to see any eclipse of your glory, interruption of safety, or indisposition of your person." †

The first two lines of this same Sonnet CVII. refer to Bruno's *Philosophy*, which the author-poet had read in the Italian. All these things point to Bacon. CVIII. is connected with the preceding CVII. and with Southampton's imprisonment, and seems to be of the same tenor as Bacon's letter to Southampton after his imprisonment already quoted.

The line

> "When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent"

of CVII. suits 1601 better than 1603 for date. But an earlier eclipse, the attempted murder of Queen Elizabeth in 1594, may be the one.

SONNETS CIX.–CXXV.

There has been a period of absence between Southampton and the poet, and the latter admits sins of omission and of commission during this time; but still there is nothing in all the world so dear to the poet's heart as his "Rose":

> "For nothing this wide universe I call,
> Save thou, my Rose; in it thou art my all."

There is no very clear reference to date in this sequence, but it seems to have been written after Southampton had returned from his Irish expedition with Essex (1599). This may have been the absence referred to, and while

* Abbott's *Bacon*, p. 37.
† Spedding's *Bacon*, ix. 160.

the Earl was away, certain indiscretions, which are vaguely hinted at, seem to have occurred. The poet confesses them with sorrow. Whatever they were they caused much "vulgar scandal," and they brought odium on the poet, for his name received "a brand," seemingly a "public" brand. He admits he had made himself "a motley to the view," and "gored his own thoughts" and "look'd on truth askance." All which seems to mean that he had acted more like a fool than a wise or sane man, had wounded his self-respect, and paid very slight heed to truth or virtue when they turned their admonishing eyes upon him.

If we read carefully the first four Sonnets of this sequence, and then read CXIX. and CXXI., we cannot fail to see a threefold charge admittedly hanging over the poet's head—a public *odium*, a vulgar private *scandal*, and a "madding fever" for an unworthy syren. I contend, taking into consideration the evidence about Bacon, already adduced, that all these three charges fit in with *his* life and character much better than with Shakespeare's. For Bacon incurred much public odium for taking a part in the Government prosecution of his closest friend Essex. This "public manner" of proceeding against Essex was imposed upon Bacon by "public means," *i.e.* his public position as a "learned counsel," and he hints that his nature was "subdued" to it not willingly, but of public necessity. This is his excuse in Sonnet CXI., and he lays the blame on "the guilty goddess Fortune." But the public opinion was strongly against Bacon, for Essex was most popular, and to be committed to custody almost directly he returned from Ireland raised pity far and wide, and, to use Bacon's own words, "Pity in the common people, if it run in a strong stream, doth ever cast up scandal and envy." * The people and the friends of Essex suspected an enemy at court, and as Bacon had been several times admitted to the Queen's presence, envy and odium fell strongly on him.

Bacon excuses himself to Southampton for his "harm-

* *History of Henry VII.*, Works, vi. p. 203.

ful deeds" (they *were* "harmful" to Southampton, and we know Bacon begged hard to be excused acting against his former friends) by reminding him that Fortune had obliged him to take up "public duties" and "public manners" (and not over-scrupulous were these last), to earn his living as an unprovided-for younger son. I know well that this particular Sonnet has been thought to be the best proof there is that the author of the Sonnets was an actor, and therefore Shakespeare,* but the "harmful deeds" of the second line of the Sonnet seem to exclude this interpretation.

The "vulgar scandal" has been sufficiently examined elsewhere. Enough here to say that it is Baconian and not Shakespearian. CXXI. deserves careful attention. The love fever seems to point to Mary Fitton:

> "How have mine eyes out of their spheres been *fitted*,†
> In the distraction of this madding fever!"
>
> —*Sonnet CXIX.*

and the "Syren tears" are Baconian, as we see by what is said in Bacon's Essay "Of Love" (1612): "[Love]

* Mr. Tyler says (p. 270): "The allusions in this Sonnet CXI. to Shakespeare's profession as an actor are not to be doubted." What Mr. Massey says on this same Sonnet is well worth perusal, both on account of the convincing force of his remarks, and because it shows us how the most ingenious and expert Shakespearians, arguing from an unsound hypothesis, are constantly wounding and shooting their own side. Mr. Massey proves at great length that this Sonnet CXI. has nothing to do with Shakespeare and the stage, and completely demolishes Mr. Tyler's assertions and allusions. Mr. Massey shows that no one has "ever heard of any 'harmful deeds' or doings of Shakespeare, occasioned in consequence of his connection with the stage. Nor do we see how his name could be branded or 'receive a brand' from his connection with the theatre. What name? He had no name apart from the theatre and the friendships it had brought him. His name was created there. His living depended *on* the theatre; he met and made his friends *at* the theatre; he was making his fortune *by* the theatre; how then should he exclaim *against* the theatre? And then the meaning and application of 'public manners' and 'public means' is considered through several pages, with the result that Shakespeare and the actor's life is not referred to here at all" (pp. 189–195, private edit. 1888). Mr. Massey was a well-known and staunch Shakespearian, and laughed Bacon to scorn, but he rightly excluded Shakespeare here.

† This word fitted is, I think, rather an important piece of evidence in a matter where direct evidence is very scanty—I mean the matter of the Dark

doeth much mischief; sometimes like a *Siren*, sometimes like a *Fury*." *Cf.* also *De Sap. Vet.*, xxxi.

Sonnet cxxiii.

This Sonnet and some others are supposed to show traces of Bruno's philosophy, and Brandes, the great Danish critic on Shakespeare, inclines to the view that the author of the Shakespeare Plays and Poems was well acquainted with Bruno's curious opinions. (*Cf.* Brandes, ii. 14, &c.)

> "No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change:
> Thy pyramids built up with newer might
> To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
> They are but dressings of a former sight."

In this Sonnet, besides Bruno, we have the curious Baconian doctrine of the pyramidal form of science touched upon. Bacon, in his philosophical works, frequently advances the theory that knowledge was best represented in the form of a pyramid gradually tapering up to the transcendental from the broad bases of Natural Experiment. (*Cf.* Prof. Nichol's *Bacon*, ii. 231.)

As for Bacon and Bruno, we may record that in June 1583 there were grand doings at Oxford in honour of a "comte palatin de Pologne." Bruno was there and played an important part, for he sustained an argument against the most famous doctors of the University, defending the system of Copernicus against the older views. Was Bacon there? Not unlikely, for he was fond of hearing and seeing these Italian freethinkers, and when later on another famous and unfortunate Italian, Vanini, came to London and played at turning Protestant, we hear that Francis Bacon was the most noticeable man

Lady's personality. The use of the word fitted here is unique, and it has a place all to itself in the *New Eng. Dict.*:

"Fit v^2 obs. rare[1] trans. To force by fits or paroxysms *out of* (the usual place); *c.* 1600. Shaks. Sonn. cxix."

No other instance is known. So the word was probably invented by the poet for the sake of the verbal allusion or pun on Mistress Fitton's name. All this is quite in Bacon's manner. His enormous vocabulary is due a great deal to his own invented words, and we know he could seldom avoid a jest or quip if the opportunity presented itself.

among the large audience that assisted at the usual function held at such conversions. This was 1st July 1612. And in 1625, just before his death, Bacon writes to P. Fulgentius and tells him that he remembers writing a daring book called *Temporis Partus Maximus* quite forty years before. This would carry us to the exact date of Bruno's works, published (1583–1585) in London, which very probably had stirred up Bacon's thoughts to such metaphysical matters.

Where was Shakespeare in 1583–5? Ah! what a different *entourage!* What time or inclination or knowledge of Italian would he have just then to deal with the high question of "the prophetic and soul of the world," other mystical matters of Giordano Bruno? He had a wife who had just presented him with twins, and he had his bread to earn. But some one clearly thought about such things (*cf.* Sonnets LIX., CVI., CVII., and *Richard III.*, Act II. sc. iii. lines 41–44).

We read that "on the night of Ash-Wednesday 1584, Bruno was invited by Fulke Greville to meet Sydney and others to hear his reason for his belief that the earth moves." Bacon knew Fulke Greville, and there are letters still extant between them, so Bacon might well be included in the *others* who were asked to meet Bruno.

SONNET CXXIV.

This Sonnet is much too courtier-like and statesman-like for Shakespeare; it is thoroughly Baconian. Bacon here states that his love for Southampton was a personal love and quite apart from political or "state" considerations, and therefore it stood independent of the reverses of fortune (lines 1–8), or the choice (αἵρεσις) of court favourites (line 9). *Hereticke* is in italics in the original, and therefore we must take the Greek signification, "seeking or choosing for itself." There is also allusion to the discontent existing after the death of Essex among men of rank ("*our* fashion"), which shows the author to be a man of quality, thus excluding Shakespeare, and

suggesting Bacon and the date 1601, which fits in with the rest of the sequence.

Sonnet cxxv.

This is the "Canopy Sonnet," which has taxed the ingenuity of many interpreters, and dates have been given to it varying from 1588—the Armada year, when Elizabeth went to St. Paul's in state—to 1603–4, when King James I. made his progress through London under a canopy.

I suggest that the date was June 16, 1600, when the Queen came to Blackfriars by water to grace by her presence the wedding of Mistress Anne Russell, one of her maids of honour and also a cousin of Francis Bacon. It was a great function; Mistress Mary Fitton was there, and took the prominent part in the masque. William Herbert and Lord Cobham conducted the bride to church, and the Queen was carried from the water-side in a *lectica* borne by six knights. I suggest, as highly probable, that Bacon was one, for although not yet a knight, he was cousin of the bride, and on most intimate terms with the young noblemen who were present, and therefore may have been privileged to help in bearing the canopy and escorting the Queen. *

* It is quite possible that the expression "bore the canopy" is a purely figurative one; just as the next expression, "laid great bases for eternity," clearly is so. In that case the references would be to the two poems dedicated to Southampton—*Lucrece*, and *Venus and Adonis*. And other parts of this Sonnet would agree very well with this view; he now asks Southampton for something closer and more hearty than formal outward praise in dedications:

> "No;—let me be obsequious in thy heart,
> And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
> Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,
> But mutual render only me for thee."

On this view we could better explain the curious phrase "not mixed with seconds" in a very Baconian manner; it would be a jesting pun referring to his "second" name William Shakespeare being mixed up with the oblation which he had made in *Lucrece* and had signed "Your Lordship's in all duety" (=duity=duo). I am rather inclined to prefer this explanation to my suggestion of the historical wedding canopy; for the author of the Sonnets is most studious not to let drop any plain hint by which his identity could be proved, and if a real event in his life is referred to by the words, "I bore the canopy," the writer is almost uplifting the mask, which he has been carefully and persistently keeping on throughout both series of the Sonnets.

As to the *informer* of the last line but one, there is some hidden allusion, for the word is one of the few placed in italics in the original. I think the poet is here apostrophising Sir William Knollys, the Comptroller of the Household, who had done him some bad turn, perhaps connected with Mary Fitton. The italicised *informer* would be very applicable to him, for in the Essex trial he appeared in that rather odious position. Some remark of Cecil's had been mentioned in the course of the trial by both Southampton and Essex; and they were asked who had informed them of this saying of Cecil's. They did not wish to say at first, but at last it was reluctantly admitted by Southampton that Sir William Knollys was the authority for it, that he was the *Informer*. There is another word too in the Sonnet that points to this same court official quite in Bacon's manner—it is the word "control":

> "Hence, thou suborn'd *informer!* a true soul
> When most impeach'd stands least in thy *control*."

Now Sir William was the *Comptroller* of the Household, with special care of Mistress Fitton and the bevy of maids of honour.

If Francis Bacon had an intrigue of any kind with Mary Fitton, the Comptroller would be the most likely man to impeach one or both—for he was very partial to Mary himself, and would have married her if his old wife had not been in the way. He, too, was one of the three Wills of a future Sonnet, CXXXV., and as the "Dark Lady" had

> "Robb'd others' beds' revenues of their rents."
> —*Sonnet CXLII.*

very likely the all-receptive Mary had taken the rent or "benevolence due" to the elderly wife of her "Comptroller" *Will*. But that is another story.

As to that word *informer*, we must not forget that jealousy is called "this sour informer" in *Venus and Adonis*. Perhaps the author wished to remind the Earl of Southampton of that passage as well.

This Sonnet also contains in line 10 a request which we may certainly term Baconian :

"And take thou my oblation, poor but free."

"My oblation!" Why, this is the very expression Bacon used when he presented his *Advancement of Learning* to King James in 1605, and he reckons the oblation of his book to the King amongst the "*freewill* offerings."

Sonnet cxxvi.

This Sonnet, addressed to "my lovely boy," is generally supposed to be an *Envoy* to the preceding Sonnets, or, as some think, to the whole first series.

I can make very little out of it. *Audit* and *quietus* (lines 11, 12) seem legal and Baconian, but they might just as well be Stratford law and Shakespearian, for Stratford municipal accounts tell us that on Jan. 10, 1564,

"*Sic quieti sunt*
Johannes Taylor et Johannes Shakspeyr."

Here we have a decided break in the course of the Sonnets. A new series and a new history now begin. We hear no more of "my Rose" or "my lovely boy." Henry Wriothesley seems to disappear, and a certain *Will*, "a man right fair," plays a principal and unworthy part, in company with a "woman colour'd ill." To the latter the majority of the remaining Sonnets are addressed.

But before we quite leave the first series, and the hero and youthful Adonis who figures there as "my Rose," let us consider some facts which may suggest a possible reason for such an unusual term of endearment for a male.

In February 1592, Henslowe's new theatre, the "Rose," was opened on the Bankside for Lord Strange's Players, with whom Shakespeare acted, and only a short time before this same company had an important rise in public esteem by acting several times (six) before the Court, while during the years previous (1587–1591) the Queen's and the Admiral's were the only companies who performed at Court at all. This new favour continued in after years,

and Shakespeare's company henceforth had the pre-eminence in courtly favour.

Fleay, the great authority on the actors and plays of that period, attributes this change to Lord Southampton's influence, who had recently entered at Gray's Inn. For although the Earl might seem too young at nineteen to have much personal influence in advancing or favouring any particular body of players, yet he could easily induce Sir Thomas Heneage to aid his projects; for Sir Thomas was fond of the young Earl's widowed mother, and afterwards married her. He was officially connected with the direction of the theatres, and in him afterwards, in 1594, Bacon found a firm ally when seeking office. In fact, Essex and Mr. Vice-Chamberlain (Heneage) did more for Bacon than any of his other friends.

Here then we have Bacon, Southampton, Shakespeare's Company, and the Rose Theatre all brought closely together, and if Bacon and Southampton went to the Bankside as special patrons of the new house, and sat together enjoying the hidden allusions of the plays—a veritable Damon and Pythias of the newly opened Rose—may not that be one reason among others why the "lovely boy" of the Sonnets is so often called "my Rose"?

Again the question crops up, why is not Shakespeare ever mentioned or hinted at, if such interest is shown to be taken in him and his fellow-actors by Bacon and Southampton? Why this conspiracy of silence? I think the somewhat parallel case of Sir Walter Scott throws light on this. The author of *Waverley* used to place poetical mottoes as headings to the chapters in his novels. He quoted from many different poets, but he never (with one exception) quoted from a poet named Walter Scott, who was often in men's mouths and much admired just then. This was remarked upon as suspicious at the time. But it was soon seen that Sir Walter did not wish to "repeat himself." Is that why Bacon never mentions Shakespeare? Perhaps it is one reason—but there are more serious reasons in this case of implicated scandal and odium.

But not only does Bacon never mention Shakespeare, but a great many other contemporaries never once mention him, even men who had written many voluminous works, such as Selden and Clarendon. Look, too, at the extraordinary case of Henslowe and Alleyn. If any men in the dramatic world were thoroughly acquainted with Shakespeare, and also knew his connection with Southampton, and perhaps Bacon, it was these two managers of theatres, of the "Rose" for many years, and the "Fortune" as well. Yet Henslowe's *Diary*, which contains frequent mention of many actors and playwrights for a long course of years, never so much as mentions Shakespeare directly or indirectly. Ben Jonson, Dekker, Chettle, Munday, Drayton, Marston, and others appear frequently in the comic spelling of this successful manager, but his *Diary* does not make a single attempt to spell the very variable name of the Stratford player. Neither do the Alleyn papers, although they mention many contemporary dramatists. Commendatory verses were common enough in those days, but in Shakespeare's lifetime he neither received any in connection with his own books nor composed any for other people's books.

The orthodox Shakespearians are always dwelling on the crushing weight of contemporary evidence, and suppose that alone to be an insuperable argument. It is really nothing of the kind. They put a false estimate upon it. There is reference certainly now and again to "sweet Mr. Shakespeare," "gentle Shakespeare," and the like; and *Venus and Adonis*, and *Tarquin* and *Lucrece*, were favourite poems, and were connected with a name or pen-name of Shakespeare; but seldom can we find anything clearly pointing out the Stratford actor, and again and again his famous contemporaries utterly ignore this surprising genius when there seems every reason to expect a notice of him.

We now come to the second series:

Sonnets cxxvii.–clii.

A "Dark Lady" fills nearly all the canvas in the remarkable picture here put before us. She is such a

lady as no amorous sonneteer had ever ventured to depict before, and this is one reason for believing in her personal existence, and for inferring that here certainly we have no glorified or spiritualised creation of a poet's brain. Her eyes are raven black, her hair is like unto black wires, there are no roses in her cheeks, and her complexion seems to be anything but a good one, and her breasts are by no means the rising hills of snow that inflame rather than cool the lover's passion—they are dun. The poet feels that he cannot say of her :

"Vera incessu patuit Dea,"

and so he says, rather prosaically :

"My mistress when she walks treads on the ground."

And yet in spite of all her defects there is this passionate finish :

"And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she bely'd with false compare."

It seems by Sonnet CXXVIII. that the lady was a fascinating player on the virginals, and therefore we may infer she was of good birth and expensively educated. The poet asks her (line 14) to give him her "lips to kiss." Surely such aristocratic lips were not for Shakespeare! Then there is the well-known incident of the poet's dear male friend who so treacherously robbed the poet of this Dark Lady of his heart.

Then we have two singular Sonnets playing on the word *Will* in a most intricate and puzzling fashion (CXXXV. and CXXXVI.). I have already given my reasons for supposing the three *Wills* are William Herbert, Sir William Knollys, and Will Kemp the clown and acrobatic dancer, and have quoted the court ballad which coupled Mary Fitton with the clown. This is the only evidence we have as against Kemp, it is true, and no one would have thought of him, if it had not been for the ballad. When first I saw the ballad I thought the "clowne" was Shakespeare, so called as a Warwickshire yokel; but remembering that Kemp had dedicated his one famous

book to a Fitton who was a maid of honour, and most likely Mary Fitton the excellent dancer, I then, on this corroborative evidence, took Kemp to be more likely than Shakespeare.

Sir William Knollys is another new candidate for admission into the trio of *Wills*, but is not of my introducing. His claim has sprung up from the old documents and letters in the muniment room at Arbury, the country house of the Newdegate family, into which family Mary Fitton's elder sister married. From his letters to Mary's married sister (Anne Newdegate) he plainly shows his love for Mary, and that he would have liked her to have made him a father. But unfortunately Sir William was encumbered with a wife considerably his senior; however, it is believed that he promised to marry her when his wife died, and thus they were betrothed in a way. But as the Sonnets show plainly, the Dark Lady would break bed-vows or any vows, and would think nothing of being "twice-forsworn."

Queen Elizabeth's maids of honour seem to have been a rather noisy and frisky company of girls at bed-time, and Mary Fitton was presumably by no means the most sedate. She had also some curious experiences with the second Will. Sir Nicholas l'Estrange reports that when Sir William Knollys lodged at Court (which was his rightful position, being Comptroller of the Household) "some of the ladyes and Maydes of Honour used to frisk and hey about in the next room, to his extreme disquiete a nights, though he often warned them of it; at last he getts in one night at their revells, stripps off his shirt, and so with a pair of spectacles on his nose and Aretine in his hand, comes marching in at a posterne door of his own chamber, reading very gravely, full upon the faces of them." He enjoyed his joke, "for he often faced them and often traverst the room in this posture above an hour."

What must his wife have thought, if she heard of it! And what must the girls have thought when they heard, many years after, that Sir William had become a sure

and onlie (?) begetter at the age of eighty-four.* Surely they could not but recall the gymnosophist who studied his "Aretine" and tried to send them all to bed in the earlier days of their love's young dream.

There was evidently something out of the common in this scandal with the maid of honour, for Sir Robert Cecil, writing to Sir George Carew on Feb. 5, 1601, uses these rather suspicious words: "We have no news, but that there is a misfortune befallen Mistress Fitton, for she is proved with child, and the Earl of Pembroke being examined, *confesseth a fact*, but utterly renounceth all marriage." What was this fact, or perhaps fault, that may have induced him to renounce his serious responsibility? Was the "clowne," from whom Pembroke took her, brought into the matter, or did the Comptroller "impeach" Francis Bacon? We cannot tell; but the more we search into the unpleasant mystery of the three Wills, the less can we find any evidence implicating Will Shakespeare. Of course there remains, and always must remain, that enigmatic closing distich of Sonnet CXXXVI.:

> "Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
> And then thou lov'st me,—for my name is *Will*."

Until it be definitely proved that the writer means by these lines that his name is Will Shakespeare, I cannot

* For the remarkable Earl of Banbury paternity case see *Nat. Dict. Biog.*, *s.v.* "Banbury." When Edward was born, the father, William Knollys, first Earl of Banbury (the "Controller"), was eighty years old, and when the second son Nicholas was born, he was eighty-four!

The legal doctrine is "*Pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant*," but the House of Lords has repeatedly refused to admit the legitimacy of the Countess of Banbury's sons, and so their descendants are without their titles to the present day.

One is rather reminded of the grey-haired old gentleman who one morning at his club pointed out with glee to a friend the announcement in the *Times*, that his wife had again given him a son; but was rather taken aback when his friend, in a voice of dismay, exclaimed "Good God, whom do you suspect?" Such a question might well have been addressed to the first Earl of Banbury.

I am afraid, too, that the book this virile old gentleman held in his hand was even worse than the modern reader may suspect. Marston tells us that Italianated Englishmen used to bring home "Aretine's pictures" with them from Venice (*Satire* II. 145); these would be the infamous "positions" of Giulio Romano, with verses by Aretin to accompany them.

accept the ordinary solution. There is so much word-play in the various uses of Will, that we must always be in some doubt as to what the writer of the Sonnets really means here.

In consequence of this enigmatical pleasantry and constant punning reiteration on the word "Will," Mr. Sidney Lee, in the *Fortnightly Review* (1888), wants to brush aside all inferences concerning Will Herbert, Will Shakespeare, and Will Knollys. He tries to do so by heaping up instances of playful contemporary reference to *Will* in the sense of lust or wilful lechery, and adds in a note (p. 219) that "the italics in the Sonnets may be disregarded, they only confuse the interpretation" (!). I fancy the truth is, he feels that they confuse *his* interpretation. But his argument makes it pretty clear that the writer *might* have meant by "my name is *Will*" something very different from Will Shakespeare. The idea intended to be conveyed may well be something oft his kind: "Love the name *Will*, for that so well describes me and my passionate desire for you, that I may claim the name myself—I am indeed Will personified in my wilful passion for you." Or again, Will or Willy was a common poetic name for a pastoral love-poet, and the author of *Venus and Adonis* was that *par excellence*. He might have been "Shepherd Will," just as another fine poet was "Shepherd Tony." Or again, but this seems more unlikely, Bacon, as the writer, might mean that to the world at large his name as author of the Shake-speare "sugred" Sonnets and the Shake-speare Plays was not Francis, but *Will*.

At least, then, we may say that there are such sufficiently good alternative explanations, as to prevent the interpretation of Will Shakespeare as the name of the author being considered a *certainty*.

Sonnet cxxxvii.

This sonnet is an important one, for it shows, by metaphors in no ways obscure, what the moral character of the "Dark Lady" really was. She was

"The bay where all men ride."

If Mary Fitton, the young maid of honour, is meant, this statement is certainly startling. The Masques and Revels of the Court of our great Virgin Queen must have concealed a state of morality far worse than our historians ever gave it credit for. We know Lady Anne Bacon made great complaints of Essex, and perhaps other young gallants as well, being too free with her nieces the Russells and other maids of honour; but Lady Anne was a rigid precisian, and may have therefore imagined more evil than really existed. But here we have the Dark Lady spoken of in terms only befitting the vilest and commonest "drab." In fact, a few lines farther on, this same lady is called "the wide world's common place." The distich is:

> "Why should my heart think that a several plot
> Which my heart knows the wide world's common place.

This reference to a common and its enclosure into *severals* may be compared with what Bacon says in a letter to Essex in 1595 after he had received from the Earl a valuable present of land, probably in Twickenham Park: "I reckon myself," he writes, "as a common, and as much as is lawful to be enclosed of a common, so much your lordship shall be sure to have."

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act II. sc. i., we have

> "My lips are no common though several they be."

But this question of the Dark Lady and Mary Fitton is further discussed in the chapter on "Had Bacon a Mistress?"

I am sorry to say that the private records of the Newdegate family seem to show that the Elizabethan maid of honour belonged decidedly to that unfortunate class of women who are described as "women with a past." We find this portion of her MS. pedigree:

Capt. Lougher, *1st husband.* = MARY FITTON, Maid of Honour, had one bastard by Wm., E. of Pembroke, and two bastards by Sir Richard Leveson, Kt. = Capt. Polwhele, *2nd husband.*

This is bad enough as it stands, but what makes it still worse is that genealogists cannot agree as to whether Captain Lougher was her first husband or her second—she was a lady evidently very "mixed" in her matrimonial relations. And then there was Will Kemp the "clowne," who probably coached her for the intricate steps in the Court masque dances, and last (if she had a last) there was Sir William Knollys, the grave old gentleman who walked up and down before the maids of honour in a kind of "undress" uniform with his A—— in his hand. With such a record, I dare not say that Mary Fitton can *not* be the lady hinted at in the present Sonnet.

Sonnet cxxxviii.

This is one of the two Sonnets printed piratically by Jaggard in 1599. It is important for our purpose, because here we have the author calling himself *old* at some period before 1599. We are here on *terra firma*, and taking the supposition that these Sonnets were only just written, we have the writer (if Shakespeare) speaking of himself as old in his thirty-fifth year and (if Bacon) in his thirty-eighth year. Neither age quite warrants the appellation *old*, but the Sonnet becomes much more suited to the assumption of Baconian authorship, because Bacon has spoken of his being aged while yet in his prime, and Shakespeare has said nothing to that effect.

Sonnet cxliii.

This Sonnet, with its simile of a "careful housewife" running after a bird, probably a chicken, while her own child keeps running after her, reminds one very much of Bacon's simile in his letter to Fulke Greville in 1595. He is complaining of the want of success that attends his pursuit of the Queen's favour. "For to be, as I told you, like a child following a bird, which when he is nearest flieth away and lighteth a little before, and then the child after it again, and so *in infinitum*, I am weary of it."*

* This same Baconian simile occurs almost word for word in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* (Act I. sc. iii.): "I saw him run after a gilded butterfly; and when he caught it, he let it go again; and after it again; and over and over he comes and up again."

Our poet uses this simile for the Dark Lady's benefit, and tells her :

"So run'st thou after that which flies from thee."

This fugitive was William Herbert according to our theory of the *Will* Sonnets, and possibly at first this youthful courtier was rather shy of the Dark Lady as being too forward for his delicate and sensitive nature.

I have quoted in full, elsewhere in this volume (p. 156), a sonnet written by this same William Herbert to some unknown tempter of the softer sex, who had tried to overcome his bashfulness by a very liberal display of her charms. That sonnet shows plainly that young Herbert could be very shy and reserved if he suspected anything wrong. What if the unknown tempter was Mary Fitton ?

Though at first, then, it appears that the lady could not succeed either in catching her bird or in putting a little salt on his tail, yet afterwards, as we know, she was more successful, and got both herself and her loved one into great trouble through it. This appears in Sonnet XLI., one of the few Sonnets that have got displaced ; we read there :

"Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won ;
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed ;
And when a woman woos, what woman's son
Will *sourly* leave her till she have prevailed ?"

The word "sourly" here fits in well with the "sullen eyes" of Herbert's sonnet, and the same lady seems to be meant in both cases. *Cf.* also Sonnet CXLIV., line 8 :

"Wooing his purity with her foul pride."

This Sonnet CXLIII. seems both by its position and contents to belong plainly enough to the *Will* Herbert series. But a German commentator will have it that the "feathered creature" was a hen, *i.e.* a Hen which, he says, is short for Henry, and that Henry, Earl of Southampton, is the man meant here, and he proposes an emendation for the last two lines of the Sonnet, which

are at first sight rather against his theory. However, his emendation puts it all right, for instead of:

"So will I pray that thou may'st have thy *Will*
If thou turn back, and my loud crying still,"

he proposes:

"So will I pray that thou may'st have thy Hen
If thou turn back and my loud crying pen."

His annotations are: "Hen, short for Henry, not so usual certainly as Harry or Hal, but not unknown. *Cf.* B. Webster, s.v. *Henry*, Muret, &c. For 'pen' *cf.* *Lucrece*, 681:

"He *pens* her piteous clamours on her head."

What are we coming to? These Germans seem bent upon beating us on our own ground, and in our own language too. I have heard that some of the members of the German Shakespeare Society know more about the Plays than any English critic, or any Baconian either. I doubt whether the famous Bentley in his most far-fetched emendation of our great blind poet ever surpassed the above.

This next Sonnet, CXLIV., gives us more hints than the majority of the Sonnets. We get a limit of date, for the *Passionate Pilgrim*, which contains it and CXXXVIII., was published in 1599. Therefore this curious love history is probably shortly before that date, and that is rather too early for the Herbert-Fitton incident: again, line 12,

"I guess one angel in another's hell,"

seems to show that the author was well acquainted with the unspeakable tale in Boccaccio, which was not, I believe, at that time translated into English, and is generally a little oasis of French in our English versions still.

And the last line,

"Till my bad angel fire my good one out,"

points very plainly to a peculiar theory of the nature of fire which Bacon held. He supposed that fire extin-

guished fire. In his *History of Henry VII.* he describes how Perkin Warbeck at the siege of Exeter fired one of the gates. "But the citizens perceiving the danger blocked up the gate inside with faggots and other fuel, which they likewise set on fire, and so repulsed fire with fire." It is also referred to in his *Promus*. (Cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act II. sc. iv., *ad fin.*)

Throughout this second series addressed to the Dark Lady there are occasional hidden allusions to that "infection of nature" in the writer which we have had cause to notice elsewhere: thus our author speaks of his

> "Tender feeling to base touches prone;"—(CXLI.)

and again:

> "Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
> Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving;"—(CXLII.)

again:

> "O, though I love what others do abhor,
> With others thou should'st not abhor my state;"—(CL.)

again:

> "Love is too young to know what conscience is;"*—(CLI.)

again:

> "My soul doth tell my body that he may
> Triumph in love; flesh stays no further reason,
> But rising at thy name, doth point out thee
> As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
> He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
> To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
> No want of conscience hold it that I call
> Her "love" for whose dear love I rise and fall."—(CLI.)

This is the Sonnet which is more unworthy of Bacon, morally speaking, than any other in the whole collection. It must be construed I am afraid *sensu obscœno*, and is so bad that many Shakespearians have thought the divine William could never have written such a Sonnet about himself, not even if he had only just left the house where

* *Cf.* "chevril conscience" in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, Act I. sc. i.: "It shall be in the power of thy chevril conscience to do right or wrong at thy pleasure, my pretty Alcibiades." I have elsewhere supposed this aimed at Bacon, or Cheverell the lawyer.

William the Conqueror showed he was before Richard III. They say he wrote it for some one else, or they say that the indiscreet and lascivious Herbert wrote it, and that it got mixed up with Shakespeare's other Sonnets, and so was delivered to Thomas Thorpe, the printer, by Mr. W. H. the "only begetter." They will not have it that their supreme Swan of Avon should thus foul his own nest. "Is it not most damnable in us," says one of his own characters, "to be trumpeters of our unlawful intents?" Is it to be credited, they ask, that Shakespeare would not feel and act up to the level of that thought in such a matter of personal import as this? "The purest treasure mortal times afford is spotless reputation," says Mowbray. "Good name in man and woman, dear my lord, is the immediate jewel of their souls," says Iago. "I have offended reputation," exclaims Antony, "a most unnoble swerving." * They cannot think it possible that a man who cared so little about gathering up his best works would have been party to the careful treasuring up of his worst—especially a man "who was so full of self-respect, domestic prudence, practical sagacity, wise reserve, and *canny* discreetness as was our Shakespeare."

I confess such arguments do not much impress me; they seem rather out-of-date. Moreover, I do not believe that our author, whoever he was, *trumpeted* his own infamy at all. Some scrivener's apprentice stole the scrip—that seems far more feasible, and in that case such arguments fall to the ground. And Bacon's scrip seems far more likely to be lying about in reach of a publisher's pirate than Herbert's or Shakespeare's, for one had a *scriptorium* and ready "pens" or penmen, and would write to his brother Anthony for something fresh to copy so that the pens might not be idle. But the strongest imagination has failed to conceive Shakespeare's *scriptorium* or Shakespeare himself dashing off a long double letter to a learned foreign correspondent.

But let us just glance at this Sonnet that every one

* *Cf.* Massey, *Sonnets*, 1st edit., p. 434.

wishes to be quit of. It certainly seems to point to the author misconducting himself in some way with a lady of good rank or quality, and that her name *might* be Fitton, *i.e.* according to the punning customs of the time—"Fit one." The author's love-passion rose at her name, for he construed it as if she were "the Fit one" for him. He was not the only one who thus played on the name. On a monument of the Fitton family at Gawsworth in Cheshire, erected by Mary Fitton's sister-in-law, we are told of some members of the family who were

"Fittons to weare a heavenly Diadem."

In a former Sonnet, CXIX., I have noticed a possible parallel allusion, where the author's eyes are said to have "been fitted out of their spheres" by his madding fever of love. And in *Cymbeline* we find this (Act IV. sc. i.)

"For 'tis said a woman's fitness comes by fits.'

So there is a *prima facie* probability that Mistress Fitton is the "prize" of which the sonneteer was so proud. But if proud it was only for a moment, and in this Sonnet only where the flesh triumphs and conscience is put to sleep. In the next Sonnet and in many others, especially CXXXVII., he admits his blindness and folly in being attracted to such a wanton and common harlot as the "worser spirit" which did "suggest" or tempt him really was. "She was," he says, "a woman colour'd ill," and I am not at all sure that this means she was of a swarthy or dark complexion, or of an unhealthy complexion. I rather think it was her moral qualities that were aimed at, and I am reminded of Bacon's Essays on the *Colours of Good and Evil*. There is also a very technical and legal sense of the word colour which we meet in *Lucrece:*

"Why hunt I then for colour or excuse?"

and in many other passages of the Shakespeare works. All these point to Bacon rather than Shakespeare.

And while just now on the subject of the "woman colour'd ill," I might refer to the other one of those—

"Two loves I have of comfort and despair"—

I mean "the better angel" or "the man right fair." Shakespearians are divided, of course, as to who he is. But as he seems also to have misconducted himself with the wanton lady of the later Sonnets, and to have

"Anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,"

so if Fitton is the right name here for the lady, then Pembroke will be the "man right fair." But Mr. Sidney Lee will have him to be Southampton throughout.

Seeing how Mr. Sidney Lee changes his views and opinions about the Mr. W. H. of the Sonnets, and how confident he always is—he certainly does not beget the confidence in him which his abilities and knowledge deserve. Mr. S. Butler has a sly hit at him at p. 66 of his *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Mr. Lee had been discussing the colour of Southampton's hair, and as he took Southampton to be the "man right fair" of this famous Sonnet, CXLIV. (The Two Loves), he had to make this hair as light as possible in the pictures and portraits of the Earl that remain. Dealing with one such picture he says, "The colour of the hair in Southampton's portrait is walnut, but is darker now than when the picture was painted." Mr. Butler remarks on this as follows: "Judging from the illustration given (in Mr. Lee's published book), when he says that the hair is walnut in colour, he must mean 'pickled walnut,' for a pickled walnut really is as black as the hair in the illustration; but how pickled walnut can be called 'bright auburn' is one of those puzzles the frequent recurrence of which detracts so seriously from the value of Mr. Lee's in many respects most interesting and useful work." *

But here I must bring my cursory view of the Sonnets to an end. The concluding eight (Sonnets CXLV.–CLII.) all deal with the author's questionings and meditations concerning the conflict in him between Reason and Conscience on the one side and Physical Love or Lust on the other. He seems to have fallen, as far as we can reasonably interpret the language used. When

* S. Butler, *Sonnets*, p. 66.

the sportive blood was hot in the veins, then he found that

"Love is too young to know what conscience is,"

and he seems to confess that he did "betray" his "nobler part" to his "gross body's treason" (Sonnet CLI.). He was not alone in this—it is a frequent experience with the frail children of men—and many far greater saints than Francis Bacon, and men too whose intellects, like his, were of the lofty and philosophic order, men like St. Paul and Augustine, who delighted in the law of God after the inward man, but failed not to find another law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin in their members.*

The autobiographical Sonnets end rather abruptly with No. CLII., where the author accuses himself of perjured vows as well as the lady, and says :

"I am perjur'd most ;
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee."

I don't quite understand what he means by this. Tyler elucidates the passage thus : "'To misuse thee,' *i.e.* To treat you in a manner entirely different from that in which you ought to be treated." Exactly so ; but one would like a little more light.

The last two Sonnets do not belong to the series at all, and are alternative renderings of a poem from the Greek Anthology. They have been referred to elsewhere as showing scholarship beyond the Stratford player's reach. They are the contrasted attempts of a scholar's idle moments. They are, I believe, not so much original renderings, as improvements on other men's labours (*more Baconico*). For I find there are earlier attempts in English several years previously, and there is a good sonnet by Giles Fletcher, LL.D., in his *Licia* of 1593 (Sonnet XXVII.), founded on the same epigram. This would be almost contemporary work.

And here I will make a friendly appeal to Mr. Sidney

* See also William Huntington's *Posthumous Letters*, iii. 196, &c. (Lond., 1815).

Lee. I take it that he knows as much about Shakespeare's times and the surroundings of the Plays as any man living. He has made a complete change of front once in his Shakespearian studies, and I now ask him to make another even more important than the last. I ask him to admit that Bacon, not Shakespeare, wrote the Poems and Sonnets, and for the moment I leave the Plays out of the question altogether. I do not think that any feeling of shame or vexation need oppress him for a moment, if he would remember, as I do, what Cardinal Newman often said in his fine sermons at Oxford, before he himself made his great change of front and position. His view was that in matters of mere opinion to have changed frequently was a true sign of vitality—and never to change in any circumstances a sure sign of stagnation. May Mr. Lee's vitality increase as he proceeds, and may his next criticism show the true sign of it.

Having thus cursorily surveyed the Sonnets on the Baconian assumption of authorship, I would state as a general remark that I should not be surprised if some of them were written by Bacon for Southampton or Herbert to send to their lady-loves. It was not at all an unheard-of thing for a lover to get a poet to write a sonnet for him in the Elizabethan days. Thurio, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, goes into the city to seek a gentleman who shall set a sonnet to music for the purpose of paying court to Sylvia. Gascoigne, who died in 1577, tells us he had been engaged to write for others in the same fashion. The author of the *Forest of Fancy* (1579) informs us that many of the poems were written for "persons who had occasion to crave his help in that behalf," and there are other instances as well. Now we know that Bacon had a confirmed habit of writing letters for other people and supplying "devices" for Essex and such like literary tricks, and there is good contemporary evidence by Marston (1598) and others that certain aristocrats, apparently Essex and Southampton, had the repute of getting their literary work composed for them by another pen. We are told of court noblemen who were

but brokers "of another's wit" who did "but champ that which another chewed," and this specially with regard to "fine set speeches" and "sonnetting" (Marston, *Sat.* I. 42–44).

All these things add to the probability that some of the Sonnets were written by Bacon for some one else. If proved it would have little effect one way or the other on the question of authorship, but it would tend to relieve Bacon from the inference that he had a mistress of abandoned character. Of course the most inexcusable of all the Sonnets, morally speaking, is Sonnet CLI.,

"Love is too young to know what conscience is,"

and it is difficult to believe that Francis Bacon is the author of such a Sonnet. It is utterly opposed to Sonnet CXLI., the tendency and spirit quite diverse. There seems also a hidden jesting obscenity in the last lines. It is thought by some critics that it is "one of Herbert's or Southampton's productions which by chance got mixed with the others." I wish it could be proved to be so. Ben Jonson's first and early opinion about Bacon tends to establish the Sonnet as representing Bacon's conscience fairly accurately: "It shall be in the power of thy chevril conscience to do right or wrong at thy pleasure, my pretty Alcibiades" (*Poetaster*, I. 1). But Ben changed this view when he knew the man personally, and Bacon's later life bore out Jonson's later view.

CHAPTER XII

OF THE PARALLELISMS AND IDENTITIES BETWEEN THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE AND THE ACKNOWLEDGED WORKS OF BACON

THESE are as plentiful as Falstaff's blackberries, and I feel somewhat as the humorous knight felt when asked for his reasons: "Give you a parallel on compulsion? No. I will give no one a parallel on compulsion, nor yet of my own free will; nor an identity either." They can be found easily enough. They grow on every bush of the Baconian nursery garden, and have been growing there for nearly forty years. They are a fruit free to all passers-by, and the nurserymen who look after the gardens say with one voice, "Taste and eat." But the men who have a reputation for being good judges of fruit, say they are not worth the ground they take up.

Let the reader, I say, please himself as to trying this singular garden; there are some odd bushes in it, and I hear that some of the out-of-the-way corners have been appropriated by strange possessors. Some say that at one end there is a "Paradise of Fools," and at another corner an odd gathering of men and women who, when they are reckoned up, are found to be mere ciphers. Let people find their parallelisms and identities themselves, and let them be sure of their own identity to begin with.

I know fairly well what reward the world gives to such explorers, and has given for forty years, and so I shall not attempt to play second Kettle to Mrs. Pott. Neither do I wish to offer "oblations" to be received by critics with language that would hardly be tolerated in a tap-room. So I therefore follow the example of the famous chapter "On Snakes in Ireland" (or was it Iceland?),

and say compendiously of this wonderful fruit from the Shakespeare Plays :

> "*No business done in this department during the present important alterations.*"

And, indeed, what inducement can there be to bring such things before the eyes of people who would only see a wilderness full of Reeds shaken by the wind, or a desert of Potsherds scattered about the ground in sufficient numbers to make a second Monte Testaccio.

It is the immense number of those scattered identities and their want of arrangement that forms their element of weakness, just as a large undisciplined rabble with a horde of camp-followers is weaker in reality than a small determined band of tried soldiers. Perhaps, however, there may be a smooth stone or two in my small wallet which might sink into the forehead of some Goliath among the critical Philistines ; but I shall not sling them. Time works wonders, and I shall leave this desert of broken reeds and crockery to old Father Chronos, in full confidence that he will make it ere long "blossom as the rose," and become a Garden of Pleasure to all lovers of English literature.

Besides this, these identities and parallelisms, whether good or bad, are so easily demolished ; and if a rampant Shakespearian critic has a thousand or two of these Baconian cattle to flesh his eager sword with, and can choose his victims—why then, of course, down they go like sheep before Ajax, and he stalks through the field of slaughter triumphant, and more "cocksure" than ever. No ; this chapter shall contain no parallels. I am not producing any just now.

CHAPTER XIII

HAD BACON A MISTRESS, OR WAS HE INCLINED TO BE A MISOGYNIST?

On the Bacon theory of the Sonnets we are met with this serious objection—"History contains no record of Bacon keeping a mistress." Of course it is open to answer—"Neither does history contain any record that Shakespeare kept a mistress—and yet it has never prevented people, for more than two hundred years, believing that he wrote the Sonnets autobiographically. But it is a strong and serious objection nevertheless, and raises an *à priori* improbability, when we are asked to believe that Mary Fitton was Bacon's mistress. There is capital evidence for Bacon having the chance of knowing her intimately as the friend of his cousins the Russells, who were maids of honour with her and took their shares in the court festivities and masques; and it is pretty certain that he would know her as an acquaintance before young Herbert would have a chance to do so. For Mary Fitton came to Court in 1597, and Herbert was not permanently in town till 1598. And it is quite certain that Mary Fitton was much more likely to be Bacon's mistress than to demean herself so far as to become mistress to a man of Shakespeare's position. Both suppositions seem improbable *à priori* for a maid of honour in high esteem with the Queen, but the second supposition, which is the accepted one by so many critics, seems absolutely out of court.

There is a way out of our difficulty, and it is this. I have sometimes thought that some of the Sonnets which seem to connect their author with the Dark Lady or Mary Fitton, may have been written *by Bacon for Pembroke*. This supposition has an air of *à priori* probability to

commend it, for Bacon was an adept at this feigned composition for others, and it has the extra advantage of quite doing away with the stumbling-block that Mistress Fitton was Bacon's mistress. It leaves her as Pembroke's mistress, but that is a historical fact well authenticated; and it leaves us free to reject a guilty *liaison* between Bacon and Mary, of which history has left no scrap of evidence or suggestion.

I wish I could accept this much easier theory, but the Sonnets do not seem to bear out this occasional feigned impersonation. The author (whether Bacon or Shakespeare) seems undoubtedly to have had "two loves"—the one "a man right faire," the other "a woman colour'd ill"; and even if Bacon got tired of the "Dark Lady" and of

"The expence of spirit in a waste of shame,"

and then became obsequious enough to pander to his friend's passion and write a Sonnet or two *for his friend to send to the lady*, we have still the initial difficulty of the loves of Bacon and Mary Fitton.

The love of the author of the Sonnets for the "Dark Lady" was certainly of a peculiar kind, and is expressed in a manner perfectly unique—quite contrary to the pretty way of the lovelorn sonneteers of that age—a good proof that the "Dark Lady" was not a mere abstraction of the poet's mind, but a very real and uncommon personality. "These Sonnets to the 'Dark Lady' are written on a burning theme, but they could not possibly woo the woman. Persons who serenade a lady do not usually approach her windows with a band of vulgar 'rough music.' They do not remind her that she has broken her marriage-vows, decry her charms, ask her not to play the wolf in leading lambs astray, tell her that her breath 'reeks,' and her breasts are black, her face is foul, and, to sum up, tell her she is as dark as night and as black as hell, with a view of gaining admission." So says Massey* very truly, and adds much more to the same

* Supplemental Chapter, edit. 1872, p. 7.

purpose; but, ingenious as he so often is, he cannot explain why Shakespeare was such an extraordinary lover (for Massey is a staunch Shakespearian and laughs Bacon to scorn), or yet why Shakespeare should write feigned Sonnets for Pembroke and Southampton to Lady Rich, who was Massey's particular "Dark Lady," and who was old enough to be Pembroke's mother.

In fact, Massey completely fails to fit Shakespeare to the circumstances here, nor do I see how any of the orthodox believers can do any better.

But there is a famous man who fits the unusual circumstances admirably, and that is old Aubrey's παιδεραστής, Bacon. For that gifted genius was to a certain extent, in spite of his impassioned and lofty presentation of the tender passion in the play of *Romeo and Juliet* and elsewhere, at bottom a bit of a misogynist, which I have hinted at before as suggested by many depreciatory remarks about the love of women met with in the Sonnets and Plays, as well as in the acknowledged Essays of Francis Bacon. It may have come about in this way; being an ardent lover of pure and beautiful youths, he may not have felt so much attracted by the other sex. We must always remember that the Ideal of the Sonnets, the Master-Mistress of the poet's passion, is a young man, with all the grace and tenderness, the changing hues and blushes of a bashful maiden. And we should always couple this fact with the strange love-ideals we meet with in so many of the earlier Plays—I mean the Rosalinds, the Julias, and the other "male impersonators"—graceful, slender girls in man's attire, with the doublet, hose, and other accessories of a courtly youth or pretty page.*

But although this be so, it cannot be denied that the earlier plays of Shakespeare do certainly dwell more than is usual on certain changes of sexual appearance in young lads and young girls. After Aubrey's revelation we are

* For the "other accessories" I can only refer the curious reader to Lucetta's words to Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Act II. vii. 53). Such matters were alluded to in contemporary Elizabethan literature without much scruple or offence, but it is not so nowadays.

naturally led by such incidents of the Plays to look in the direction of Bacon and Mary Fitton rather than towards Will Shakespeare and Ann Hathaway.

But after all, these suggestive incidents may be harmless enough, and indeed one of the Sonnets, the famous "Master-Mistress" one (XX.), inclines us strongly to take the more lenient view. I will quote it here, so that the reader may judge :

"A woman's face with Nature's owne hand painted,
Haste thou, the Master Mistris of my passion,
A woman's gentle hart but not acquainted
With shifting change as is false women's fashion,
An eye more bright then theirs, lesse false in rowling :
Gilding the object where-upon it gazeth,
A man in hew all *Hews* in his controwling,
Which steales men's eyes and women's souls amaseth,
And for a woman wert thou first created,
Till Nature as she wrought thee fell a dotinge,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she prickt thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love and thy loves use their treasure."

The two lines which I have put in italics are the more important ones with reference to what we are now considering. I think they are witnesses in the writer's favour, and exclude the grosser view. I think also that there is a play upon words in the use of the phrase *she prickt thee out for women's pleasure*, and that it is distinctly in Bacon's manner. He had the defect, which even his friends admitted, that he could not pass by a jest, if opportunity offered. Ben Jonson, while praising Bacon after his death, could not forbear a reference to this, and tells us "his (*i.e.* Bacon's) language (*when he could spare a jest*) was nobly censorious." *

Indeed the Sonnet, taken as a whole, seems to show pretty evidently that the love referred to in it was Platonical in the best sense of that word, and not after the unnatural or "wild" manner which we occasionally

* Ben Jonson's Works, edit. Gifford, p. 749.

hear of even in these refined and civilised days. It may have been "more Greek than English," but this may be attributed to the *refined* Platonism of Italian Renaissance culture, with which Bacon would be well acquainted.

We would accept any reasonable explanation rather than the gross charge which some might be inclined to draw from old Aubrey's word. The poet Gray and his Swiss friend Bonstetten have been adduced as forming a strictly parallel case.* And so has Michael Angelo, who had a strong passion for a youthful friend.†

Bonstetten was a Swiss youth of quality, who went to Cambridge with an introduction to Gray from his friend Norton Nicholls; and in Gray's letters both to Nicholls and to Bonstetten himself there are close parallels to the feelings so beautifully phrased in the Sonnets—especially as to the pangs of absence: "Alas! how do I every moment feel the truth of what I have somewhere read: 'Ce n'est pas le voir, que de s'en souvenir'; and yet that remembrance is the only satisfaction I have left. My life now is but a conversation with your shadow," &c. And another letter warns the youth against the vices to which his youth and good looks, and the example of his own class, leave him peculiarly exposed.

But the case of Michael Angelo is even stronger.

"Michael Angelo's relation to Messer Tommaso de' Cavalieri presents the most interesting parallel to the attitude which Shakespeare adopted towards William Herbert. We find the same expressions of passionate love from the older to the younger man; but here it is still more unquestionably certain that we have not to do with mere poetical figures of speech, since the letters are not a whit less ardent and enthusiastic than the Sonnets. The expressions in the Sonnets are sometimes so warm that Michael Angelo's nephew, in his edition of them,

* The Rev. Professor Beeching on the Sonnets: *Cornhill Magazine* for Feb. 1902.

† G. Brandes, *Shakespeare*, 1898, i. 343.

altered the word *Signiore* into *Signora*, and these poems, like Shakespeare's, were for some time supposed to have been addressed to a woman."

I have given barely a tithe of the arguments and letters by which the Rev. Prof. Beeching and George Brandes illustrate these close parallels. I think they have shown good cause for a belief in the innocent and Platonic character of the warm love depicted in the Sonnets. They are both orthodox Shakespearians, and are thinking of defending the character of the "Swan of Avon." I am thinking of a very different personage, intellectually, socially, and, I should certainly add, physically—but I hail their Platonic parallels with gratitude, and am glad to have Plato on my side. *Malo errare cum Platone quam cum* [*aliis*] *vera sentire.*

Bacon's real character has been more or less a mystery to most of his biographers—a mystery that we cannot expect to be ever made clear. But Mr. Abbott, who perhaps, after Mr. Spedding, has bestowed the greatest thought on this subject, makes a general remark which is worth notice in connection with the scandals we have been considering. He says: "All men lead double lives, a private and a public; but if we may believe Bacon's own account about himself — and it agrees with many casual and unpremeditated indications in his writings— he was a man in whom the two lives were to an extraordinary degree separable." This is a wise saying and worthy of all acceptation. It will account for his great intimacy with Perez while he was hard at work in the other life at the finest passages of *Romeo and Juliet*, or whatever other immortal drama was on hand at the time. It would also account for any possible scandal that there might have been connected with his earlier life and the Sonnets, even if it occurred when he was meditating the Greatest Birth of Time, or the best Policy for the Queen.

After the storm fell upon him and he was wrecked late in life, the double life becomes less apparent, and

gradually fades away. The cleansing fires had purged the dross, and he could say with truth then :

"I gaze at a field in the Past
Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire.
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is quiet at last
As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher.*

We get Francis Bacon's later "glimpses" in his Prayers, found after his death, in that translation of the few Psalms from a sick-bed, and also in his religious "Confession of the Faith" that was in him. For although this last was composed in earlier troubles (1602 perhaps), it was never annulled.

After all that has been said for and against this most illustrious Englishman who is, I hope and believe, eventually to be securely enthroned without serious opposition on the summit of Parnassus, I must give it as my final opinion that he was of a nobler nature and intellect than the world has given him credit for. He has been most unjustly maligned in Pope's well-known lines, and the words, or rather, the worst word, has been quoted against Bacon so often, that some of the mud contained therein has been bound to stick—when flung, as it must be, against a man unable now to reply or excuse himself. Dr. Rawley, his friend, chaplain, literary executor, and biographer, is a better authority for Bacon's character than Pope, that crooked little "note of interrogation," and the good qualities that he bears witness to in the moral and intellectual life of the great Lord Chancellor in his later years seem to bear the stamp of reasonable truth and impartial justice. If Lady Anne had good cause to complain of her younger son's carelessness for religion—or for the puritanical form of it that she professed—if that same younger son afterwards passed through a dark period of pessimistic scepticism very nearly allied to absolute Unbelief, still these were only "murmurings in the wilderness" of one who was to

* Tennyson, *Demeter and other Poems* (Lond. 1893), p. 159.

reach in later years a better spirit and to die on the Mount in the felt Presence of God Himself. It was a saying of his that "a little philosophy maketh men apt to forget God, as attributing too much to second causes; but deep philosophy bringeth a man back to God again"; and here no doubt he spoke of his own experience. His chaplain also tells us that "he was able to render a reason of the hope which was in him, which that writing of his of the Confession of Faith doth abundantly testify." We may accept this high testimony, I think, as well as the many other good qualities which Dr. Rawley assigns to his friend in the biography which was published about thirty years after Bacon's death, but had been compiled some years previously, and was published by Rawley in his own lifetime. Many people bitterly resent the "dethroning of Shakespeare" because they have, from tradition and fashion, come to view the man and his genius as something so sublime and wellnigh divine, that to speak anything derogatory against such a man is almost flat blasphemy. But this is pure idol-worship, founded on sentiment rather than on fact. As a matter of fact and evidence we may safely say that Francis Bacon, with all his faults, was a man of a higher, nobler, and diviner nature than William Shakespeare; and that therefore no harm is done to the moral convictions of any one, by dethroning the smaller man and placing the grander man in the vacant seat on the summit of Parnassus.

There seems little reason to doubt that, even if Francis Bacon had a "storm and stress" period and also a "dark" period in his earlier years, he found a philosophic and religious calm later on. His "Confession of Faith" is a noble one indeed; and has been accepted as a genuine and conscientious account of his ultimate convictions by his best biographers. It is far too little known. As Spedding says: "If any one wishes to read a *summa theologiæ* digested into seven pages of the finest English of the days when its tones were finest, he may read it here" (vii. 215). C. de Remusat says: "On ne voit

nulle raison de supposer que cette pièce, qu'il ne publia pas, ne fût point l'expression sincère de sa conviction." * A high ecclesiastical authority, viz. Abbas Jac. Andr. Emery, Congreg. St. Sulpicii generalis superior, says: "Cette confession met dans la plus parfaite évidence la religion de Bacon, elle donne encore la mesure de l'élévation de son génie, elle abonde en idées véritablement sublimes; et ce qui est encore singulier dans cette pièce c'est que quoique l'auteur récût dans la communion de l'Église protestante, il serait difficile d'y trouver quelque article qui ne pût être avoué par un théologien de l'Église Romaine."

This last remark from the famous theological school of St. Sulpice agrees wonderfully with a similar fact that exists in connection with the immortal Shakespeare Plays. No one seems able to state clearly or positively whether the author of these Plays was a Puritan or an Anglican or a Catholic. Both in the Confession of Faith and in the Plays, the infused religious element is so lofty and so comprehensive that it seems to include both the opposing sections of the Church, as they then were. Bacon was as universal a genius in religion as in other provinces of the human intellect.

It may appear to some that these sincere religious convictions of Bacon's later days quite exclude the probability of his having a mistress or a scandal in his younger days. I cannot think so. I do not see why Bacon was not as likely to sow his wild oats as a Saint Augustine and many another man who afterwards came to die in the odour of sanctity, having "witnessed a good confession." I do not think that Bacon, as a young man, separated himself from his coetaneans as did "the Lady of Christ's," in certain special matters, some forty years later. It was an allowed saying in those times that "nowadays no courtier but has his mistress, no captain but has his cockatrice, no cuckold but has his horns, and no fool but has his feathers"; and I think Bacon fell in with the conventions of the age for a courtier. Surely

* Bacon, *Sa Vie*, &c., Paris, 1858.

noscitur a sociis helps me here; and the Sonnets connected with Southampton and Pembroke bear curious witness to the fact.

The chosen companions of Bacon's early middle period of life were men of loose principles, and both from his mother's letters about him, and from his own evident predilection for masques and mummeries, he was no "saintly confessor" up to the time of at least 1601 or 1602, when he said in *Hamlet*: "I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me." Perhaps the "bruits" and scandal connected with him had made him more careful since 1597 or 1598, when, if we may take the scant evidence of the Sonnets, he was beginning to be "vile esteemed," and to be fearful that Southampton would shun his close acquaintance. It is not at all unlikely that the ill odour in which he found himself both before and after the Essex trial, and the dark period in which he was thereby involved, had grave effects on his personal character, and that these and his thoughts of a well-dowered wife checked very considerably the grosser elements of his nature. I seem almost able, from Hamlet's remarks to Horatio about the gravedigger just before Yorick's skull had been thrown out, to gather the very year of the "bruits" among the vulgar, the *mendacia famæ* which Bacon refers to in his letters to Sir Robert Cecil and others in 1598. Hamlet says: "How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe."

Now, taking *Hamlet* to be written in 1601 or a little earlier (for I do not think Bacon had anything to do with the *Ur-Hamlet* we hear of in 1589; this was Kyd's), we get by subtracting the three years of the text the very time when, as we have supposed from the Sonnets and other grounds, the public adverse rumours were strongest against Bacon. What if the slander was a country one

connected with Gorhambury, and hushed up with difficulty among a rural population? Village slander spreads like wildfire, but seldom gets into print. Hamlet speaking specially of the peasant leads one to think of village gossip, which notoriously puts the worst construction on doubtful matters. What if we have here a reminiscence of the "old scent" which Coke was following up when he talked about the *capias utlegatum* being clapped on Bacon's back, and used other insulting and disgraceful words?

I know the chief authorities on Bacon's life take the *capias utlegatum* incident to refer to Bacon's arrest for debt in 1598, but I think the reference is to something much more serious than this—either to the *treason* in being the author of *Richard II.* (but there would be no need of "disgraceful words" here), or, as I believe, to some scandalous charge evaded by Bacon; this was *felony*.

I am willing to allow all that can possibly or probably be said in Francis Bacon's favour regarding the "wild oats" of his youth, but I confess I do not like the frequency with which beautiful and graceful young girls don the male attire, and especially the unsavoury way in which they discuss their male dress in the Shakespeare Plays. This last is an unusual feature in Renaissance Romance or Drama, and is rather suggestive of Bacon, as it sends our thoughts to Aubrey's Greek appellative and the words that follow about Bacon's "minions." Moreover, the name Rosalind chose in *As You Like It*, when she was disguised as a young lad, was *Ganymede*, a distinctly unpleasant name through its classical allusions; for Ganymede was a minion *par excellence*. I know, of course, that this was the name in Lodge's original tale, from which the play of *As You Like It* was to a great extent derived, but the author of the play could easily have altered the name if he had chosen to do so—indeed he *did* alter most of the names—but he kept Ganymede and one or two others. But I lay very little stress on this name being chosen, for I think it is far more likely that the name was chosen casually and harmlessly rather

than that Bacon and Lodge should be written down *Arcades ambo*, or that we should say of them, as Dogberry said of his prisoners, " 'Fore God, they are both in a tale." And who is there acquainted with Renaissance literature who does not know that it was one of the commonest incidents of Italian and Spanish novels for young girls to dress themselves in the attire of a page so that they could follow their true love and be near him ? Bandello's Tales and the *Diana* of Montemayor are full of such male impersonators, and I have often thought that it was through reading the *Diana* of the Spanish novelist, which had just been translated in 1598 for the English upper classes, that Mary Fitton went to meet her lover Pembroke with her clothes tucked up like a man. She had been reading the last fashionable novel, and she was madcap enough to do anything that was up-to-date and out of the common.

And while on the subject of Montemayor's *Diana*, mention should be made of its connection with the authorship of the Plays. It really affords a strong proof of the Baconian theory, for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is based on incidents in Montemayor's *Diana*, and this Shakespearian play was written before *Diana* had been translated from the Spanish, for it is mentioned by Francis Meres in 1598, and had most likely been written and acted long before this date. For in 1584–5, as we know by the Court Records, *The History of Felix and Philomena* was played before the Queen at Greenwich. Now Felix and Felismena are hero and heroine of Montemayor's novel, and so the Queen would be listening in 1585 to an imitation or reproduction in some form of the *Diana*, not at all unlikely to be an early attempt of young Francis Bacon which was afterwards revised *more suo*, and presented as the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which is itself an early play, as we judge by expressions in it reminding us of the early Sonnets. But the great proof in favour of Bacon that this play affords, is that the whole atmosphere of it, so to speak, is in the highest degree aristocratic, and far removed from that which

Will Shakespeare breathed. It was clearly a play for the court, and the allusions would be well understood by an aristocratic audience. For most of the ladies and gentlemen who aspired to frequent court society were fairly acquainted with the latest novels in their original foreign languages, and there were generally translations for those few who could only read or speak their own vernacular. Now, since the fashionable romance of *Diana* was not translated into English till 1598, it looks pretty evident that the author of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* would either have to translate from the original Spanish or some foreign version of it, or else borrow any manuscript English version he could procure. There might just possibly be two English MS. versions finished, viz., that of Barth. Yonge, eventually published in 1598, and that of Thomas Wilson, dedicated to the Earl of Southampton in 1596, and perhaps written at an earlier date. But whether the author grappled with the foreign languages, or borrowed the English translations before they were published, in both cases Francis Bacon is far the more likely man. As for Will Shakespeare attempting *Diana* either in Spanish or Italian, it seems to me a ridiculous supposition, nor would he fare much better in French.

Sir Henry Irving asked the pertinent question : " Why on earth could not Bacon let the world know in his lifetime that he had written Shakespeare ? " Mrs. Gallup's reply was : " The principal reason was because the history of his life was largely given in those Plays, not alone in the bi-literal cypher but in the word-cypher, and the revelation of that in the lifetime of Queen Elizabeth would have cost him his own life. He hoped against hope to the very day of the Queen's death that she would relent and proclaim him heir to the throne. But he states that the witnesses were then dead, and the papers that would then authenticate his claims destroyed."

My reply is a very different one. It was not through any " more scandals about Elizabeth," but on account of a personal scandal of his own, which might involve

also people of high rank who were still alive. And if it be further asked why did not Bacon's own private secretary Rawley, who lived after him and edited his works, or Ben Jonson, who lived ten or eleven years after him, give to the world the wondrous news, my suggestion is that if they knew it, which I think extremely likely, they refrained from pity and sympathy with a great and unfortunate man latterly, who had made them firm friends of his, and who earnestly desired to throw a veil of concealment over the early errors of his sportive blood, which had been so long renounced and atoned for by his pure devotion to Dame Nature, his new method of enlisting her in the service of man, and his admirable *philanthropia* or lifelong endeavour for the public good.

But it will, I hope, have already been gathered from previous remarks of mine that I see another mistress connected with Bacon who is certainly very different from Mary Fitton the maid of honour ;—different in age and experience and in social position—an earlier flame and a more unworthy and degrading one—a more notorious and infamous one as well, if Marston really meant that she was mixed up in Marlowe's early death. Apparently she was connected with the *habituées* of the playhouses, and known to Southampton and Bacon in that way first. Or if we put aside Marston's allusion to Marlowe as uncertain, there is other evidence pointing to a married "Dark Lady," a citizen's wife of doubtful virtue, whose shop was the resort of the fashionable gallants. And then there is Mrs. Stopes' suggestion that it was Jacquinetta Vautrollier, the dark French connection (by marriage) of Richard Field the publisher. Since Field published Bacon's *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, this seems to be a shrewd suggestion, by no means improbable. But Mrs. Stopes has no evidence to back it up, except that Field was a Stratford man and knew Shakespeare the Player.

CHAPTER XIV

BACON AS A POET

AFTER all, I believe the true estimate of Bacon will be found to be this, that he was not nearly so eminent a philosopher as he was a poet and orator, and withal a supreme master of human speech. I suppose no one knew him more intimately and with more freedom from "concealment" than his great friend Tobie Matthew. His testimony is therefore of prime importance, and is to the following effect: "A man so rare in knowledge of so many several kinds, endued with the facility and felicity of expressing it all, in so elegant, significant, so abundant and yet so choice and ravishing a way of words, of metaphors and allusions, as perhaps the world hath not seen since it was a world." *

The general belief of critics has nearly always been that Bacon was essentially prosaic, not to say prosy. His closest friend and contemporary, who was frequently corresponding with him, and was doubtless admitted to his secret, thought very differently. I maintain that his carefully expressed opinion as above would outweigh the consensus of scores of so-called "critics of style." Unfortunately, too, Mr. Spedding, who has studied Bacon's *known* works more carefully perhaps than any man living or dead, has helped to endorse this opinion of the absence of poetic fire in Bacon with his own weighty signature, and has practically declared that Bacon was incapable of writing either the Plays or the Poems, and that the styles of the two writers were perfectly distinct and unmistakable. These dogmatic assertions, uttered from

* Matthew, *Collection of Letters*, 1660, Preface.

behind the ægis of unquestioned authority, have with many people put an end to any further research into the question. This is unfortunate, for really Spedding, with all his deep acquaintance with Bacon's Life, Letters, and Works, knew hardly more than any one else about that very important period of Bacon's life between the ages of twenty and thirty. It is during this decennium, and a little earlier, that the flowers of poetic fancy are generally wont to bud and blossom, and it is just this period of Bacon's life that is so little known.

If Spedding had known what young Francis was doing in the years 1580 to 1590 as well as he knew his life later on, his dictum would have been much more weighty; but as it is, I hold that it has no warrant to carry conclusive conviction with it, especially when we remember that this opinion was probably founded on Bacon's own remarks on Poetry in the *Advancement of Learning*. But it is quite possible, and I think probable, that here Bacon "concealed" his real attitude to both Poetry and the Drama, *intentionally*. Thus Spedding would be misled. But even the careful and accurate Spedding was inconsistent, for although it is his well-known *ipse dixit* against the Baconian authorship which has strengthened the orthodox belief to such a degree that very few take the trouble to search into the dispute any further, yet this absolute anti-Baconian almost "gives himself away" with the following remark: "The truth is that Bacon was not without the fine frenzy of the poet. . . . Had his genius taken the ordinary direction, I have little doubt that it would have carried him to a place among the great poets." Yet this was the supreme authority who doubted whether there were five consecutive lines in either Bacon or Shakespeare that could possibly be interchanged and not recognised at once by any person "familiar with their several styles"!!

It is far too much taken for granted in this controversy that there is an absolute consensus of opinion against the

poetical gifts of Francis Bacon. This is not the case, as the following extracts show:

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

"Another virtue of the book (Bacon's *Essays*) is one which is not frequently found in union with the scientific or philosophical intellect; viz., a poetical imagination. Bacon's similes, for their aptness and their vividness, are of the kind of which Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Richter might have been proud."—*John Stuart Blackie.*

"To this Bacon would bring something of that high poetical spirit which gleams out at every page of his philosophy."—*Charles Knight.*

"Reason in him works like an instinct; the chain of thought reaches to the highest heaven of invention."—*William Hazlitt.*

"We have only to open *The Advancement of Learning* to see how the Attic bees clustered above the cradle of the new philosophy. Poetry pervaded the thoughts, it inspired the similes, it hymned in the majestic sentences of the wisest of mankind."—*E. Bulwer Lytton.*

There are many more, and they are the common property of any reader who is unprejudiced enough to open the leaves of Mr. Edwin Reed's anti-Shakespearian works. Unfortunately he seldom gives chapter or verse for these extracts, and I have not taken the trouble to verify them, but I believe there is every reason for accepting them as correct. I have noticed one myself from *De Maistre*, and have given it, with the reference, further on.

In later life Bacon's views with regard to Poetry seem to have considerably altered. The difference between the views held in the *Advancement of Learning* of 1605, and the remarks on Poetry in the revised and enlarged edition of the same book in 1623, is very striking. In his later years Poetry holds a far less important place among the elements of human knowledge and progress. In *Advancement of Learning* (1605) he claims that "for the expression of affections, passions, corruptions, and customs, we are beholden to poets' more than to philo-

sophers' works." In the corresponding place of the revised edition of 1623 he drops this claim altogether. In 1605 "Poesy" is declared to be one of the three "goodly fields"—"history" and "experience" being the other two—where "grow observations" concerning the "several characters and tempers of men's natures and dispositions." In 1623 this is omitted, or at least depreciated considerably, because poets are so apt to "exceed" the truth. In fact, as E. W. S. justly remarks,* the revised edition of 1623 so underrates the value of Poesy and Works of the Imagination, that we are led to think "that Bacon, if he had not been hampered by previous publications, would have deposed both Poetry and Imagination from the high place they still continued to occupy in his system."

I suggest that as Bacon grew older he looked with much less appreciation on his earlier contributions to Poetry and its criticism. He thought far less of the Shakespeare Poems and Plays than he did in younger days. His *New Method*, his *Novum Organum*, and *Instauratio* possessed him and cast out much of his earlier aspirations. Moreover, his philosophical methods could be exactly preserved in a language that would live (Latin), while his "works of recreation" could not be so preserved.

May not these things partly account for the strange neglect and concealment of the earlier and immortal productions of his genius, and for his disregard of the fame that might attach to their author? I say "partly account" advisedly, for I have given other reasons elsewhere for this concealment, viz., the wish in early days not to offend relations and friends; not to bring envy or ill-odour on himself; not to rouse personal controversy, and such like. I venture therefore to suggest, although against enormous odds, that Bacon was a born poet, and that it was the Muses who were the first to claim that incomparable intellect for themselves. But circum-

* *Shakespeare-Bacon*, an Essay, 1899, p. 41, where all the references are given.

stances were dead against his open profession of being their true liegeman. He knew well enough where his *genius* delighted to lead him, but his position in life and his surroundings forced him to follow his inner impulse not openly to be seen of all men, but hidden safely under a mask. Openly he became a great lawyer and politician, but his heart was not in the work—*multum incola fuit anima mea* was his oft-quoted complaint. He kept his countenance beneath his self-imposed literary mask with great caution and skill, and like a Franciscan brother in his cowl and rope-girdled cassock, he died and was buried, still wearing it.

Some of us, at last, are beginning to lift up the edges of it. Throughout his whole life, he voluntarily lifted off the mask to but very few—to his dear brother Anthony, his close friend Sir Tobie, his literary adviser Bishop Andrewes — perhaps these wellnigh complete the list. There were no doubt some others who discovered the secret against his wish—and among these I should put Ben Jonson, Marston, Hall, Ned Blount, and some of the piratical printers and their jackals; but both the scandal of the Sonnets and the face behind the mask were kept from public observation and comment in a truly marvellous way. The Star Chamber and its terrors had, I believe, somewhat to do with this, for the law of libel and the charge of *scandalum magnatum* could be very effectively used in those days by people high in authority.

I here maintain that Bacon's *genius* led him in his earlier days to poetry and to a style of oratorical prose, which for singularity of language, largeness of vocabulary, and richness of illustrations has hardly ever been equalled in our language. He showed his unique mastery of the English language both early and late in life, and the main difference between the two periods seems to be that he tried to be less ornate, less "spangled," and "more current in the style" in his later years. He had learned by the experience of years that this innate magniloquence to which his genius led him was sometimes against him rather than not, and so we find he asks his friend Sir Tobie

to mark any passages (in a MS. forwarded) where he (Bacon) may have yielded to his genius (*indulgere genio*). He intended to revise such. We have also Bacon's own clearest evidence that he was "a man born for literature" (*litteras*) rather than for anything else, and "forced against his own genius (*contra genium suum*) into affairs, by he knew not what fate." * Dr. Garnett, writing to the *Times* for July 5, 1902, suggests that the fact of Bacon being a great lawyer is very much against the Baconian authorship of the Plays, for no one illustrious in forensic circles has ever produced a masterpiece either in poetry or the drama. Dr. Garnett is not likely to be incorrect in his literary facts, but I demur to his Baconian inference, for Bacon was a lawyer *in spite of himself*, and was thus an exception to the general rule.

But how any literary student of Bacon can fail to see in his works the *vera insignia* of a poet, or pass over without notice the many *spolia opima* of our vernacular therein contained, is to me most surprising. Long ago Shelley said Bacon "was a poet," and *his* insight ought to be worth something, for he bore the true stamp of the divine art himself, and had only Bacon's prose to guide him. The fact seems to be that Francis Bacon began to be a concealed poet as early as 1579, and was laying the *foundations* of the Plays and Poems that were to make another man immortal during all the ten years, 1580 to 1590, of which we know so little. He was then a great admirer of Sir Philip Sidney, and we shall never perhaps know how often these two illustrious men discussed in friendly conference "the excellence of sweet Poesie." Later on, when his *Novum Organum* engrossed his thoughts, he altered his views about poetry and word-painting, and misled his critics and editors right up to the present day. He, who as plain Francis Bacon had the finest collection of "spangled" words, and the most extensive vocabulary of all the gentlemen of the "Innes of Court," when he was getting older and advancing slowly to the highest offices of the land, seemed to despise the former glories

* Spedding, *Bacon's Works*, i. 792.

of his vocabulary, as a hindrance both to philosophy and truth. "It is," he says, "the first distemper of learning when men study words and not matter. . . . It seems to me that Pygmalion's frenzy is a good emblem or portraiture of this vanity; for words are but the images of matter; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture." * We must be careful, however, to take these remarks as only directed against bare and excessive verbiage—words without life in them; but if they had "life of reason and invention," such as the "Tables of Invention," which were, so to speak, "living" (*tanquam vivæ*), it was a very different matter.

I will say no more just now as to the new indications I think I have discovered of Bacon's interest in poetry. That part shall be left until some future work. We have already seen how Bacon, when writing to Essex in 1594, hints that he has been writing poetry, and speaks without concealment of "the waters of Parnassus." There is another pertinent instance later on in 1599. Bacon, at that date, writes to Lord Henry Howard, a scholar and littérateur, in these terms: "For your Lordship's love, rooted upon good opinion I esteem it highly, because I have tasted of the fruits of it; *and we both have tasted of the best waters, in my account, to knit minds together.*" A plain enough confession that Bacon was a lover of the Muses.

But perhaps the strongest statement that Bacon was a poet comes from a literary enemy, a Frenchman and a rigid Roman Catholic. One of the severest attacks ever made on Bacon's philosophy was the *Examen de la Philosophie de Bacon*, by Count Joseph de Maistre, published posthumously (Paris, 1836). It is one long tirade against Bacon, calling him an atheist, a hypocrite, and a charlatan; and yet, strange to say, the tirade abates its force towards the end, and admits his poetic genius and some other good qualities in the following terms: "La nature l'avait créé bel esprit, moraliste sensé et ingénieux, écrivain

* *Advancement of Learning*, Book I. iv. 2.

élégant, avec je ne sais quelle veine poetique qui lui fournit sans cesse une foule d'images extrêmement heureuses, de manière que ses écrits, comme fables, sont encore très amusant." And elsewhere (vol. i. p. 5) he says "rarement il résiste à l'envie d'être poète." This recalls Shelley's statement that Bacon was a poet, and also Bacon's own question to his friend Tobie Matthew as to whether he had given way to his genius (poetry ?) in his last words sent to his friend on approval.

My strong impression is that with Francis Bacon love for literature and poetry came long before his great passion for science, and one was in fact eventually extinguished by the other. Hear his own words: "Poetry is as it were a dream of learning. . . . But now it is time for me to become fully awake, to lift myself up from the earth, and to wing my way through the liquid ether of philosophy and the sciences." * But he could not express his simple intention without falling (as above) into poetical prose. Such was his genius, as he himself knew and admitted. How modern Shakespearians can insist upon denying to Bacon any claim whatever to pose as a poet, is one of the greatest puzzles to me in the whole controversy.

Extant seventeenth-century testimonies to the existence of a most intimate relation between Bacon and the Muses, Apollo, Poetry, Helicon, Parnassus, &c., are embarrassingly numerous. Thomas Randolph, in Latin verses published in 1640, but probably written some fourteen years earlier, says Phœbus was accessory to Bacon's death, because he was afraid lest Bacon should some day come to be crowned King of Poetry or the Muses. Further on the same writer declares that as Bacon "was himself a singer," he did not really need to be celebrated in song by others. George Herbert calls Bacon the colleague of Sol (Apollo). Thomas Campion addresses Bacon thus: "Whether the thorny volume of the Law, or the Schools, or the Sweet Muse allure thee." George Wither in his *Great Assizes at Parnassus*, 1644,

* Spedding, *Bacon's Works*, i. 539.

makes Bacon Chancellor of Parnassus and Sir Philip Sidney High Constable. And there are many other similar praises in the *Manes Verulamiani* which were prefixed to Gilbert Wats's translation of the *De Augmentis* in 1640. All these evidences, and more, have been before the world for many many years and no one seems to give any heed to them. The list could easily be increased, but is it worth while? Would it avail anything to convince people who in a great majority hold a very strong opinion that Bacon was the exact opposite of a poet, and could not write a humorous line to save his life? Experience has taught me that it will not be of the slightest use. So I forbear; they must keep their opinions, and I will keep mine until I hear evidence to overthrow it. And out of the many other proofs I could give I will choose but one. It is by a contemporary poet, John Davies of Hereford, and openly addressed to Bacon in print while he was alive.

To the royall, ingenious, and all learned knight,

SIR FRANCIS BACON.

Thy *bounty* and the *Beauty* of thy witt,
Compris'd in lists of *Law* and learnèd *Arts*,
Each making thee for great *imploiment* fitt,
Which now thou hast (though short of thy deserts),
Compells my Pen to let fall shining *Inke*
And to bedew the *Baies* that *deck* thy Front;
And to thy health in Helicon to drinke
As to her Bellamour, the Muse is wont:
For thou dost her embozom; and dost use
Her company for sport 'twixt grave affairs,
So utterest Law the livelyer through thy *Muse*,
And for that all thy *Notes* are sweetest Aires;
My muse *thus notes thy worth* in every Line
With yncke which thus she sugers; so to shine.

This seems plain enough, and I only remark that Davies could not possibly call Bacon the Muses' Bellamour or darling if he only knew the poetry of Bacon that this age recognises. Davies clearly knew (line 10) what Bacon called his "works of recreation." His last two

lines refer, I suppose, to an illuminated presentation copy.*

But, to my mind, one of the best of evidences that Bacon was a poet comes from his own words, uttered on Nov. 17, 1595, by an amateur gentleman actor "that in Cambridge played Giraldy" in the presence of the Queen and a large gathering of court notables at one of the "Triumphs" that were so much the fashion in those days. Tobie Matthew, Bacon's lifelong friend, was also there, and took a prominent part in the proceedings. He took the character of the squire of the great Lord who presented the "Device," and who also had the contemporary credit of composing the words, for it is always spoken of as "My Lord Essex's Device." But Tobie Matthew knew well enough who was the true author of the remarkable speeches it contained, and so do we now. Time reveals many mysteries, and has made known to us, by the discovery of a rough copy partly in Bacon's writing, that the Device of my Lord Essex, presented Nov. 17, 1595, was the work of that amazing genius, Francis Bacon. I have spoken somewhat of it in another

* And here I would make the bold and novel suggestion that the famous Shake-speare's Sonnets were *not* called "sugred" because they were sweet as sugar, but because they were carefully prepared for presentation by an expert scrivener, and came into the hands of the "private friends" of the author with their manuscript characters heightened and made more brilliant by the art of the illuminator and gilder, and the ink "sugred" so as to shine on the scroll. I possess several German manuscript broad-sheets addressed to great personages *c.* 1600 to 1650 which have been sprinkled in this manner, and still retain their shiny brightness. I suppose the "sugring" was effected by something in the form of a pepper-caster or like the pounce-box of our ancestors. I am aware that Thomas Bancroft in 1639 wrote the following:

To Shakespeare.

Thy Muse's sugred dainties seem to us
Like the fam'd apples of old Tantalus,
For we (admiring) see and hear thy straines,
But none I see or hear those sweet attaines.

This of course tells against my suggestion, but Bancroft, like others down to the present day, may have taken the primary and more obvious meaning that sugred = sweet without thinking further about it, and without knowing that Francis Bacon had at least one "sugred" sonnet addressed to himself with "sugred yncke."

chapter on the Pallas-Shake-speare evidence, and to avoid repetition shall only deal with that part of the Device which proves to me so forcibly that Bacon was a poet *par excellence*.

The scene is the "Tiltyard," and, after certain usual exercises have been successfully got through, Tobie Matthew, arrayed in the garb of an esquire to "my Lord," addresses the Queen, and asks leave to present to her Majesty three personages who wish to speak before her. They are said to be "a melancholy, dreaming Hermit, a mutinous, brain-sick Soldier, and a busy, tedious Secretary." They come forward in turn, and each makes his suitable speech. These speeches are the undoubted composition of Francis Bacon, though gossiping contemporaries and letter-writers of the day, such as Rowland Whyte, all seem to be without the slightest inkling of such a notion. They are wonderful compositions, whether we look at the wise reflections, the fine imagery and striking similitudes in which they abound, or the clever way they put the case of Essex before the Queen. The speech that most of all shows Bacon the Great Poet is the one delivered by the "melancholy, dreaming Hermit." * He is advising that the gifts of fortune, the glories of war, and the diplomacy of statecraft are wearisome and dangerous compared with the solace, variety, and eternity of the gifts and fruits the Muses offer. He goes on :

> Let thy master, Squire, offer his services to the Muses. It is long since they received any into their court. They give alms continually at their gate, that many come to live upon ; but few have they ever admitted into their palace. There shall he find secrets not dangerous to know, sides and parties not factious to hold, precepts and commandments not penal to disobey. The gardens of love wherein he now playeth himself are fresh to-day and fading to-morrow, as the sun comforts them or is turned from them. But the gardens of the Muses keep the privilege of the golden age ; they ever flourish and are in league with time. The

* *Cf.* the "melancholy Jaques" of the Shakespeare Plays, and the many other notices spread about the earlier dramas. "What sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy ?" (*Love's Labour's Lost*, I. ii. 2). N.B.

monuments of wit survive the monuments of power: the verses of a poet endure without a syllable lost, while states and empires pass many periods. Let him not think he shall [not] descend, for he is now upon a hill as a ship is mounted upon the ridge of a wave; but that hill of the Muses is above tempests, always clear and calm; a hill of the goodliest discovery that man can have being a prospect upon all the errors and wanderings of the present and former times. Yea, in some cliff * it leadeth the eye beyond the horizon of time, and giveth no obscure divinations of times to come."

Do not we see here the thoughts and language of a supreme poet? Have we not reproduced here in elegant and courtly phrase many reminiscences of the Sonnets, of *Hamlet* and of the early plays, of the *Promus* and a forecast of that cloudless Parnassian summit which adorned the title-page of another book a few years later? We think of Sonnets LX. and CXXIII., and others where Time's devouring hand is scorned by the "ever-living" poet. We think of the "prophetic soul" of Hamlet and of Sonnet CVII. "dreaming on things to come," and we feel sure we are in the presence of a great and true poet, who, strangest of all literary marvels, let "this man" take his admirable "Devices," and "that man" his immortal Poems and Plays, and perhaps "another man" the contents of his carefully prepared commonplace books —content, when nearing the end of all earthly labours, to feel the inward assurance that, though only "in a despised weed," yet in all laborious earnestness he had sought the good of all men. He too it was, as I submit, subject to correction, who placed on the postern door of the *Palatium Palladis* in place of FINIS those characteristic words:

NASCIMVR IN COMMVNE BONVM.

But that is another story, belonging to my proofs reserved for a future volume, and is more conjectural than the present chapter, which I here conclude with the hope

* Spedding reads "as from a cliff"? but perhaps cliff=clef. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, V. ii. 11.

that I have given solid grounds for believing that Bacon had by many sure and infallible signs the genius and the language of a supreme poet.

But while saying this, and hoping for its favourable acceptance, I would not for one moment deny the great difficulty there must be for any man, conversant with literary style, to be able to believe that the writer of the *Novum Organum* was also the writer of the immortal Plays, Poems, and Sonnets of Shakespeare. It would be believing in a "miracle" of literature, and miracles do not occur nowadays in any department of the universe. Professor Tyrrell, as we have seen, would rather believe all the fables of the Talmud and Alcoran, than believe this miracle of letters, and the Professor is D.Litt., and should be a good judge. I quite understand the Professor's position, for it was my own once, and it was only new and unexpected evidence that dislodged me. Even now I know of no instance like Bacon's marvellous change of style, manner, and identity in the whole literary history of mankind. It is a record literary marvel, unattained to in the past, and possibly unattainable in the future. As far as the gap or immense literary chasm between the two styles is concerned, I can think of but one incident in my personal experience at all reminding me of it, and that was the private ordinary conversation that Cora L. V. Tappan once entertained me with for a few minutes (by privilege) before she went off into a trance—and her so-called inspirational utterances or lectures to her audience while in that mediumistic state. The literary chasm was very wide between the two, and I remember I was much struck with it many years ago, before I had so much as heard of the Bacon theory. Outside my personal experience, the case of T. L. Harris seems to me sometimes slightly akin to the Bacon "marvel." When I compare his plain but eloquent sermons in England with the poetry and the prose of his remarkable series of privately-printed Californian books from Santa Rosa, I seem to see a gulf of difference almost as vast and deep as lies between *Novum Organum* and *Hamlet* or *King Lear*. What if

Bacon had the mysterious power of assuming the personality and utterances of the characters he put into his plays, even as some mediums have apparently a psychical power or gift of assuming the manner, voice, and knowledge (?) of another person alive or dead? Milton was "visited" in the early watches of the morning by thoughts and phrases and fancies of a loftier character than would occur to him in the ordinary working hours of the day; and other similar examples could be adduced. I know of no scrap of evidence in Bacon's life that points this way, but, when there seem so few possible solutions that will float us out of the sea of difficulty, we are ready to catch at any straw.

CHAPTER XV

NEW EVIDENCE CONNECTING BACON WITH PALLAS AND THE HYPHENATED SHAKE-SPEARE

In order that Baconians may get a hearing, two things must be proved either separately or in conjunction, as Professor A. R. Wallace very properly puts it :

(1) It must be shown that Bacon wrote the Plays; or
(2) That Shakespeare could not possibly have written them.

The first is the easier plan, for it is proverbially difficult to prove a negative, and I have chosen the easier plan ; but the great majority of anti-Shakespearians have chosen the harder task of proving that Shakespeare the Player could not be the author of the Shakespeare Plays, and inferentially could not be author of the Sonnets and Poems either, though generally these latter works are not much dwelt upon by Baconians. They, as a rule, manage their facts and arguments so as to stand or fall by the Plays.

One of the latest and longest works on the second or harder plan, is a book just written (1902) by a Mr. W. H. Edwards, author of *The Butterflies of North America*, *A Voyage upon the River Amazon*, &c. It has more than 500 pages, and is entitled *Shaksper not Shakespeare*, with this motto on the title-page, "Let every tub stand on its own bottom." He begins his vast demonstration thus :

"I propose to show that William Shaksper, often called Shakspere, could not have possibly written the works attributed to him under the name of William Shakespeare or Shake-speare. That the writer was a man who was a player, whose family name was 'Shaksper,' and whose name is appended to a deed and a

mortgage 'Shaksper' and 'Shakspar,' and three times to a will 'Shaksper'—of this there is no evidence, there is nothing but inference, conjecture, unwarranted assumption, and baseless (though general) reputation. During his life of fifty-two years none of his relatives, neighbours, or intimates, and none of his contemporaries, testified that this man was the author of these works."

This is a vigorous beginning, and perhaps such all-embracing assertions would have been all the better for a little restraint and modification. However, he goes on to say :

"Halliwell-Phillipps is the greatest authority on the subject of William Shakespeare by consent of all Shakespearians. His two large volumes comprise nine hundred pages,—and, after all, striking out some few elegiac verses or eulogies from the beginning of the successive folio editions of the Plays . . . *there is not one line in the whole work that identifies William Shaksper as the author of the poems and plays*—not one line. We are made to know about him in every aspect but that of author, and there history is silent."

Next he comes to his main point concerning *Shaksper* not being Shakespeare.

"The name Shakespeare is quite another etymologically and orthographically from Shagsper or Shakspere, or Shaxpeyr or Shaxper. It is not in evidence that any author lived in the age of Elizabeth whose family and baptismal name was William Shakespeare or Shake-speare. There is no such historical man—no individual known who bore that name ; and the inference is fair that the name as printed upon certain poems and plays was a pseudonym, like that of 'Mark Twain,' or of 'George Eliot.'"

A very great deal of what this writer says in his 500 pages is, I am afraid, below criticism, for he is very careless and inaccurate in his assertions ; and R. L. Ashhurst, who is Vice-Dean of the Shakspere Society of Philadelphia, read before that Society (Jan. 23, 1901) "Some Remarks" on this book, and certainly proves the author's sins of omission and commission and reckless assertion to be very numerous. But the remarkable

thing in connection with the Vice-Dean's paper is that with regard to the spelling of the name "Shaksper not Shakespeare," which is one of the main points of the book, and *its only title*. Mr. Ashhurst begins by saying: "Tradition gives us as the author of these Plays William Shakspere—*I care nothing about the spelling*—an actor at the Globe Theatre, &c." I hardly remember a cooler instance of passing or slurring over the main point of the very book which the lecturer set himself to criticise.

Personally, I think there *is* a good deal in this peculiar change into Shake-speare, and that it points to a "concealed personality" who was very different both by culture and position from the Stratford player. I believe that Shake-speare was a man who had sought "in a despised weed the good of all men," and had tried his best to shake a spear at Ignorance, which can hardly be said of the Stratford Shaksper, who brought up some of his family in such ignorance that they could not write their own names.

Mr. Edwards further thinks that Shaksper the player went back to Stratford because "he liked the sort of people who lived there and the life they led, and would have been utterly out of place in a genteel or cultivated community." He adds: "Shaksper is never reported to have been seen with a book in his hand, or as having owned or read one, nor as seen writing poems or plays, or as having talked about such works, or as engaged in literary occupation of any description." He asks also how Shaksper could get a vocabulary of 15,000 to 20,000 words, and quotes the following to show the meanness of the man: "In the Chamberlain's accounts of Stratford is found a charge, in 1614, for one quart of sack and one quart of claret wine, given to a preacher at the New Place (Shaksper's own house). What manner of man must he have been who would require the town to pay for the wine furnished to his guests? What," he asks, "would a Virginian think of a man who charged a visiting preacher's whiskey to the county?" And so he goes on for nearly 500 pages, often not altogether accurate in his

assertions or inferences, but he writes forcibly enough for the man in the street, and sums up without mentioning Bacon, as he does not come into his line of argument. This book is the last from America (excluding Mrs. Gallup), and that is the reason I have introduced it to my readers, so that they may hear *le dernier mot* from that quarter and the line taken. It contains most of the stock arguments against the possibility of the Stratford man writing the Plays, but is not equal in lucidity and arrangement to Judge Webb's *Mystery of William Shakespeare*, which is the latest and best on our side of the Atlantic.

Before quite leaving the Shake-speare or lance-brandishing problem, I will bring forward some little discoveries of my own. I do not attach much importance to them, but there is this in their favour—they are perfectly new in the way of evidence.

Here is a sonnet addressed to Francis Bacon in 1595 or 1596, which has never been in print before, and which was preserved by his brother Anthony. It is rather important for one word which may refer to the Shake-speare authorship.

À Monsieur François Bacon.

Sonnet.

Ce qu'inspiré du Ciel, et plein d'affection
Je comble si souvent ma bouche, et ma poitrine
Du sacré Nom fameus de ta Royne divine
Ses valeurs en sont cause et sa perfection
Si ce siècle de fer si mainte Nation
Ingratte à ses honneurs, n'avait l'ame Æmantine :
Ravis de ce beau Nom, qu'aus Graces je destine
Avec eus nous l'aurions en admiration.
Donc (Baccon) s'il advient que ma Muse l'on vante
Ce n'est pas qu'elle soit ou diserte, ou sçavante :
Bien que *vostre Pallas* me rende mieus instruit
C'est pource que mon Lut chant sa gloire sainte
Ou qu'en ces vers nayfz son Image est emprainte :
Ou que ta vertu claire en mon ombre reluit.

—La Jessée.

This sonnet, which is at the Lambeth Archiepiscopal Library, was overlooked both by Birch and Spedding, or

perhaps, I should say, passed over by them as containing nothing of historical interest. However, for a certain reason I have thought it worth transcription. La Jessée, who signs as responsible for the sonnet, was not a lady, as one might suppose at first sight, but was, as I take it, Jean de la Jessée, who was *secrétaire de la chambre* to that Francis, Duke of Anjou, who was so long a suitor for Queen Elizabeth (1570–1581). Most likely it was while Bacon was in France in the English ambassador's suite (1576–1579) that he made acquaintance with La Jessée. He was a man evidently fond of the Muses, for he wrote many sonnets to friends and patrons, published at Antwerp in 1582 in four volumes quarto. What the Duke of Anjou's private secretary seems to wish to convey to Bacon is this—that his own Muse, prolific as it was, was not a learned or eloquent one, but that Bacon's Pallas had taught it better how to speak. Now, Pallas was not one of the Muses, nor had Pallas anything to do with law; what could Bacon have to do with her? Well, she sprang fully armed from the head of Jove; she was a learned goddess; she was *Hastivibrans*, a Shaker of the Spear or Lance; and she had a vanquished serpent (Ignorance?) at her feet in Greek sculpture. With the ancient Greeks she was looked upon as the protectress and preserver of the state; she was the personification of what the Romans called *Prudentia Civilis*, and what we call Political Science. Bacon set himself to be an adept at this. Can this partly explain why Bacon called himself Shake-speare?

La Jessée wrote both in French and Latin, and I find sonnets to Seigneur Pollet,* ambassadeur d'Angleterre, to the King of Navarre, and to Queen Elizabeth; so we may conclude on several grounds that the Duke of Anjou's secretary was fairly acquainted with court life and court fashions in England.

This French sonnet to *François Bacon*, from its position in the bound-up volumes of Anthony Bacon's MSS., seems

* This was the Sir Amyas Paulet in whose train young Francis Bacon went to France for nearly three years (1576–1579).

to have been written about 1595 or 1596, and at that date the famous Essays of Francis Bacon had not been published, nor had any literary work of much significance been put forth by him, so the expression *vostre Pallas* does not seem appropriate, as nothing like a Pallas fully armed had sprung from Bacon's great brain yet, as far as the world of letters knew.

But while pondering on what La Jessée's reference to Bacon's Pallas (*vostre Pallas*) could possibly mean, I fortunately struck upon a clue to which I attach considerable importance, and if a right clue, it leads to the key which will perhaps unlock the mystery of that hyphenated and strangely-spelled word Shake-speare, which is quite different from any of the player's usual signatures, and only appears hyphenated on certain title-pages and dedications and signatures to Poems (*The Phœnix and the Turtle*) in the prefatory matter by Ben Jonson and others of the first folio, and in Willobie's *Avisa*, 1594. The clue is this: Pallas is referred to in a remarkable paper, without heading, docket, or date, found in the Lambeth collection; which paper is further proved by some notes and portions of the rough draft still extant in Bacon's handwriting to be of his composition. It is clearly a part of one of the Devices which Bacon was so clever and ready in contriving. It seems to have been a sequel to some former Device of the same kind, in which Philautia, the goddess of Self-Love, had been represented as addressing some persuasion to the Queen, and is in the form of a letter (in Bacon's handwriting, and with his notes for Essex written in the margin!) to the Queen. This letter was most likely intended to come into the Device at the point where the ambassadors introduce themselves by delivering it to the Queen. It is so important for the solution of The Mystery of William Shake-speare, that I must quote it at length.

"Excellent Queen, Making report to Pallas, upon whom Philautia depends,* of my last audience with your Majesty and of

* *Frustra sapit, qui sibimet sapit.*

the opposition I found by the feigning tongue of a disguised Squire, and also of the inclination of countenance and ear which I discerned in your Majesty rather towards my ground than to his voluntary, the Goddess allowed well of my endeavour and said no more at that time. But few days since she called me to her, and told me that my persuasions had done good,* yet that it was not amiss to refresh them. I attending in silence her furder pleasure, after a little pause putting her shield before her eyes as she useth when she studieth to resolve. Better (said she) raise the siege than send continual succours, and that may be done by stratagem. This, Philautia, shall you do. Address yourself to Erophilus. You know the rest: we shall see what answer or invention the Goddess of fools (so many times she will call Jupiter's fair daughter) will provide for him against your assailings. And then the alone Queen † (so she ever terms your Majesty) will see that she hath had Philautia's first offer, and that if she reject it, it will be received elsewhere to her disadvantage. And upon my humble reverence to depart she cleared her countenance, and said, The time makes for you. ‡ I gladly received her instructions. Only because I had negotiated with your Majesty myself I would not vouchsafe to deal with an inferior in person: but I have put them in commission that your Majesty will see can very well acquit themselves; and will at least make you sport, which Philautia for a vale desireth you to contrive out of all others' earnest, and so kisseth your serene hands, and rested,—Your Majesty's faithful remembrancer, PHILAUTIA."

Then follows the beginning of the speech of the Hermit —a first draft only; it was afterwards entirely rewritten, and is extant in another part of the same MS. volumes, viz., in the Gibson Papers, vol. v. No. 118.

Now this rough draft of Bacon's composition was intended solely for the eyes of the Earl of Essex, who was the supposed author of the Device, and obtained apparently the whole credit for it from his contemporaries. Bacon's name seems quite kept out of our accounts of the Device,

* That your Lordship knoweth whether the Queen have profited in Self-Love.

† I pray God she be not too much alone, but it is a name of excellency and virginity.

‡ That your Lordship knoweth, and I in part, in regard of the Queen's unkind dealing, which may persuade you to self-love.