

THE QUINTESSENCE  
OF THE  
SHAKESPEARE SECRET

BY  
EDWIN BORMANN

A. SIEGLE  
2 LANGHAM PLACE, LONDON, W.

1905

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*From and to Pen*

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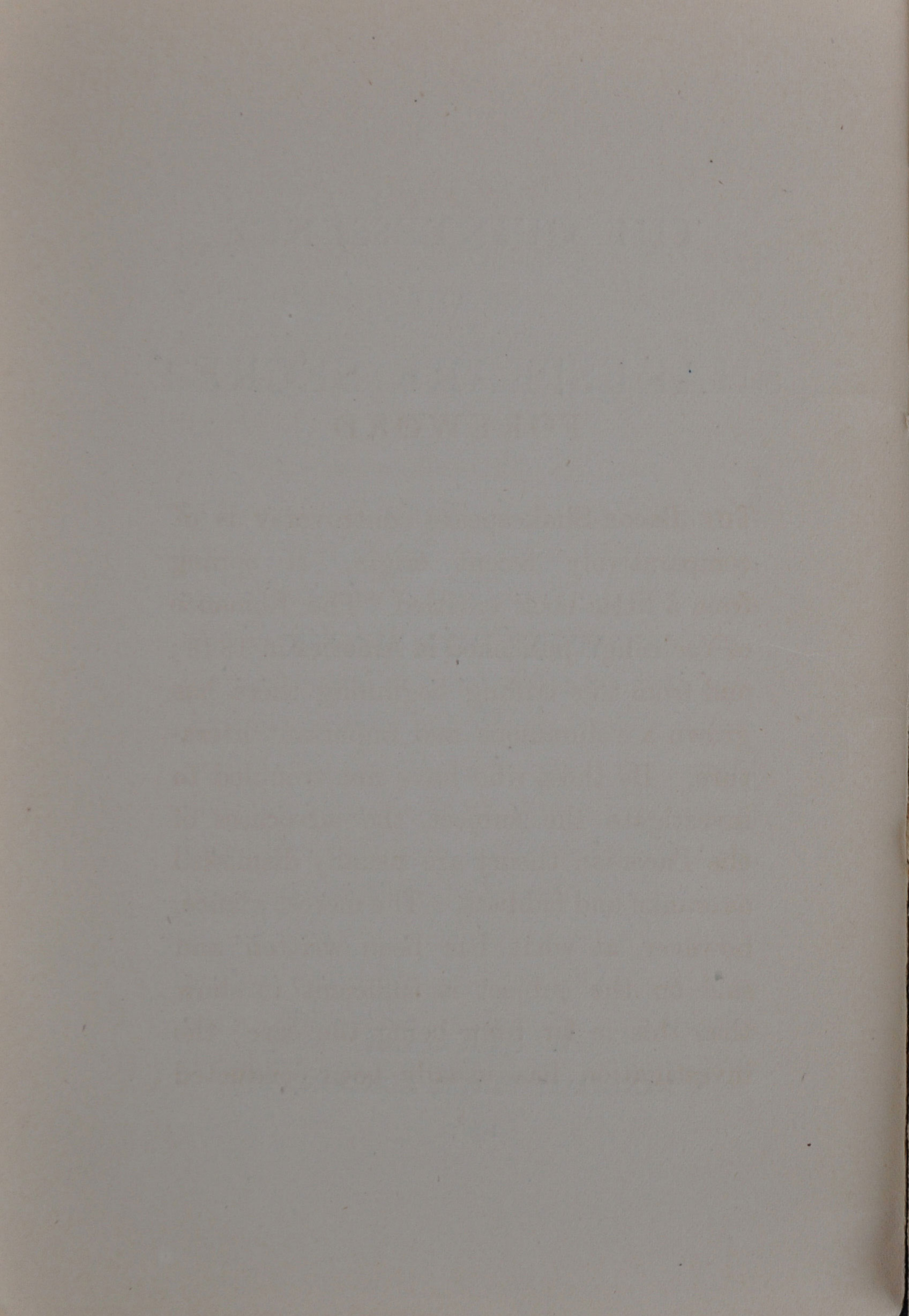
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## FOREWORD

THE Bacon-Shakespeare controversy is of comparatively recent origin. It sprang from a little book entitled "The Romance of Yachting," published in America in 1848; and from this trifling beginning there has grown a voluminous and important literature. By those who have not troubled to investigate the subject, the advocates of the Baconian theory are usually dismissed as cranks and faddists. The merest glance, however, at what has been written and said on the subject is sufficient to show that this is far from being the case; the investigation has usually been conducted



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by those solely influenced by a desire to get at the truth. Nathaniel Hawthorne said many years ago, in a preface to a book advocating the claims of Bacon, "the first feeling of any reader must be one of absolute repugnance towards a person who seeks to tear out of the Anglo-Saxon heart the name which for ages it has held dearest, and to substitute another name, or names, to which the settled belief of the world has long assigned a very different position." And none can help feeling in complete sympathy with Hawthorne's view. The world does not take kindly to the disturbance of its settled beliefs, notwithstanding that the process is continually in operation. There is, however, a consolatory aspect of the present controversy. It is this: If Shakespeare did not write the plays with which his name has hitherto been associated, no



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one would be less likely than he to resent the publication of the fact. For, if he sailed under false colours it could not have been with the desire to reap unmerited fame; that the secret, if secret there be, did not leak out, is merely a testimony to his fidelity in carrying out a business compact. Shakespeare was, in fact, either a respectable man of theatrical affairs, or he was the extraordinary genius of common acceptation. There can be no middle view. Mr. E. Bormann, the author of the present pamphlet, is one of the most authoritative and scholarly exponents of those inclining to the Baconian theory; and his arguments are marshalled here, as it were, in a nutshell.







## THE QUINTESSENCE OF THE SHAKESPEARE SECRET

FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626) wrote and published in his own name a series of scientific books. Only three of these can be classed as "belles lettres," viz., the Essays, the Book on the Wisdom of the Ancients ("De Sapiientia Veterum"), and "Apophthegms"; and one only, a modest little volume, is in verse: it is a transcription of twelve Psalms into English rhymed verse. All these books were published between 1597 and 1626, not one, therefore, before the author was thirty-six years of age, a highly remarkable fact, in the case of



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so universal, diligent, ingenious and quick-working a writer, a man whose time up to the thirty-sixth year of his age was in no particular way occupied by the duties of public office.

It is also remarkable, in considering these works of Francis Bacon, to find that Ben Jonson, his younger contemporary, says : "Francis Bacon is he who has filled up all numbers;" and that Rawley, Bacon's secretary, writes : "Whatever he attempted to write was ever in verse" ("Et quod tentabam scribere, versus erat;" *cf.* Ovid, *Trist.* IV. x. 26).

Is it reasonable to say this of a man whose sole publications in verse are twelve rhymed Psalms?

Our surprise reaches a climax when we find that Ben Jonson continues : "Bacon may be nam'd and stands as the mark



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and acme of our language." Does a great English poet speak thus of the author of a row of scientific works in English and Latin, three volumes of belles lettres and a paraphrase of twelve Psalms?

Nor is Ben Jonson isolated in this view. Immediately after Bacon's death, in 1626, Rawley collected and published thirty-two Latin Funeral Odes and Poems, written by some twenty Cambridge men of letters and poets. These poems praise the deceased, the late Lord Chancellor, not as statesman or scientist, but above all as the "tenth Muse," as the "Leader of the Chorus of Muses," as "he who increased the arts of Pegasus," as "the Apollo of the tragic Muse Melpomene."

Why is a man who was only a scientist and the poet or transcriber of twelve Psalms called the God of the Muse of Tragedy,



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praised as the Leader of the English Chorus of Muses, allowed merit which refers to the arts of Pegasus?

These poems, written by contemporaries and friends, were not written for the masses nor for the day only, appearing, as they did, in Latin. It may be reasonably inferred that their authors knew of other works which Bacon had *not* published in his own name, of works of a poetical, probably of a dramatic nature, which he had published anonymously or under a pseudonym.

Numerous passages in contemporary literature point to Bacon's having, in fact, written many such works. Witness the following points in his acknowledged works. In the signature of a letter dated 1603, Francis Bacon calls himself "a concealed poet." | In another he says: "I profess not to be a poet." In a letter to an intimate



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literary friend he speaks of writings which could "yield more lustre and reputation to my name" than those which he published in his own name. | In his "Essay on Simulation and Dissimulation" he recommends "a power to feign, if there be no remedy." In his "Essay on Envy" he says: "The wiser sort of great persons bring in ever upon the stage somebody," to cover them with his name, and that some person can always be found for this purpose. Elsewhere he says: "I have (though in a despised weed) procured the good of all men." | He writes to his King: "I often advisedly and deliberately throw aside the dignity of my name and wit," in order to serve mankind. In his scientific works he recommends the custom of the ancients to place in certain books the name of another contemporary on the title-page. And im-



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mediately after his fall from the Lord Chancellorship he writes: that he intends to “retire from the stage of civil action and betake myself to letters, and to the instruction of the very actors (ipsos actores instruam).”

Does not all this point to—nay, does it not definitely establish—a fact? I, Francis Bacon, have written and published many works under another's name. That this is the case, and that the works in question must have been something great, something very great, is proved by a postscript to an intimate letter of his friend, Sir Toby Matthews, dated about 1623: “The most prodigious wit (Bacon himself uses the word wit in the sense of genius) that ever I knew of my nation, and of this side of the sea (he writes on the continent), is of your Lordship's name, though he be known by another.”



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Here we have direct testimony that Francis Bacon, under the name of another, probably another living person, had written the greatest works of genius in the English language. And a passage in one of the collection of letters, which this same Sir Toby Matthews left at his death, tells us what works of genius they were, and under whose name they were published. This letter deals at length with Francis Bacon, and then continues: "as that excellent author's Sir John Falstaff sayes ;" then follows a quotation from *King Henry IV.*, Part I: "I never dealt better, since I was a man!" Although the above indicates sufficiently that Francis Bacon was the author of great English dramas, that in my opinion he was the secret poet of the Shakespeare dramas, and that he had given them to the world under cover of



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the name of the actor William Shakspere, there are further facts I would adduce as evidence.

First of all, Ben Jonson, in enumerating the greatest English authors, *omits* the name of William Shakespeare altogether, and as the last and greatest of all names Francis Bacon. The same author uses exactly the same words in prose of Francis Bacon which he applies in verse to William Shakespeare: "He surpassed everything which insolent Greece or haughty Rome has written." We further hear how Ben Jonson, on Bacon's sixtieth birthday, praises him as his king, therefore as king of poets. In the Funeral Odes we read that Bacon has "buried" certain works; and there are many other sentences pointing to the mysterious literary activity of this hard-working man, which reveal, to him

It is not properly a Catalogue of authors, but a list of writers. However, Spenser, for instance, is not mentioned. (V. J.'s works, iii. 401)

111 - V. the poem "The King" is James I! (works, iii. 330)

Note



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that has eyes to see and ears to hear, the secret poet Shakespeare in the person of Francis Bacon.

It is, of course, true that there lived a man bearing the name of William Shakespeare (he wrote it "Shakspere" and lived from 1564 to 1616), and that it is supposed that this man, who was merely used as a cover, himself wrote the dramas, which went by his name.

Now this Shakspere, I mean the man born with this name, when he was eighteen married a girl several years older than himself, had a family of three by the time he was twenty-one, left his family, and went to London, became an actor there, and, later, director of a theatre. Of his schooling we only know that it was exceedingly deficient; neither his father nor his mother nor even his daughter could write their own names;

*As we know nothing of his schooling, this is not true.*



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the actor himself, of whom we possess nothing in writing save five signatures, wrote a most defective and almost illegible hand, resembling a bad imitation of print. *not true*  
In the prime of life, being about forty years old, he returned from London to his native town of Stratford-on-Avon, lived there without evincing any literary tendencies, *proof?* and in his will mentions all sorts of trifles, but not one word concerning any book or right in any printed matter or in the performance of any drama. At his death no pen stirred in the whole of England to lament the loss of a great poet, the loss of one who had shaken London and all England with his dramas. He died like an actor of the time, not like a poet; all the initiated knew that he was *not* the poet.

Authors<sub>+</sub> contemporary with this actor



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call him "an upstart crow," a man who adorns himself with another's plumes. And of *Titus Andronicus* we read that it was brought to him by another.

Add to this that the dramas bearing his name show that their author was acquainted with Greek, Latin, French and Spanish, that he was at home in the literatures of all these tongues, that he was a clever lawyer, that in natural and historical sciences he was as well versed as any of his contemporaries, often much more so.

But do they?

Does it not become highly improbable that the Stratford actor, William Shakspeare, could be the poet of such works of genius as have passed under his name? There is many another proof that he indeed was not this poet.

There exists a bundle of manuscripts, dating from the end of the sixteenth



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century, the so-called Northumberland manuscript, in which there were *under the same cover* works by Bacon *and* the dramas *Richard the Second, Richard the Third*, even *before* they were printed. A contemporary says of *Hamlet* that it was written by a lawyer, who was also the son of a lawyer. This remark would not fit the actor in any way, but it does fit Bacon. Bacon says of *Henry the Fourth* that it was a matter which originally came from him, but which eventually passed under another's name. We have already heard Bacon called the author of *Sir John Falstaff*. And in the same collection of letters in which this happens, Matthews, writing to Bacon, says: "I shall not promise to return you weight for weight, but measure for measure," evidently referring to the title of the well-known comedy.



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When Bacon was very busy in his official capacity—these years can be definitely ascertained—no Shakespeare dramas appeared. As soon as his time was his own, new Shakespeare works appear. The dramas do not depend upon the actor's leisure but upon Bacon's. And the great folio edition of all the Shakespeare dramas, which was published in 1623, seven years, that is, after the actor's death, made its appearance when Bacon was entire master of his time, after his fall as Chancellor, and after he had resolved to devote himself to literature, to serve immortality and to instruct the actors themselves. This gigantic volume also contains fifteen dramas never printed before, and all the others are, more or less, improved. Is it probable that the director of a theatre would have kept such masterpieces as



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*The Tempest, Coriolanus, Julius Cæsar,* and *Macbeth* locked up in his desk, while alive, *without having them printed,* while other dramas of less value were printed and sold?

The portrait contained in this folio edition shows a gentleman in court costume, with an oval mask tied before his face.

The line of demarcation of this mask is plainly visible between the chin and the ear. It is a portrait which bears neither the features of Francis Bacon nor those of the actor Shakspeare, and about which the accompanying poem of Ben Jonson warns the reader: "Reader, look not on his picture, but his booke!" The curiously figured heading which ornaments the beginning of the Shakespeare folio edition is exactly the same as that adorning Bacon's "Novum Organum." And the

(and both arms  
left arms).

Is it really a  
MASK?



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little quarto editions of the dramas often  
have an ornamental heading, which shows  
a Bird, then the letters A C quite plainly,  
then an urn (for the syllable "on"); there-  
fore the sounds of the name "Bacon."  
There exist, too, a series of literary allu-  
sions to the fact that Bacon is the Shake-  
speare poet. In a passage of his scientific  
books Bacon himself quotes Virgil, *inten-*  
*tionally* changing the text: "Dextra mihi  
Deus et telum quod missile libro—Nunc  
adsint." In the first edition, instead of  
"missile," we find the word "inutile."  
"Telum quod missile libro" is the absolute  
Latin rendering of the word Shake-speare.  
Ben Jonson, too, renders it "to shake a  
lance, as brandish't at the eyes of igno-  
rance." And the word "inutile" (useless)  
Bacon adds of his own accord. The useless  
Shakespeare! It has absolutely no sense

V. notes  
p. 594.



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if we think of a real spear, but makes very good sense as soon as we think of the actor of that name.

In one of the Funeral Odes Bacon is called a "Quirinus." That again signifies a spear-brandisher, a Shake-speare. The head ornament of this little book shows boys playing with a spear. | Another poem plays with the word "spicula," which also signifies a throwing-spear, Shake-speare. | Another Latin poem of Bacon's friend, the young poet Herbert, designates Bacon as a literary Brutus. Brutus was the man accomplished in the art of simulation. And it calls Bacon the "Pinus" of the elegant manner of writing; "Pinus" is a throwing-spear, a Shake-speare.

One of the plainest testimonies occurs in the Northumberland manuscript, to which I have already referred. Apart



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from the fact that manuscripts of the works of Bacon and Shakespeare are here lying side by side before being printed, there is many a hint given on the leaf of the cover. Above the titles of the dramas Richard the Second and Richard the Third, we find the words: "By Frauncis Bac,—" which is crossed out and the pseudonym "William Shakespeare" written there instead.

The custom of writing anonymously or under another's name was quite common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; in Bacon's case it was a family habit. His mother made anonymous translations from Italian and Latin; his father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Queen Elizabeth's Great Keeper of the Seal, wrote political essays which he published in the name of one of his under-officials. High officers of state, as were the Bacons, father and son, had to exercise



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discretion in literary matters. High officials, particularly statesmen and military men, are even now in the habit of hiding their names from publicity, though a few intimate friends may know the true authors. This is and was ever the case. Aristophanes published one of his comedies in the name of an actor. Cicero says of the comedies of the Roman poet Terence, that they were written by Cajus Laelius, and not by the freed-man Terence, who was but ill educated. Although this is well known, the comedies continue to be known as the plays of Terence; and although it is, or should be, known, that the Shakespeare dramas were written by Bacon, they will long remain the Shakespeare dramas, though it is high time to put the name "Francis Bacon—Shakespeare" upon title-pages and playbills.



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From the first the secret was known to many educated men and to Bacon's friends. But it was gradually forgotten ; and it was not until the time of Goethe that the authorship of the dramas began to be questioned. Goethe himself was unable to reconcile the greatness of the works with the insignificance of their reputed author ; he recognised that the prodigiousness and depth of the dramas and the greatness of their author's mind were immeasurably more than could be expected from an illiterate actor. Among the first modern men of learning who doubted the authorship of the actor we may mention Byron, Beaconsfield, Gförer, John Bright, Hallam, Coleridge and Dickens. In the nineteenth century the first to be convinced of Bacon's authorship were Delia Bacon, William Henry Smith, Palmerston, Count Vitzthum

*Byron +  
Dickens men  
of learning.*



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von Eckstädt and Nietzsche. Those who admit of no doubt on the subject to-day form a list of the most brilliant names in science and literature on both sides of the Atlantic.

For the sake of brevity I have adduced only the main points of an *external* nature; further details and countless intrinsic reasons are to be found in the writings of Edwin Bormann: "The Shakespeare Secret" (English edition), "Der Anekdoteschatz Bacon-Shakespeare's," "Die Kunst des Pseudonyms," "Venus und Adonis," "Der Lukretia Beweis," "Neue Shakespeare Enthüllungen," "300 Geistesblitze aus Bacon's Schriften und anderes," "Der Shakespeare-Dichter," "Wer War's und Wie sah er aus?" Most of these books are fully illustrated. The last named contains some forty portraits and shows



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that the ideal head, which to-day we call the portrait of Shakespeare, really bears the features of Bacon, mixed with those of the actor in a proportion of about 3 to 1. No monument, no sculptor would dare to repeat the features of the "bon-vivant" actor from the tomb in Stratford Church, still less to take the stupid mask-portrait in the folio edition as a model for his work. The new monument at Weimar also gives a composite head, which strongly leans towards the real features of Francis Bacon.

"Ille ego qui fuerim, . . . . .  
Quem legis ut noris, accipe, Posteritas."



















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