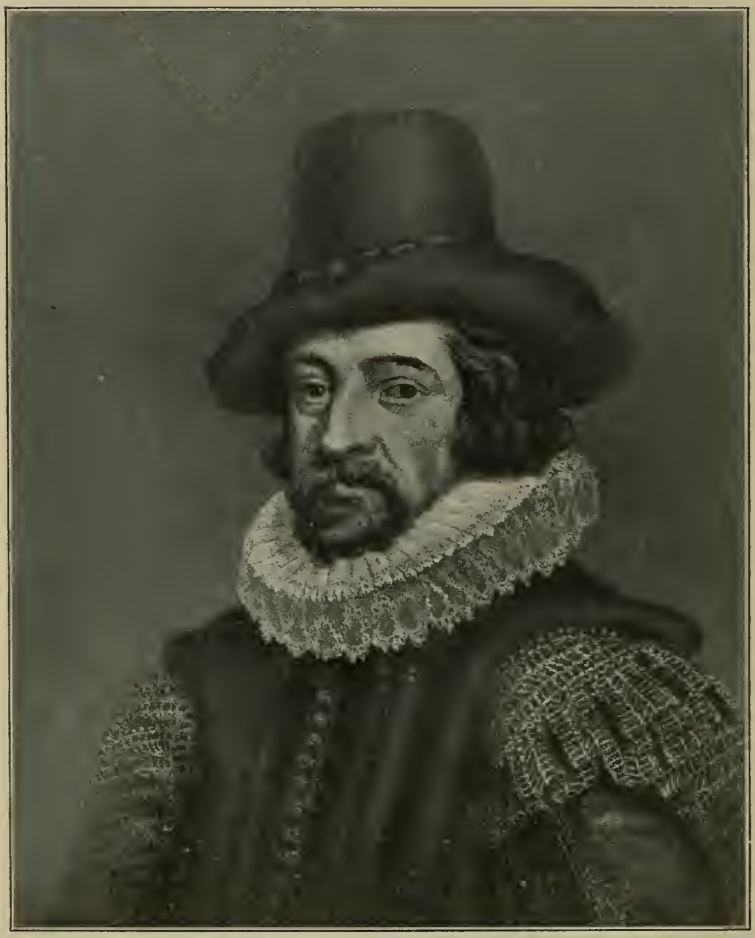
TWO OF THE
SONNETS
OF
FRANCIS BACON,
THE
TRUE SHAKESPEARE



After the portrait by Van Sommer at Gorhambury.

FRANCIS BACON,

THE TRUE SHAKESPEARE.

"The most exquisitely constructed intellect that has ever been bestowed on any of the children of men. * * * From the day of his death his fame has been constantly and steadily progressing; and we have no doubt that his name will be named with reverence to the latest ages, and to the remotest ends of the civilized world." MACAULAY.

TWO OF THE MOST REMARKABLE AND INTERESTING

OF

THE SONNETS

OF

FRANCIS BACON,

THE TRUE SHAKESPEARE.

A Compilation, Arrangement, and Composition

BY

HENRY HAMILTON HARWOOD,

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.

Published December, 1908.

WARE & DUKE,
PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS,
RICHMOND, VA.

Introductory.

A good many years ago I read Richard Grant White's challenge to Baconians to adduce evidence that Francis Bacon was the author of "Shakespeare's" Sonnets. Although I had, even then, learned to doubt that the Plays were the productions of their reputed author, William Shaksper, I confess that I had not yet become well enough acquainted with the subject of the famous Shaksper-Bacon controversy to come to the conclusion that Bacon was, indeed, the author of both the Plays *and the Poems—Sonnets included*—attributed to Shaksper.

The controversy attracted me, however, powerfully, irresistibly; and I soon found myself neglecting matters of business in order to familiarize myself with the literature and the arguments of the controversy.

In the course of time I grew confident that, while it would be *tedious* and *laborious*, it would be neither *impossible* nor very *difficult*, to show that it was Francis Bacon's pen that wrote the Sonnets as well as the Plays, and Venus and Adonis, and Lucrece.

Besides being tedious and laborious, the undertaking has proved to be expensive beyond my expectation—having been carried on and out at the cost and loss to me of many thousands of dollars.

After spending years in preparatory reading, I began, six years ago, the making of notes for editing "The Poems and Plays of Francis Bacon, the True Shakespeare." In October, 1907, the first volume of the series—"The Sonnets"—was commenced. At the end of eight months of application my manuscript was ready for the press. But the unexpected hard times of this year—1908—have prevented the printing of it. Consequently, the manuscript has been pigeon-holed for several

months, awaiting a change for the better in my fortunes. I, myself, though, am not, like my manuscript, a patient waiter. So I have selected two of the most important and interesting of the Sonnets, and have printed them by themselves, in the endeavor to arouse enough interest in my work to make possible the publishing of the whole book.

The whole book will consist of an Introduction, of about 3,000 words; The Argument (for Bacon), of about 45,000 words; The Sonnets, with parallels, notes, and comments, of about 190,000 words; and The Law in the Poems and Plays, a compilation from several writers, of about 30,000 words—about 270,000 words altogether—about nine times the size of this book.

My hope is that some of the readers of these two Sonnets will become sufficiently interested to purchase the larger book when it is published. As a slight inducement to them, I promise to deduct from the selling price of the larger, complete book (whatever the price may be), *for every buyer of this book and that one*, one dollar. Hence the importance of each buyer's acquainting me with his or her name and address.

HENRY H. HARWOOD.

Richmond, Va., November 5, 1908.

XXVI.

LORD of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage,
To witness duty, not to shew my wit:
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to shew it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it;
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving,
To shew me worthy of thy sweet respect:
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
Till then not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

Compare with lines 1–2 the first four lines of Sonnet CXVII:

> Accuse me thus: that I have scanted all
> Wherein I should *your great deserts* repay;
> Forgot upon your dearest *love* to call,
> Whereto *all bonds do tie me* night and day.

With remarkable unanimity, students of "Shakespeare" agree in saying that this Sonnet recalls to their minds the Dedication of Lucrece.

Lee makes the confident assertion: "This is a gorgeous rendering of the Dedication to Lucrece."

Tyler ventures the remark: "There is a curious and interesting resemblance between this Sonnet and the Dedication to Lucrece. Drake's argument (Shakespeare and His Times,

1817) that this resemblance gives evidence that it is Lord Southampton who is here addressed also, *is certainly not conclusive.*"

Irving notes that "Lord Campbell speaks of the poem as 'a love-letter, in the language of a vassal doing homage to his liege-lord' (Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements, p. 101)."

We have just now seen, under Sonnet XXV, that Essex had virtually made a vassal of Bacon by his splendid gift; and that Bacon exclaimed, in accepting the almost princely present: "My Lord, I see I must be your homager!"

Essex had made himself *the lord of Bacon's love* and had made Bacon his vassal. We shall soon read letters of Bacon to Essex and to Lord Burghley, written "in the language of a vassal doing homage to his liege-lord"—in language that will be substantial proof that *their* author and the author of the Dedication of Lucrece, and of the Dedication of Venus and Adonis, and of this Sonnet, were one and the same person.

First, though, I will take the step of clearing the field of a little brush-wood.

The poet exultantly confesses that his duty is *strongly knit* to the merit of the lord of his love. The rhetorical figure constructed on the verb *to knit* is a favorite one with both Bacon and "the author of the Poems and Plays."

In his Apology Concerning the Earl of Essex, Bacon writes: "And when, not long after I entered into this course [towards Essex], my brother, Mr. Anthony Bacon, came from beyond the seas, being a gentleman whose ability the world taketh knowledge of for matters of state, especially foreign, *I did likewise knit his service to be at my lord's disposing.*"

Observe the implication here: Bacon's—Francis Bacon's—service was *already knit* to be at Essex's disposing; so he now *likewise* knits his brother Anthony's, &c.

Some time previously, during the trial of Essex, Bacon had written to Lord Henry Howard, and had made use of the same metaphor:

"My Lord:—There be very few besides yourself to whom I would perform this respect; for I contemn *mendacia famæ* as it [fame] walks among inferiors; though I neglect it not, as it may have entrance into some ears. For your Lordship's love, rooted upon good opinion, I esteem it highly, because I have tasted the fruits of it; and we have both tasted of the best waters, in my account, *to knit minds together*," &c.

And, at the trial, he used this language: "I hope that my Lord Essex himself, and all who now hear me, will consider that the particular *bond of duty, which I do now, and ever will, acknowledge that I owe unto his Lordship*, must be sequestered and laid aside, in discharge of that higher duty which we all owe to the Queen," &c.

To the Earl (later, the Duke) of Buckingham he declares: "I will rely upon your constancy and nature, and my own deserving, and the *firm tie* we have in respect of the King's service."

To Mr. Michael Hicks he writes: "Such apprehension *knitteth every man's soul* to his true and approved friend."

To the Duke of Buckingham: "* * * The King himself hath *knit the knot of trust and favor* between the Prince and your Grace."

In a speech in the House of Commons—*Quinto Jacobi*—he said: "And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I come now to the third general part of my division, concerning the benefits which we shall purchase by this *knitting of the knot* surer and straiter between these two kingdoms," &c.

And I take from Perkins's speech in the History of King Henry VII.:

"But it seemeth that God above, for the good of this whole island, and the *knitting of these two kingdoms* of England and Scotland in a strait concord and amity," &c.

On the 31st of May, 1612, he wrote to the new sovereign, King James: "* * * But the great matter, and most instant for the present, is the consideration of a Parliament—for two effects: the one for the supply of your estate, the other for *the better knitting* of the hearts of your subjects unto your Majesty, *according to your infinite merit.*"

But it would take up too much space to adduce all the instances of this figure that could be adduced from Bacon.

In the Plays the metaphor is of frequent occurrence. Especially noteworthy is one in Othello, I, 3: "I confess me *knit to thy deserving* with cables[1] of perdurable toughness."

And another in Pericles, II, 4:

> Then you love us, we you, and we'll clasp hands;
> *When peers thus knit*, a kingdom ever stands.

And yet another in Macbeth, III, 1:

> *Banquo:* Let your Highness
> Command upon me; to the which *my duties*
> Are with a most indissoluble tie
> *Forever knit.*

(It is possible that Bacon unthankingly, unacknowledgingly, adopted this word—*to knit*—as he did with many other words and expressions and ideas and sentiments—from Sidney's writings. In his Arcadia Sidney describes Pamela as "* * * of high thoughts, who avoids not pride with not

---

[1] On October 12, 1623, Bacon wrote to Buckingham: "* * * myself have ridden at anchor all your Grace's absence, and *my cables are now quite worn.*" And on the 22d of the same month, to the same person: "* * * my *cables are worn out;* my hope of tackling is by your Lordship's means."

knowing her excellencies, but by making that one of her excellencies to be void of pride; her mother's wisdom, greatness, nobility, but (if I can guess aright) *knit* with a more constant temper." The word is met with also in Sidney's Sonnets.)

Now, to spare the reader the trouble of searching foregoing pages, I will reprint a letter of Bacon's to Essex, that is already included amongst letters under Sonnet XXV:

"To My Lord of Essex:

Most Honorable and My Singular Good Lord:—

I cannot but importune your Lordship with thanks for remembering my name to my Lord Keeper, which, being done in such an article of time, could not but be exceedingly enriched both in demonstration and effect: which I did well discern by the manner of expressing thereof by his Lordship to me. This accumulating of your Lordship's favors upon me hitherto worketh only this effect—*that it raiseth my mind to aspire to be found worthy of them* [l. 10 of this Sonnet], *and likewise to merit and serve you for them.* But whether I shall be able to pay my vows or no, I must leave that to God, who hath them *in deposito.* Whom, also, I most instantly beseech to give you fruit of your actions beyond that your heart can propound. *Nam Deus major est corde.* Even to the environing of his benedictions, I recommend your Lordship."

And another, undated, from Gray's Inn:

" * * * I shall ever, in a firm *duty*, submit my occasions, though great, to your Lordship's *respects*, though small; and this is my resolution, that, when your Lordship doth for me, you shall increase my obligation; when you refuse to do for me, you shall increase my merit. * * * "

Again:

" * * * Lastly and chiefly, I know not whether I shall

attain to see your Lordship before your noble journey; for ceremonies are things infinitely inferior to my love and to my zeal; this let me, with your allowance, say unto you by pen. It is true that, in my well-meaning advices, out of my love to your Lordship, and perhaps out of the state of mine own mind, I have sometimes persuaded a course different: *ac tibi pro tutis insignia facta placebunt:* be it so, yet remember that the signing of your name is nothing unless it be to some good patent or charter, whereby your country may be endowed with good and benefit: which I speak both to move you to preserve your person *for further merit and service of her Majesty and your country*," &c.

Compare Sonnet CVIII, ll. 3–4:

> What's new to speak, what new to register,
> That may express my love, *or thy dear merit?*

There can be little, if any, doubt that Essex is alluded to in an undated letter (written, probably, in 1592, 1593, or 1594) to a person to whose identity we have no clue:

"SIR:—In this solitude of friends, which is the base court of adversity, where nobody, almost, will be seen stirring, I have often remembered the Spanish saying, *Amor sin fin no tiene fin.* This bids me make choice of your friend and mine for his noble succours; not now towards the aspiring, but only the respiring, of my fortunes. I, who am a man of books, have observed that he hath both the magnanimity of the old Romans[1] and the cordiality of the old English, and withal, I believe he hath the wit of both; sure I am that, for myself, I have found him, in both my fortunes, to esteem me so much above my just value, and to love me so much above the possibility of deserving or obliging, on my part, as if he were a friend created and reserved for such a time as this."

[1] Hamlet, v, 2—*Horatio:* I am more an antique Roman than a Dane.

(This letter will be compared with Sonnet LXXII.)

Again I must repeat a passage already cited (under Sonnet XXV) from the Apology:

"It is well known how I did many years since dedicate my travels and studies to the use, and, as I may term it, the service, of my Lord of Essex, which, I protest before God, I did, not making election of him as the likeliest mean of mine own advancement, but out of the humor of a man that ever from the time I had any use of reason, whether it were reading upon good books, or upon the example of a good father, or by nature, I loved my country more than was answerable to my fortune; and I held at that time [1592–'3–'4–'5] my Lord to be the fittest instrument to do good to the state [the man of pre-eminent *merit*], and therefore I applied myself to him [*knit* myself to him] in a manner which I think rarely happeneth among men: for I did not only labor carefully and industriously in that he set me about, whether it were matter of advice or otherwise; but, *neglecting the Queen's service*, mine own fortune, and in a sort my vocation, I did nothing but advise and ruminate with myself, to the best of my understanding, propositions and memorials of anything that might concern his Lordship's honor, fortune, or service."[1]

---

[1] Compare Hamlet to Horatio—Hamlet, III, 2:

> Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
> And could of men distinguish her election,
> She hath seal'd thee for herself: for thou hast been
> As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
> A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
> Hath ta'en with equal thanks: and bless'd are those
> Whose blood and judgment are so well co-mingled,
> That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
> To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
> That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
> In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
> As I do thee.

Truly, Bacon's *duty* was *very* strongly *knit* to Essex's *merit.*

Montagu, in his "Life," says:

"The exertions which had been made by Essex to obtain the Solicitorship for his friend, and his generous desire to mitigate his disappointment, had united them *by the strongest bonds of affection.*"

It is mere fairness of treatment, though, to let Bacon qualify his declaration of vassalage to Essex. In his Apology he says: "But it is very true that I, *that never meant to enthral myself to my Lord of Essex, nor any other man, more than stood with the public good,* did, though I could little prevail, divert him by all means possible from courses of the wars and popularity."

And it is opportune here to quote from another letter of Bacon's, written in 1595 to Lord Treasurer Burghley, "concerning the Solicitor's place," and showing Bacon's double-dealing and double-speaking, in consonance with the Machiavellian principle enunciated in the Plays—"Know thou this, that men are as the time is." "The times" were characterized by rascality, duplicity, untruthfulness, and every other imaginable "art of the court," on the part of aspirants to high office and royal favor; and Bacon unquestionably "partook of the weakness of the times." The extract from the letter is as follows:

"To the Lord Treasurer:—

* * * But I may justly doubt her Majesty's impression upon this particular, as her conceit otherwise of my insufficiency and unworthiness, which, though I acknowledge to be great, yet it will be the less, *because I purpose not to divide myself between her Majesty and the causes of other men, as others have done, but to attend her business only, hoping that a whole man meanly able may do as well as half a man better able.*"

This literary habit of Bacon's—of professing himself

entirely devoted to the service and friendship of any one to whom he is writing—makes it difficult to decide whether certain of the Sonnets were intended for Essex or for Southampton or for Queen Elizabeth.

Bacon seemed never to tire of assuring and reassuring Essex of his vassalage. Yet another of his letters to the Earl comes to my mind—a fine example of epistolary fawning with an eye to thrift:

"To My Lord of Essex:—

My Lord:—Conceiving that your Lordship came now up in the person of a good servant to see your sovereign mistress; which kind of compliments are many times *instar magnorum meritorum;* and therefore that it would be hard for me to find you, I have committed to this poor paper the humble salutations of him that is more yours than any man's, and more yours than any man," &c.

Besides, there is a long letter—part of which is of a tenor similar to the tenor of these letters to Essex—to Lord Burghley, written in 1592. One sentence bears on our subject:

"Besides, I do not find in myself so much self-love but that the greater parts of my thoughts are to deserve well, if I were able, of my friends, and namely of your Lordship, who, being the Atlas of this commonwealth, the honor of my house, and the second founder of my poor estate, *I am tied by all duties* ['Thy merit doth my duty strongly tie—knit'], both of a good patriot and of an unworthy kinsman, and of an obliged servant, to employ whatsoever I am to do your service," &c.

And another long, undated solicitation to the same person, from which I will cull two or three sentences:

"My Singular Good Lord:—

* * * To your Lordship also, whose recommendation—I

know right well—hath been material to advance her Majesty's opinion of me, I can be but a bounden servant [vassal]. So much may I safely promise, and purpose to be, seeing public and private bonds vary not, but that my service to her Majesty and your Lordship draw in line. *I wish, therefore, to show it with as good proof, as I can say it in good faith,*" &c.

These letters and extracts sufficiently, I think, serve my present purpose of showing the almost doubtless probability that part, at least, of Sonnet XXVI was born and cradled in the same brain—and that brain Bacon's—from which issued a numerous and interesting progeny of letters to Essex, Queen Elizabeth, Burghley, the Cecils, Buckingham, Howard, King James I., and other contemporaries of the philosopher-and-poet.

A little farther on, though, I shall introduce, for a different purpose, other letters from the same source, singing the same strain of sincere, undivided, and unending affection and devotion.

For a moment, I'll tarry to "gloss" line 11—

And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving.

Only a Baconian, I think, can understand this line.

If we go back in this Sonnet and re-read lines 5 and 6, we shall have caught our first scent of the author's meaning in line 11. Lines 5 and 6 are:

Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to shew it.

That is to say—"if my wit were richer, my duty would not seem bare, unclothed, *without apparel;* for then I should not want words to clothe or apparel my duty with."

Words, then, as our poet regards them, may serve as clothing or apparel.

And—*not* strange to relate—our philosopher, Bacon, had the same metaphorical conception of words.

In his essay—Mr. Bacon in Praise of Knowledge—he

preaches: "* * * All things may be endowed and adorned with speeches; but knowledge itself is more beautiful than any *apparel of words* that can be put upon it."

The 11th line, then, is—plainly enough to me—a "tattered" reminiscence of the thought embodied in the sentence from the essay on Knowledge, and is a pen-print of Bacon's.

The metaphor of appareling with words and arguments is one of the flowers of rhetoric in the very "flowery" fourth scene of the second act of the first part of King Henry VI.

In the altercation between Richard Plantagenet and the Earl of Somerset, a moment before those rivals pluck roses—one a red, the other a white rose—as party emblems, Plantagenet vaunts:

> The truth appears so *naked*[1] on my side
> That any purblind eye may find it out.

To this boastful claim Somerset retorts:

> And on my side it is so well *apparel'd*,[1]
> So clear, so shining, and so evident,
> That it will glimmer through a blind man's eye.

(In parenthesis, I will say that, in the writing of the hundred words immediately preceding these two claims, Bacon—undesigningly, maybe, yet plainly—left his thumb-mark. When called upon to decide between Plantagenet and Somerset in their contention, the Earl of Suffolk confesses:

> Faith, I have been a truant in the law,
> *And never yet could frame my will to it;*
> And therefore frame the law unto my will.

This aversion to the law—that is, to the study and practice, not to the existence and operation, of the law—is characteristic

[1] Notice the employment of *naked* and *apparel'd* here and in the Sonnet.

of Bacon, and will be treated in detail and exhaustively under Sonnet CXI. I make this parenthetical digression and anticipation, because some Shakespeareans utterly reject this play of first Henry VI., refusing to recognize any part of it as the work of the author of the second and third parts. Finger and hand-prints show, though, that it had the same author that the others had—namely, Francis Bacon.)

Mr. Sidney Lee says that this Sonnet is "a gorgeous rendering of the Dedication to Lucrece"—a dedication Mr. Lee, with beautiful, childlike faith and simplicity, believes was indited by the heartless gentleman and illiterate scholar we have read about under Sonnet XXII—William Shaksper.

Perhaps time given to an examination and analysis of this belief of Mr. Lee's and of an innumerable host of other authorities on matters Shakespearean will not be wholly thrown away and fruitless.

Of course, this belief includes the Dedication of Venus and Adonis.

In order to discuss them, we should have the Dedications conveniently under eye. So I shall copy them here—the Dedication of Venus and Adonis first.

To The Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley,
Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield:—

Right Honourable:—I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burthen: only if your Honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather; and never after ear so

barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your Honour to your heart's content; which I wish may always answer your own wish, and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your Honour's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.[1]

Of Lucrece:

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLEY,
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON AND BARON OF TITCHFIELD:—

The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater: meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

Your Lordship's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Venus and Adonis was given to Southampton, and the world, in 1593; Lucrece, in 1594. In those years the young Earl was still in full flower and good odor in Elizabeth's favor and graces. He was gay and licentious, fond of bear-baitings and masks and plays. Besides, he possessed wealth, and was a generous patron of literary merit. His high family connections, his influential acquaintances and associates, his æsthetic tastes,

---

[1] Mr. Isaac Hull Platt, in Book News, September, 1904, says: "The name Shakespeare makes its first appearance in English annals appended to the dedication of 'Venus and Adonis,' in 1593; with all the sixty-seven, more or less, ways in which the name of the Stratford family was spelled, that never occurs."

and his abundant means, all combined, made his good will and patronage very much to be desired by the semi-tradesman—the theater-manager, Shaksper. That successful business man must have understood, better than most men of his vocation did, the arts of advertising himself and his business. And, seeing other men gaining favor and remuneration from the young man by means of their adulatory writings, and being unable to write anything whatever himself, what is more probable than the theory that he made terms with the talented but needy "noverint," Francis Bacon, for something from his pen, that—unlike the plays Bacon was then, and had been, writing—should be destined for and dedicated to the young man alone?

Certain beyond the shadow of a doubt it is, I think, that Bacon wrote the Dedications; and I feel no hesitancy in making the same assertion respecting both poems. In this book, however, I shall have to restrict myself to showing only that he wrote the Dedications.

In the Dedication of Venus and Adonis, the author calls his poem "*unpolished* lines"; in that of Lucrece he calls that poem "my *untutored* lines." These characterizations will be mentally paralleled by the student with part of Sonnet CXXXVIII:

> When my love swears that she is made of truth,
> I do believe her, though I know she lies;
> That she might think me some *untutor'd* youth,
> Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.

And a passage from Love's Labors Lost, IV, 2: "* * * After his *undressed*, *unpolished*, *uneducated*, *unpruned*, *untrained*, or, rather, *unlettered*, or, ratherest, *unconfirmed*, fashion."

Now, I am well aware that not much capital can be made of these self-disparaging adjectivations considered by themselves,

because the practice of belittling the value of one's own dedicated literary productions has been a common one throughout the ages. Still, in order to make all the use I can of my material, I will quote part of a sentence here—the rest of it a moment later—from a letter of Bacon's to Essex ("before his going to Ireland"): "Thus I have presumed to write these few lines to your Lordship, *in methodo ignorantiæ* [in the manner of ignorance], which is, when a man speaketh of any subject, not according to the parts of the matter, but according to the model of his own knowledge," &c.

Next, I will make comparison of several phrases in the Dedication with a sentence from one of Bacon's legal writings.

The dedicator writes: " * * * so strong a prop to support so *weak* a burthen,"—" * * * if the first heir of my *invention* prove deformed,"—"I shall * * * never after ear so *barren* a land"; and Bacon, in The Statute of Uses: " * * * Where an inferior wit ['my own unableness, which I had continual sense and feeling of'] is bent and constant upon one subject, he shall many times, with patience and meditation, dissolve and undo many of the *knots*, which a greater wit, distracted with many matters, would rather cut in two than *unknit;* and, at the least, if my *invention* or judgment be too *barren* or too *weak*, yet, by the benefit of other arts, I did hope to dispose or digest the authorities which are in cases of Uses in such order and method as they should take light one from another, though they took no light from me."

Here we meet again with the figure of *knitting*, and, in one clause, with three important words—*invention*, *barren*, *weak*—that occur in the very brief Dedication.

Again, Advancement, Book II:

"In the handling and undertaking of which work I am not ignorant what it is that I do now move and attempt, nor insen-

sible of mine own weakness to sustain my purpose; but my hope is that, if my extreme love to learning carry me too far, I may obtain the excuse of affection, for that 'it is not granted to man to love and be wise.'"

The metaphor of a strong prop supporting a weak burden is a conceitful variation of figures that embellish both the Plays and Bacon's prose.

Thus, Measure for Measure, III, 2:

> How may likeness, made in crimes,
> Making practice on the times,
> *Draw with idle spiders' strings*
> *Most pond'rous and substantial things!*

And King John, IV, 3:

> The smallest thread
> That ever spider twisted from her womb
> Will serve to strangle thee; *a rush will be*
> *A beam to hang thee on.*

And 2d Henry IV., IV, 5:

> My cloud of dignity
> Is held from falling by so weak a wind
> That it will quickly drop.

In Bacon we encounter, in The History of King Henry VII.:

"* * * In this fourteenth year also, by God's wonderful providence, that boweth things unto his will and *hangeth great weights upon small wires*," &c.

And in The Advancement of Learning, Bk. II:

"* * * But such being the workmanship of God, *that he hangs the greatest weight upon the smallest wire—maxima e minimis suspendens*," &c.

The Dedication has: "But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed"; and Bacon, in a letter to the University of Cambridge, upon his sending to their public library his *Novum Organum*, says: "Seeing I am your son and your disciple, it will much please me to repose in your bosom the issue which I have lately brought forth into the world, for otherwise I should look upon it as an exposed child"—thus displaying remarkworthy similarity of thought to, even though not identity of expression with, the language of the Dedication.

To the Earl of Salisbury Bacon writes:

"I am not ignorant how mean a thing I stand for in desiring to come into the Solicitor's place. * * *

"Although I know your fortune is not to want a hundred such as I am, yet I shall be ever ready to give you my best *and first fruits* [the first heirs of my invention], and to supply, as much as in me lieth, a worthiness by thankfulness."

I wonder what Mr. Lee, who pronounced this Sonnet "a gorgeous rendering of the Dedication to Lucrece," would have said if he had been acquainted with a certain letter of Bacon's to Burghley, which I am about to bring forward for comparison with *both* Dedications. This is the letter:

To the Lord Treasurer Burghley:

Most Honorable and My Very Good Lord:—

I know I may commit an error in writing this letter[1] ["*I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship*"], both in a time of great and weighty business; as also when myself am not induced thereto by any new particular occasion: And, thereof, your Lordship may impute to me either levity or ignorance, what appertaineth to good respects

[1] Compare Sonnet CXIX, l. 5: What wretched errors hath my heart committed.

and forwardness of dealing; especially to an honorable person in whom there is such concurrence of *magnitudo honoris et oneris* [greatness of honor and of burthen], as it is hard to say, whether is the greater.

But I answer myself first, that I have ever noted it as a part of your Lordship's excellent wisdom—*parvis componere magnis*—that you do not exclude inferior matters of access amongst the care of great. And, for myself, I thought it would better manifest what I desire to express, *if I did write out of a deep and settled consideration of my own duty*,[1] rather than upon the spur of a particular occasion.

And, therefore (my singular good Lord), *ex abundantia cordis*, I must acknowledge *how greatly and diversely your Lordship hath vouchsafed to tie me unto you by many your benefits* [your Lordship hath *knit me* unto you, &c.].

The reversion of the office which your Lordship only procured unto me and carried through great and vehement opposition, though it yet bear no fruit, yet it is one of the fairest flowers of my poor estate; your Lordship's constant and serious endeavors to have me Solicitor; your late honorable wishes, for the place of the Wards; together with your Lordship's attempt to give me way by the remove of Mr. Solicitor; they be matters of singular obligation; besides many other favors, as well by your Lordship's grants from yourself as by your commendation to others, which I have had for my help [surely, here is "merit" enough to *knit* the letter-writer's *duty strongly* to the personage addressed]; and may justly persuade myself, out of the few denials I have received, that fewer might have been, if mine own industry and good hap had been answerable to your Lordship's goodness [if I had shewn me worthy of thy goodness—or sweet respect].

---

[1] Compare the repeated and stressful employment of this word—*duty*—in this letter with its equally important *role* in the Dedications, and with lines 3 and 4 of this Sonnet.

But, on the other side, I most humbly pray your Lordship's pardon if I speak it—the time is yet to come that your Lordship did ever use, or command, or employ, me in my profession in any services or occasion of your Lordship's own, or such as are near unto your Lordship; which hath made me fear sometimes that your Lordship doth more honorably affect me than thoroughly discern of my most humble and dutiful affection to your Lordship again. Which, if it were not in me, I know not whether I were unnatural, unthankful, or unwise. This causeth me, most humbly to pray your Lordship (and I know mine own case too well to speak it as weening I can do your Lordship service, but as willing to do it, as) to believe that *your Lordship is upon just title a principal owner and proprietor of that I cannot call talent—but mite—that God hath given me; which I ever do, and shall, devote to your service* [Lucrece: "What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would shew greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship," &c.][1]

And in like humble manner I pray your Lordship to pardon mine errors, and not impute unto me the errors of any others (which, I know also, themselves have by this time left and forethought); but to conceive of me to be a man *that daily profiteth*

---

[1] Mr. Lee—*Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 130—says: "Repeatedly does the sonnetteer renew the assurance given there [in the *Lucrece* epistle, or Dedication] that his patron is 'part of all' he has or is. Frequently do we meet in the Sonnets with such expressions as these:

> [I] by a *part of all* your glory live (XXXVII, 12);
> Thou art all the better part of me (XXXIX, 2);
> My Spirit is thine, the better part of me (LXXIV, 8);

while 'the love without end' which Shakespeare has vowed to Southampton in the light of day re-appears in Sonnets addressed to the youth as 'eternal love' (CVIII, 9), and a devotion 'what shall have no end' (CX, 9)."

in duty. It is true, I do in part comfort myself, supposing that it is *my weakness and insufficiency that moveth your Lordship, who hath so general a command to use others more able.*[1]

But let it be as it is; *for duty only and homage*, I will boldly undertake that nature and true thankfulness shall never give place to a politic dependence.

Lastly, I most humbly desire your Lordship to continue unto me the good favor and countenance and encouragement in the course of my poor travails, whereof I have had some taste and experience; for the which, I yield your Lordship my very humble good thanks. And so again craving your Honor's pardon for so long a letter, *carrying so empty an offer of so unpuissant* [of so *weak*] *a service, but yet a true and unfeigned signification of an honest and vowed duty*, I cease—commending your Lordship to the preservation of the Divine Majesty.

Amongst the Letters from Birch that Montagu reprints, there is one composed in Bacon's presentation style. The letter was written to King James, in 1623, to present to him a copy of the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, the revised and enlarged edition of The Advancement of Learning, published in 1605. It runs:

It May Please Your Most Excellent Majesty:—

I send in all humbleness to your Majesty the poor fruits of my leisure. This book was the first thing that ever I presented to your Majesty; and it may be will be the last. For I had thought it should have [been] *posthuma proles* [a posthumous offspring—"heir of my invention"]. But God hath otherwise disposed for a while. It is a translation, but almost enlarged to a new work. I had good helps for the language. I have been

[1] The continual undervaluing of himself in this letter, as in the Dedications, is noteworthy.

also mine own *index expurgatorius*, that it may be read in all places. For, since my end of putting it into Latin was to have it read everywhere, it had been an absurd contradiction to free it in the language and to pen it up in the matter. Your Majesty will vouchsafe graciously to receive these poor sacrifices of him that shall ever desire to do you honor while he breathes, and fulfilleth the rest in prayers.

Your Majesty's true beadsman and most humble servant, &c.

Todos duelos con pan son buenos: itaque dat vestra Maiestas obolum Belisario.

In the Dedication we read: " * * * if your Honor seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honored you with some graver labor."

And in a letter to the King, January 2, 1618, Bacon tells and promises his royal master: " * * * I, therefore, whom only love and duty to your Majesty, and your royal line, hath made a financier, do intend to present unto your Majesty a perfect book of your estate, like a perspective glass, to draw your estate nearer to your sight; beseeching your Majesty to conceive that *if I have not attained to do that I would do in this, which is not proper for me, nor in my element, I shall make your Majesty amends in some other thing in which I am better bred.*"

The dedicator says [I have changed the order of the words]: "I wish your *heart's content* may always answer your own wish." "Heart's content" and "heart's ease" are favorite expressions in both Bacon's acknowledged writings and the Plays (but are, of course, also found in many other works of Bacon's time and of preceding times).

In Troilus and Cressida, I, 2, Cressida says:

> Then, though my *heart's content* firm love doth bear,
> Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.

In The Merchant of Venice, III, 4, Jessica tells Portia:

I wish your Ladyship all *heart's content.*

In Julius Cæsar, I, 2, Cæsar comments on Cassius:

Such men as he be never at *heart's ease*
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves.

And several other instances.

The form "heart's ease" flowed freely from Bacon's quill.

A letter to the Duke of Buckingham has preserved it, and, in addition, yet another example of the writer's fondness for the metaphorical use of the verb "to knit."

"EXCELLENT LORD:—

* * * You are not as a Lerma or an Olivares, and many others the like, who have insinuated themselves into the favor of young princes, during the kings', their fathers', time, against the bent and inclination of the kings: but, contrariwise, the king himself hath *knit the knot of trust and favor between the prince and your Grace*, wherein you are not so much to take comfort in that you may seem to have two lives in your own greatness, as in this, that hereby you are enabled to be a noble instrument for the service, contentment, and *heart's ease*, both of father and son," &c.

To Sir Michael Hickes, Bacon wrote:

"Your wits seem not travelled, but fresh, by your letter, which is to me an infallible argument of *heart's ease*," &c.

And, in 1624, to King James:

"* * * Before I make my petition to your Majesty, I make my prayers to God above, *pectore ab imo*, that, if I have held anything so dear as your Majesty's service, (nay) your *heart's ease*, and your honor, I may be repulsed with a denial," &c.

FR. ST. ALBANS.

Finally, we have a good parallel between "I wish your heart's content may always answer your own wish" and this clause from a letter to the Queen (written about the time of the writing of the Dedication of Lucrece): "* * * I wish your Majesty served answerable[1] to yourself [answerable to your own wish]"; and a tolerable one with this short prayer of Bacon's in behalf of Essex (in the letter to Essex printed in the first pages under this Sonnet): "Whom [God], also, I most instantly beseech to give you fruit of your actions beyond that your heart can propound."

Of the Dedication of Lucrece the first clause of the first sentence stands—"The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end." This phrasing is trite enough to be the effusion of even the veriest tyro in letter—and dedication—writing. It happens, however, to be a form of a sentiment that actually was occasionally introduced by Bacon into his letters. Thus, in the letter written, probably, in the period of 1592–1594, to a correspondent whose name was omitted from the preserved draft or copy (already given in part under this Sonnet), he says:

"SIR:—In this solitude of friends, which is the base court of adversity, where nobody, almost, will be seen stirring, I have often remembered this Spanish saying, *Amor sin fin no tiene fin* [Love without end is without end]."

In a letter "framed as from Mr. Anthony Bacon to the Earl of Essex," Bacon managed to insert essentially the same thought: "For, though I [Essex] am so unfortunate as to be a stranger to her Majesty's eye, much more to her nature and manners, yet by that which is extant I do manifestly discern

[1] Answerable = corresponding. Compare Taming of the Shrew, II, 1, line 361:

> Six score fat oxen standing in my stalls,
> And all things *answerable* to this portion.

that she hath that character of the divine nature and goodness as *quos amavit, amavit usque ad finem* [those whom she has loved she has loved even to the end]."

And in 1603, when the Earl of Southampton—the same personage to whom Lucrece had been dedicated—was liberated by King James from prison, to which he had been committed by Elizabeth for his complicity in Essex's treason, he wrote:

"It May Please Your Lordship:—

I would have been very glad to have presented my humble service to your Lordship by my attendance, if I could have foreseen that it should not have been unpleasing unto you. And, therefore, because I would commit no error, I choose to write; assuring your Lordship, how [in-]credible soever it may seem to you at first, yet it is as true a thing as God knoweth, that 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. And so, craving no other pardon than for troubling you with my letter, *I do not now begin to be, but continue to be,*

Your Lordship's humble and much devoted."

To Sir Robert Cecil he began a letter in this style:

"It May Please Your Honorable Lordship:—

I know you will pardon this my observance in writing to you empty of matter, but out of the fulness of my love," &c.

It may be remarked that, while Bacon was entirely sure as to the constancy of his own devotion and love, he entertained little confidence in those virtues as they existed in his royal mistress. He tells Essex, in a letter of 1594: "Princes, especially her Majesty, love to make an end where they begin."

The Dedication continues: "The warrant I have of your

honorable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance."

Similarity of wording is easily perceived between this sentence and one from a letter of advice of Bacon's to Essex: "Thus I have presumed to write these few lines to your Lordship, *in methodo ignorantiæ*, which is, when a man speaketh of any subject not according to the parts of the matter, but according to the model of his own knowledge; and most humbly desire your Lordship *that the weakness thereof may be supplied in your Lordship by a benign acceptation, as it is in me by my best wishing.*"

To the Earl of Salisbury he wrote: "Although I know your fortune is not to want a hundred such as I am, yet I shall be ever ready to give you my best and first fruits, and to supply, as much as in me lieth, *a worthiness by thankfulness.*"

Compare, too, the style of this letter to the same nobleman ("upon a New Year's tide"):

"It May Please Your Good Lordship:—

Having no gift to present you with, in any degree proportionable to my mind, I desire nevertheless to take advantage of a ceremony to express myself to your Lordship; it being the first time I could make the like acknowledgment when I stood out of the person of a suitor; wherefore I must humbly pray your Lordship to think of me, that now it hath pleased you, by many effectual and great benefits, to add the assurance and comfort of your love and favor to that precedent disposition which was in me to admire your virtue and merit; I do esteem whatsoever I have or may have in this world but as trash in comparison of having the honor and happiness to be a near and well accepted kinsman to so rare and worthy a counsellor, governor, and patriot. For having been a studious, if not a curious, observer of antiquities of virtue, as of late pieces, I forbear to

say to your Lordship what I find and conceive; but to any other I would think to make myself believed. But not to be tedious in that which may have the shew of a compliment, I can but wish your Lordship many happy years; many more than your father had; even so many more as we may need you more.

So I remain."

To the Queen, "upon the sending of a New Year's gift": "* * * I continue my presumption of making to your Majesty my poor oblation of a garment, as unworthy the wearing as his service that sends it; but the approach to your excellent person may give worth to both; which is all the happiness that I aspire unto."

To the Earl of Northampton:

"It May Please Your Good Lordship:—

Having finished a work touching the Advancement of Learning, and dedicated the same to his sacred Majesty, whom I dare avouch (if the records of time err not) to be the learnedst king that hath reigned; I was desirous, in a kind of congruity, to present it by the learnedst counsellor in this kingdom, to the end that *so good an argument, lightening upon so bad an author, might receive some reparation by the hands into which, and by which, it should be delivered.* And, therefore, I make it my humble suit to your Lordship to present *this mean but well-meant writing* to his Majesty, and with it my humble and zealous duty; and also my like humble request of pardon, if I have too often taken his name in vain, not only in the dedication, but in the voucher of the authority of his speeches and writings.

And so I remain," &c.

And again to the Earl of Salisbury ("upon sending him one of his books of The Advancement of Learning"):

"It May Please Your Good Lordship:—

I present your Lordship with a work of my vacant time,

which if it had been more, the work had been better. It appertaineth to your Lordship (besides my particular respects) in some propriety, in regard you are a great governor in a province of learning, and (that which is more) you have added to your place affection towards learning, and to your affection judgment, of which the last I could be content were (for the time) less, that you might the less exquisitely censure that which I offer you. But sure I am, the argument is good, if it had lighted upon a good author; but I shall content myself to awake better spirits, like a bell-ringer which is first up, to call others to church. So, with my humble desire of your Lordship's good acceptation, I remain—"

And to the King, September 5, 1621: "* * * *I shall never measure my poor service by the merit, which perhaps is small, but by the acceptation, which hath been always favorably great.*"

The Dedication goes on with declarations of entire surrender and devotion of the writer's self to the Earl: "What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have devoted yours."

The reader will, without prompting, remember Bacon's letter to Burghley, reproduced a few pages above, and this sentence in that letter: "This causeth me most humbly to pray your Lordship * * * to believe that your Lordship is upon just title *a principal owner and proprietor of that I cannot call talent—but mite—that God hath given me; which I ever do, and shall, devote to your service.*"

How thoroughly characteristic of Bacon such servile, meaningless phrases are will become more evident from other letters of his.

He writes to Essex, for instance:

"My Lord:—Conceiving that your Lordship came now up

in the person of a good servant to see your sovereign mistress; which kinds of compliments are many times *instar magnorum meritorum;* and therefore that it would be hard for me to find you; I have committed to this poor paper the humble salutations of him that is more yours than any man's, and more yours than any man."

In 1615 he makes to James the avowal: " * * * Being no man's man but your Majesty's."

And in 1620 he repeats it with courtier-like self-abasement:

" * * * I have been ever your man, and counted myself but an usufructuary of myself, the property being yours. And now, making myself an oblation, to do with me as may best conduce to the honor of your justice, the honor of your mercy, and the use of your service, resting as

Clay in your Majesty's gracious hand,

Fr. St. Alban, Can."

The Dedication, again: " Were my worth greater, my duty would shew greater."

And Bacon, to the Earl of Salisbury: "*I am not ignorant how mean a thing I stand for*, in desiring to come into the Solicitor's place."

And, a good many years previously, to Lord Treasurer Burghley:

My Singular Good Lord:—

Your Lordship's comfortable relation of her Majesty's gracious opinion and meaning towards me, though at that time your leisure gave me not leave to show how I was affected therewith; yet upon every representation thereof it entereth and striketh more deeply into me, as both my nature and duty presseth me to return some speech of thankfulness. It must be an exceeding comfort and encouragement to me, setting forth

and putting myself in way towards her Majesty's service, to encounter with an example so private and domestical, of her Majesty's gracious goodness and benignity; being made good and verified in my father, so far forth, as it extendeth to his posterity.

Accepting them as commended by his service, during the nonage, as I may term it, of their own deserts, *I, for my part, am very well content, that I take least part, either of his abilities of mind, or of his worldly advancement*;[1] both which he held and received, the one of the gift of God immediately, the other of her Majesty's gift; yet, in the loyal and earnest affection which he bare to her Majesty's service, I trust my portion shall not be with the least: nor in proportion with the youngest birth. For methinks his precedent should be a silent charge upon his blessing unto us all, in our degrees, to follow him afar off, and to dedicate[2] unto her Majesty's service both the use and spending of our lives. *True it is, that I must needs acknowledge myself prepared and furnished thereunto with nothing but a multitude of lacks and imperfections;* but, calling to mind how diversely, and in what particular providence, God hath declared himself to tender the state of her Majesty's affairs, I conceive and gather hope that those whom he hath in a manner pressed for her Majesty's service, by working and imprinting in them a single and zealous mind to bestow their duties therein,

---

[1] Hamlet, III, 2:

Hamlet: I lack advancement.

Rosencrantz: How can that be, when you have the *voice** of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?

Hamlet: Ay, sir, but *while the grass grows*—the proverb is some what musty.

[2] See Sonnet LXXIV, l. 6: The very part was consecrate to thee.

(* Bacon, to the Earl of Salisbury: "I have been *voiced* to it [the Solicitorship]"; and to the Earl of Essex: "I was *voiced* with great expectation [to the Attorney-Generalship].")

he will see them accordingly appointed of sufficiency convenient for the rank and standing where they shall be employed: so as, under this her Majesty's blessing, I trust to receive a larger allowance of God's graces. And as I may hope for this, so I can assure and promise for my endeavor, that it shall not be my fault; but what diligence can entitle me unto, that I doubt not to recover. And now seeing it hath pleased her Majesty to take knowledge of this my mind, and to vouchsafe to appropriate me unto her service, preventing any desert of mine with her princely liberality; first, I humbly do beseech your Lordship to present to her Majesty my more than humble thanks for the same: and withal, *having regard to my own unworthiness to receive such favor, and to the small possibility in me to satisfy and answer what her Majesty conceiveth*, I am moved to become a most humble suitor to her Majesty, that this benefit also may be affixed unto the other; which is, that, *if there appear in me no such towardness of service as it may be her Majesty doth benignly value and assess me at by reason of my sundry wants, and the disadvantage of my nature, being unapt to lay forth the simple store of those inferior gifts which God hath allotted unto me, most to view; yet, that it would please her excellent Majesty not to account my thankfulness the less, for that my disability is great to shew it;*[1] but to sustain me in her Majesty's gracious opinion, whereupon I only rest, and not upon any expectation of desert to proceed from myself towards the contentment thereof. But if it shall please God to

[1] Twelfth Night, III, 3:

Sebastian: * * * My kind Antonio,
I can no other answer make, but thanks,
And thanks, and ever thanks: Often good turns
Are shuffled off with such uncurrent pay:
But were my worth, as is my conscience, firm,
You should find better dealing.

And Bacon: "* * * I shall be ever ready * * * to supply, as much as in me lieth, a worthiness by thankfulness."

send forth an occasion whereby my faithful affection may be tried, I trust it shall save me labor for ever making more protestation of it hereafter. In the meantime, howsoever it be not made known to her Majesty, yet God knoweth it, through the daily solicitations wherewith I address myself unto him, in unfeigned prayer, for the multiplying of her Majesty's prosperities. To your Lordship, also, whose recommendation, I know right well, hath been material to advance her Majesty's good opinion of me, *I can be but a bounden servant.* So much may I safely promise, and purpose to be, seeing public and private bonds vary not, but that my service to her Majesty and your Lordship draw in one.[1] I wish, therefore, to shew it with as good proof, as I can say it in good faith.

Your Lordship's, &c.

It would be superfluous and wearying to present more examples of Bacon's incessant practice of preaching to others on duty and of promising, himself, to be always mindful of, and always to perform, his own duty to the Queen, the King, and his friends and correspondents.

I cannot forbear, though, to extract from the Plays a few more lines that point to our philosopher as their creator, and help to strengthen my contention that one and the same mind (Bacon's) wrote the Dedications and the Sonnets (and the Plays).

---

[1] Yet Bacon had already written to Burghley (as I have shown above): "But I may justly doubt her Majesty's impression upon this particular, as her conceit otherwise of my insufficiency and unworthiness, which, though I acknowledge to be great, yet it will be the less, *because I purpose not to divide myself between her Majesty and the causes of other men, as others have done, but to attend her business only,*" &c.

I will draw first from Two Gentlemen of Verona, II, 4:

Enter PROTEUS.

Silvia: Have done, have done; here comes the gentleman.
Valentine: Welcome, dear Proteus! Mistress, I beseech you,
Confirm his welcome with some special favor.
Silvia: His worth is warrant for his welcome hither,
If this be he you oft have wish'd to hear from.
Valentine: Mistress, it is: sweet lady, entertain him
To be my fellow servant to your Ladyship.
Silvia: Too low a mistress for so high a servant.
Proteus: Not so, sweet lady; but too mean a servant
To have a look of such a worthy mistress.
Valentine: Leave off discourse of disability:
Sweet lady, entertain him for your servant.
Proteus: My duty will I boast of, nothing else.
Silvia: And duty never yet did want his meed;
Servant, you are welcome to a worthless mistress.
Proteus: I'll die on him that says so, but yourself.
Silvia: That you are welcome?
Proteus: No; that you are worthless.

Here we have the same descanting on "duty," "worth," and "mean(ness)" that we hear with almost tiresome iteration in Bacon's letters, and in the Dedications and in this Sonnet. Sentiments and language are substantially the same in all.

Then, from Love's Labor's Lost, V, 2:

Biron: We number nothing that we spend for you:
Our duty is so rich, so infinite,
That we may do it still without accompt.

(Compare Bacon below—"infinitely bound.")

From Hamlet, II, 2:

Polonius: I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious king.

From Richard II., I, 1:

Norfolk: Myself I throw, dread sovereign, at thy foot.
My life thou shalt command, but not my shame:
The one my duty owes; but my fair name
(Despite of death, that lives upon my grave)
To dark dishonor'd use thou shalt not have.

(Note that Bacon writes to the Earl of Buckingham: "The duties of life are more than life.")

Finally, from Henry V., III, 6:

Fluellen: The Duke of Exeter is as magnanimous as Agamemnon; and a man that I love and honor with my soul, and my heart, and my duty, and my life, and my livings, and my uttermost powers.

(Here the fact is "as plain as plain can be"—to a Baconian—that Bacon is seizing an opportunity to proclaim from the stage his devoted attachment to Essex.)

The Lucrece Dedication concludes: "* * * It [my duty] is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness."

And Bacon was, if his own words can be believed, likewise *bound*—to every one of his friends, patrons, and correspondents.

To Lord Burghley he wrote: "To your Lordship * * * I can be but *a bounden servant*."

To Essex he was "Your Lordship's ever *most humbly bounden*."

To the Marquis of Buckingham he protested:

"* * * I would not fail to let your Lordship understand

that, as I find every day more and more occasions whereby *you bind me* [*knit* me] to you; so, this morning, the King himself did tell me some testimony that your Lordship gave of me to his Majesty even now when you went from him, of so great affection and commendation (for I must ascribe your commendation to affection, *being above my merit*), as I must do contrary to that that painters do; for they desire to make the picture to the life, and I must endeavor to make the life to the picture it hath pleased you to make so honorable a description of me."

To the Prince of Wales: "When I call to mind how *infinitely I am bound* to your Highness."

To King James: "I think myself *infinitely bounden* to your Majesty."

But the possible list would be little less than endless.

To bring these comparisons to a close, I will place in sequence the dedicator's "I wish your Lordship long life, still lengthened with all happiness," and the clause, "I wish your Lordship all happiness," from the letter to Burghley, printed a few pages above, under the Dedication of Venus and Adonis. This last extract is, I know, a bare straw; yet it helps a little to show that the wind of evidence blows towards Bacon as the author of the Dedications. The sum total of evidence is, to my mind, irresistible and convincing.

To all these letters and passages from letters and other writings, I will append a Dedication that Bacon actually wrote and signed. This Dedication is prefatory to "The Arguments in Law of Sir Francis Bacon, Knight, the King's Solicitor-General in Certain Great and Difficult Cases"; and is addressed "To My Loving Friends and Fellows, the Readers, Ancients, Utter-Barristers, and Students of Gray's Inn":

"I do not hold the law of England in so mean an account, but that which other laws are held worthy of should be due

likewise to our laws, as no less worthy for our state. Therefore, when I found that, not only in the ancient times, but now at this day, in France, Italy, and other nations, the speeches, and as they term them, pleadings, which have been made in judicial cases where the cases were mighty and famous, have been set down by those that made them, and published; so that not only Cicero, a Demosthenes, or an Æschines hath set forth his orations, as well in the judicial as in the deliberative, but a Marion and Pavier have done the like by their pleadings; I know no reason why the same should not be brought in use by the professors of our law, for their arguments in principal cases. And this I think the more necessary, because the compendious form of reporting resolutions, with the substance of the reasons lately used by Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, doth not delineate or trace out to the young practicers of law a method and form of argument for them to imitate. *It is true, I could have wished some abler person had begun; but it is a kind of order sometimes to begin with the meanest.* Nevertheless, thus much I may say with modesty, that these arguments which I have set forth, most of them are upon subjects not vulgar; and therewithal in regard of the commixture which the course of my life hath made of law with other studies, they may have the more variety, and perhaps the more depth, of reason; for the reasons of municipal laws, *severed from the grounds of nature*,[1] manners and policy, are like wall-flowers, which, though they grow high upon the *crests* of states, yet they

[1] Compare Henry V., I, 2:

Exeter: While that the armed hand doth fight abroad,
The advised head defends itself at home:
For government, though high and low, and lower,
Put into parts, doth keep in one *concent*,
Congruing in a full and natural close,
Like music.

have no *deep root;*[1] besides, in all public services, *I ever valued my reputation more than my pains:*[2] and therefore, in weighty causes I always used extraordinary diligence; in all which respects I persuade myself the reading of them will not be unprofitable. This work I knew not to whom to dedicate rather than to the Society of *Gray's Inn*, the place whence my father was called to the highest place of justice, and where myself have lived and had my procedure so far as, by his Majesty's rare, if not singular, grace, to be of both his councils; and therefore few men so bound to their societies by obligation, both ancestral and personal, as I am to yours, which I would gladly acknowledge, not only in having your name joined with mine own in a book, but in any other good office and effect which the active part of my life and place may enable me unto toward the

---

Canterbury: True; therefore doth heaven divide
The state of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavor in continual motion;
To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,
Obedience; for so work the honey bees,
Creatures that, by a *rule in nature*, teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.

(With "concent," "congruing," "rule in nature," in this passage from Henry V., compare the following sentence from Bacon's "A Brief Discourse of the Happy Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland": "There is a great affinity and *concent* between the *rules of nature* and the true rules of policy: the one being nothing else but an order in the government of the world, and the other an order in the government of a state. * * * So that I still conclude there is * * * a *congruity* between the principles of nature and policy.")

[1] Compare the wording of this and the preceding clause with the wording of a line in 1st Henry VI., II, 4, l. 85:

Spring *crestless* yeoman from so *deep a root?*

[2] Compare Richard II., I, 1:

The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation.

society, or any of you in particular. And so I bid you right heartily farewell.

Your assured loving Friend and Fellow,

FRANCIS BACON.

At first glance, on first inspection, this Dedication will reveal to the cursory reader (I write from experience) the merest glimmer of resemblance—if, indeed, any resemblance whatever—to the Dedications under examination and comparison. Analytical study shows, though, that the hand of Bacon has made its peculiar characteristic print here as well as in the other Dedications.

The style is, in the main, I admit, different from that of the others. Yet, that fact is just what might be expected. Many years had elapsed, at the time of the writing of this Dedication, since the writing of the Dedication of Venus and Adonis (in 1593) and of Lucrece (in 1594). The theme of this work is wholly dissimilar to the themes of those poems. The men addressed in this Dedication were—theoretically, at least—of an intellectually higher, graver class than the "class" (of profligates) in which the young Earl of Southampton belonged in the early nineties of the sixteenth century. And Bacon's mind had, for a long time, been in training in the school of dry, logical legal lore and of unpoetical business.

Despite these facts, characteristics of Bacon's style and of the diction of the Dedications are discoverable.

We hear in this production the same harping on worth, worthiness, unworthiness, meanness—not a word of which is sincerely meant—that greets our ears when the Dedications and Bacon's letters are read. In the Lucrece Dedication the author disparages himself by saying: "Were my worth greater," &c. In this Dedication Bacon says: "I could have wished some abler person had begun." In the former the

author says: "My duty * * * *is bound* to your Lordship," &c. In the letter Bacon says: "Few men *so bound* to their societies * * * as I am to yours."

There are not greater differences in language and style between this Dedication and the others than between Love's Labor's Lost and Hamlet; and the student of Bacon recognizes Bacon in all three Dedications as confidently as the student of "Shakespeare" recognizes "Shakespeare" in those two plays.

In conclusion, I will call attention to a literary blemish in the fourth line of this Sonnet, that might else escape the reader's notice. I am alluding to the feeble, wretched play on words that the poet has low-artfully constructed into that line—the "quibble" of ending the line with a word—"wit"—identical in form and sound with the first syllable of the word "witness" in the same line:

"To witness duty, not to shew my wit."

To this practice—of "quibbling," or punning—Bacon was, Ben Jonson relates, strongly addicted. Both the Plays and Bacon's letters give evidence of the fondness of their author for this kind of word-play. Jonson says of Bacon (I have already quoted him): "There happened in my time one noble speaker, who was full of gravity in his speaking: *his language, where he could spare or pass by a jest*, was nobly censorious."

And Samuel Johnson wrote of the author of the Plays:

"The admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best he soon ceases to do.[1] *He is not long soft and pathetic without some*

[1] Tolstoi has recently (1906–'7) expressed the same judgment. See "Shakespeare and the Drama," in *The Fortnightly Review*, January, 1907.

idle conceit or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

"*A quibble is to Shakespeare what luminous vapors are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of the way, and sure to engulf him in the mire.* It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisitions, whether he be enlarging knowledge, or exalting affection; whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchanting it in suspense; let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. *A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth.* A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it."

Even now, though, after being reminded of what they had read before, few persons will, I think, be able to *believe* that the poet deliberately stooped from the elevation, and violated the propriety, dignity, and grandeur, of the opening lines, to trick "a poor and barren quibble"—that would be of no credit to a low comedian—into the fourth line; and fewer, I fear, will be able, at this stage of explanation, to see or to hear the quibble or pun, *as* a quibble or pun, even after reading the line or hearing it read.

So we must get better acquainted with "Mr. Shakespeare" and Mr. Bacon, in order to sharpen our perception and understanding.

First, it will be fair to let "Shakespeare" give his own opinion of the habit of quibbling.

In The Merchant of Venice, III, 5, Lorenzo discourses:

How every fool can play upon the word! I think, the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none but parrots. * * *

> O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
> The fool hath planted in his memory
> An army of good words: And I do know
> A many fools, that stand in better place,
> Garnish'd like him, *that*, *for a tricksy word*,
> *Defy the matter.*

Here we distinguish Bacon's voice with ease. In The Advancement, Book I, the author writes:

" * * * The first distemper of learning is when men study words and not matter; whereof, though I have represented an example of late times, yet it hath been, and will be, *secundum majus et minus* in all time. And how is it possible but that this should operate to the discrediting of learning, even with vulgar capacities, when they see learned men's works like the first letter of a patent or of a limned book, which, though it hath large flourishes, yet it is but a letter? 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 unless they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all the same as to fall in love with a picture. * * *

"The second (distemper of learning), which followeth, is in nature worse than the former: for, as substance of matter is better than beauty of words, so, contrariwise, vain matter is worse than vain words." [1]

We can easily imagine that the practice of punning by

[1] Compare Romeo and Juliet, II, 6:

> Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,
> Brags of his substance, not of ornament.

others disgusted Bacon, and that he even ridiculed the practice openly. But it became, in the course of time, ingrained in him, second nature with him—and "nature was above art in that respect"—above his ability to break himself of the habit, as was the case with Oliver Wendell Holmes.

A year or two ago I cut out from *T. P.'s London Weekly* this short article on "Shakespeare's Puns":

"Matter-of-fact critics have been sorely puzzled at the way Shakespeare's characters have of punning in moments of stress and agony. Who can forget Lady Macbeth's horrible jest? It is dead of night. Macbeth has murdered the King, his guest, and comes down-stairs to his wife, who, with nerves strung tense, stands waiting his success. He has done the crime with the daggers of the King's own grooms, sleeping near him. Dazed and half mad, he has brought the daggers down with him. They must be taken back; but, broken and terror-stricken, he refuses to face again the sight of his slaughtered King. So Lady Macbeth herself takes the daggers and ascends to the chamber of horror. As she climbs the stairs she hisses out her terrible pun:

> If he do bleed,
> I'll *gild* the faces of the grooms withal,
> For it must seem their *guilt*.

[The writer might have added Henry V., II, chorus: Have, for the *gilt* of France (O *guilt* indeed!), &c.]

"There comes into our mind, also, the dying of John of Gaunt, taking leave of his life in an agony of sorrow for the woes of his country, and punning dismally on his own name throughout a dozen lines:

> Old Gaunt, indeed, and gaunt in being old:
> * * * * * * * *
> Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
> Whose hollow womb inherits naught but bones.

"No wonder that the King asks, 'Can sick men play so nicely with their names?' We think of Constance, and of her frantic despair as she hears of the peace between France and England, cemented by a marriage which means the ruin of her son, Arthur, and herself. With wild energy she turns on the King of France, who had promised to maintain her against the usurper John, and upbraids him for his perfidy. And in the midst of all her vehemence we are startled by a sudden pun:

> You came in arms to spill mine enemies' blood,
> But now in arms you strengthen it with yours.

"These tragic puns may be attacked by some on the ground of incongruity, or defended by others with arguments drawn from the mysterious recesses of human nature. For most of us it is enough that they are Shakespeare's" [and for many of us the explanation is that they are Bacon's].

I will supplement this newspaper article with three or four additional "nerve-graters."

The dramatist rang the changes on the verb *to tender* and the noun and adjective *tender* almost as inanely as he did on the words *gild*, *gilt*, and *guilt*.

In Cymbeline, III, 4, Imogen asks:

> Why *tender'st* thou that paper to me, with
> A look *untender?*

In Hamlet, surely, we shall not be shocked by such clownish wit—we might reasonfully say. Yet, the truth is, we are so shocked.

In Act I, scene 3, we find this remarkable conversation between Polonius and Ophelia:

> *Ophelia:* He hath, my lord, of late made many *tenders*
> Of his affection to me.

Polonius: Affection! puh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his *tenders*, as you call them?
Ophelia: I do not know, my lord, what I should think.
Polonius: Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,—
That you have ta'en these *tenders* for true pay,
Which are not sterling. *Tender yourself* [1] more dearly;
Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wronging it thus—you'll *tender* me a fool.

And in Act III, scene 2, Hamlet sarcastically tells Guildenstern:

"Call me what *instrument* you will, though you can *fret* me, you cannot *play upon* me."

The reader will, I am sure, remember a note under Sonnet XXII (to Donnelly's account of Shaksper's application to the College of Arms for a grant of coat-armor to his father, John Shaksper), mentioning the quibbling allusion to Shaksper, in Lucrece, to be found under this Sonnet. The note had relation to this statement of Donnelly's: "His [Shaksper's] profession as a 'vassal actor' prevented any hope of having a grant of arms made directly to himself," &c. Now, in Lucrece, St. 87, ll. 5-6, we read this instructive, preceptorial reminder and caution, uttered by Lucrece to Tarquin:

O be remember'd, no outrageous thing
From *vassal actors* can be wip'd away.

Here, in the second line, the poet has seemingly—has *in reality*, as I interpret it—made a venomous innuendo, a literary stiletto thrust, at actors, or rather at one particular actor—William Shaksper. It is—considered apart from the time and

[1] Regard yourself with tenderness or affection.

circumstances—a clever play on words that has almost the suddenness and the dazzling brilliancy of lightning, and certainly could not have flowed into the poem from the mind of William Shaksper, himself a member of the class of vassal actors. Sane men do not flay themselves—nor even pillory themselves—gratuitously, or for the sake of a jest, a pun, a quibble. Despite its brilliancy and force, though, it is itself an "outrageous thing," regarded as a quibble or an innuendo; for it is indisputable that the poet exceeds the bounds of both propriety and probability in causing a woman in such extreme agitation and anxiety and terror as Lucrece was suffering—or should have been suffering—to use a phrase that the scoundrelly intruder could construe as denoting that the speaker of it was not truly, seriously, desperately in earnest. It is simply inconceivable to common sense that the real Lucrece could have quibbled at *that* moment. Yet the poet—who was Bacon—made *his* Lucrece *quibble*.

Compare the villainous quibbling on "color" in the same poem, Stt. 68 and 69.

In Romeo and Juliet, 1, 3, the nurse says of Juliet:

> I'll lay *fourteen* of my teeth—
> And yet, to my *teen* [tears] be it spoken, I have but *four*—
> She is not *fourteen*.

A pun that was dragged in by the hair of its head and then foisted on a semi-imbecile woman who was as incapable of originating the pun as she was of reading Greek.

Of Bacon, Montagu says:

"His playfulness of spirit never forsook him. When, upon the charges being first made, his servants rose as he passed through the hall, 'Sit down, my friends,' he said, 'your rise has been my fall'; and when one of his friends said, 'You must look around you,' he replied, 'I look above me.'"

And Montagu speaks truly. Not in his younger days only was Bacon unable to "spare or pass by a jest."

In 1617, when he was Lord Chancellor, he wrote to the King:

"* * * And so, expecting that that sun which, when it went from us, left us cold weather, and now it is returned towards us hath brought with it a blessed harvest, will, when it cometh to us, dispel and disperse all *mists* and *mistakings*."

And in the same year he facetiously assured the Earl of Buckingham: "It is the *line of my life*, and not the *lines of my letter*,[1] that must express my thankfulness."

He quibbled as Lord Chancellor, and quibbled poorly.

Nor did he have either the good taste or the good sense to purge his talk and letters of undignified word-juggling, even after his fall from his high office. In 1623 he wrote to the Duke of Buckingham:

EXCELLENT LORD:—I send your Grace, for a *parabien*, a book of mine, written first and dedicated to his Majesty in English, and now translated into Latin, and enriched. * * * I hope your Grace * * * will not send your book to the Conde d'Olivares, because he was a deacon, for I understand by one * * * that the Conde is not *rational*, and I hold this book to be very *rational*. Your Grace will pardon me to be merry, however the world goeth with me.

FR. ST. ALBAN.

About the same time he wrote to King James the famous letter, begging for pardon—full of penitential groans and tears—that bears such very strong resemblance to parts of Wolsey's even more famous lamentation and admonition to his servant Cromwell; and *allegroed* the concluding lines in this manner:

---

[1] See Wyndham on "lines," under Sonnet XVI.

" * * * Help me, dear Sovereign Lord and Master, and pity me so far as I, that have borne a *bag*, be not now, in my age, forced in effect to wear a *wallet;* nor I, that desire *to live to study*, may not be driven *to study to live.* I most humbly crave pardon of a long letter, after a long silence."

The mind that could—and did—quibble with the words *mists* and *mistakings*, when writing a letter of the importance to the writer that the letter to the King was freighted with (Bacon was laboring to convince the King that he had not spoken derogatorily of "my Lord of Buckingham," a high favorite of the King's), and with the words "bag" and "wallet," when making the most earnest, heartfelt, tearful, and prayerful petition of his whole life, when the bark of his fortunes was shipping green seas, would not only *not have hesitated* at marring, to the ear of grave readers, a grandly sonorous and dignified poem to his dear friend Essex by a pitiful puerility. He would have seized his opportunity with avidity and have been childishly proud of his feat. There is little doubt possible, I am sure, that Bacon intended a pun, a quibble, in this fourth line, and that both he and Essex enjoyed it. And, although we may be so charitably credulous as to believe that "this written embassy" as a whole—the entire Sonnet—was written in order "to witness duty," intimate acquaintance with the Plays and with Bacon's letters justifies the additional, qualifying belief that this fourth line was purposely constructed "to shew my wit" ("wit" in his day meaning intellectual powers).

Compare Bacon—Preface to The Maxims of the Law:

"Now for the manner of setting down of them, I have in all points, to the best of my understanding and foresight, applied myself not to that which might seem most for *the ostentation of mine own wit* or knowledge, but to that which may yield most use and profit to the students and professors of our laws."

Compare the almost silly playing with words in Macbeth, I, 4:

More is thy due than *more* than all can pay;

and—with "more" again—in Sonnet XXIII, l. 12; and with "all," in Sonnet XXXI, l. 14. And the play on the syllable and the word "pen," in Sonnet LXXXIV, l. 5:

Lean *pen*ury within that *pen* doth dwell.

See Wyndham, Sonnet CXIII, l. 3.

See Sonnets LVIII, l. 4, and CXLI, l. 12, for the appellation "vassal" figuratively applied by the poet to himself.

Bacon's propensity to levity has caused some of his commentators and critics to form an incorrect estimate, an unfavorable opinion, of the quality and character of the sentiments of the Plays.

Tolstoi—in the article mentioned in the foot-note above—says:

"Sincerity is completely absent in all Shakespeare's works. In them all one sees intentional artifice—one sees that he is *not in earnest*, but that he is *playing with words*."

For a long time I could get no satisfactory explanation of this persistent levity, so offensive to intellectual readers or auditors—a characteristic that is mainly responsible for the charge of insincerity against the dramatist. But I found the true explanation, I think, at last, in Bacon's utilization of the suggestion in Horace's Epistle I. (Book II), lines 262–263:

Discit enim citius, meminitque libentius illud,
Quod quis deridet, quam quod probat et veneratur;—

"For men learn sooner, and retain better, what makes them laugh, than what they esteem and respect."

His audiences, coming to the playhouse to laugh, unawares imbibed the precepts of wisdom.

Mr. Lee, in a foot-note on page 128 of his "Life of William Shakespeare," says:

"There is little doubt that this sonnet was parodied by Sir John Davies in the ninth and last of his 'gulling' sonnets, in which he ridicules the notion that a man of wit should put his wit in vassalage to any one.

To love my lord I do knight's service owe,
And therefore now he hath my wit in ward;
But while it [*i. e.*, the poet's wit] is in his tuition so,
Methinks he doth intreat [*i. e.*, treat] it passing hard. * * *
But why should love after minority
(When I have passed the one and twentieth year)
Preclude my wit of his sweet liberty,
And make it still the yoke of wardship bear?
I fear he [*i. e.*, my lord] hath another title [*i. e.*, right to] got,
And holds my wit now for an idiot."

This is the Sir John Davies to whom Bacon wrote—in 1603, when Sir John went north to meet and welcome the new King, James I.—the famous letter containing the request, "be good to concealed poets."

Although these notes have already far exceeded the limit I intended for them, I am going to extend them with matter which, though not strictly pertinent to this sonnet, will nevertheless, I hope and believe, prove interesting to the reader, because it relates to the reputed "disgrace" of Bacon's life—his impeachment of bribery and his removal from the office of Lord Chancellor.

And there are two salient points in the section above on

"quibbles" by which this appendix can be brought, after all, into a sort of connection with preceding notes.

Turning back to the quibbles, we re-read Bacon to his *servants* (note the word): "Sit down, my friends; *your rise has been my fall*"; and to the King: "Help me, dear Sovereign Lord, *and pity me*."

Before proceeding, however, with my story of Bacon, I will invite attention to language used by Cleopatra to Cæsar—Antony and Cleopatra, v, 2:

> Be it known that we, the greatest, are misthought
> For things that others do; and when *we fall*
> We answer others' merits in our name:
> Are therefore to be *pitied.*

How natural it would have been for Bacon to write thus after 1621!

Montagu says:

"On the 15th of March, 1620, Sir Robert Phillips reported from the committee appointed to inquire into the abuses of courts of justice, of which he was chairman, that two petitions had been presented for corruption against the Lord Chancellor by two suitors in the Court of Chancery—the one named Aubrey, the other Egerton

"Aubrey's petition stated, 'That having a suit pending before the Lord Chancellor, he had been advised by his counsel to present £100 to the Chancellor, that his cause might, by more than ordinary means, be expedited, and that in consequence of this advice he had delivered the £100 to Sir George Hastings and Mr. Jenkins, of Gray's Inn, by whom it was presented to his Lordship; but, notwithstanding this offering, the Chancellor had decided against him.'

"Egerton's complaint was, that, 'To procure my Lord's favor, he had been persuaded by Sir George Hastings and Sir

Richard Young to make some present to the Chancellor, and that he accordingly delivered to Sir George and to Sir Richard £400, which was delivered by them to the Chancellor as a gratuity, for that my Lord, when Attorney-General, had befriended him; and that, before this advice, Egerton had himself, either before or after the Chancellor was intrusted with the great seal, presented to his Lordship a piece of plate worth fifty guineas; but that, notwithstanding these presents, the Lord Chancellor, assisted by Lord Chief Justice Hobart, had decided against him.'

"If Bacon, instead of treating the charge with contempt, and indulging in imaginations of the friendship of Buckingham and the King, [they] thinking, as they were, of their own safety, had trusted to his own powerful mind, and met the accusation instantly and with vigor, he might at once, strong as the tide was against all authority, have stemmed the torrent, and satisfied the intelligent *that the fault was not in the Chancellor, but* [in] *the chancery.* * * *

"On the 17th of March the Chancellor presided, for the last time, in the House of Lords. The charges, which he had at first treated with indifference, were daily increasing, and could no longer be disregarded. * * * He resolved, therefore, to meet his accusers; but his health, always delicate, gave way, and instead of being able to attend in person he was obliged by writing to address the House of Peers. * * *

"Although the King and Buckingham hoped that this general submission would be satisfactory, the agitation was too great to be thus easily quieted. * * * Their Lordships resolved that the Lord Chancellor should be charged particularly with the briberies and corruptions complained of against him, and that his Lordship should make a particular answer thereunto. * * * He [Bacon] proceeded, therefore, to a minute answer to each particular charge, which he so framed that future ages might see the times when the presents were made, and the persons to whom they were made.

"On the 30th of April the Lord Chief Justice signified that he had received from the Lord Chancellor a paper roll, sealed up, which was delivered to the clerk; and being opened * * * was read."

Bacon's answer would fill several of these pages. He replies to the twenty-eight charges against him, specifically, and seemingly honestly. Again and again he mentions the complicity of his "servants"—Shereburne, Hatcher, Hunt—in the alleged bribe-taking.

To Article 28, he answers:

"28. To the eight-and-twentieth article of the charge—viz., the Lord Chancellor hath given away to great exactions by his servants, both in respect of private seals, and otherwise for sealing of injunctions: *I confess it was a great fault of neglect in me, that I looked no better to my servants.*"

"On the 3d of May [1621] the Lords adjudged 'that, upon his own confession, they had found him guilty: and therefore that he shall undergo fine and ransom of forty thousand pounds [between $1,200,000 and $1,500,000, nowadays]; be imprisoned in the Tower during the King's pleasure; be forever incapable of any office, place, or employment in the state or commonwealth; and shall never sit in parliament, nor come within the verge of the court.' * * *

"After two days' imprisonment he was liberated. * * * In September the King signed a warrant for the release of the parliamentary fine.

"Forced by the narrowness of his fortune into business, conscious of his own powers, aware of the peculiar quality of his mind,[1] his heart was often in his study, while he lent his person to the robes of his office; *and he was culpably unmind-*

[1] Sonnet CXIV: "And my great mind most kingly drinks it up."

ful of the conduct of his servants, who amassed wealth meanly and rapaciously, while their careless master, himself always poor, with his thoughts on higher ventures, never stopped to inquire by what means they grew rich."

(This last paragraph will be repeated and completed under Sonnet XXIX, l. 8.)

Bacon busied himself, after his removal from his high office, with literary labors. One of the productions of the period between 1621 and 1625 is entitled, "An Advertisement Touching a Holy War" (written in the year 1622). In the Dedication of that Paper to Lancelot Andrews, Lord Bishop of Winchester, and Counsellor of Estate to His Majesty, Bacon says:

My Lord:—

Amongst consolations, it is not the least to represent to a man's self like examples of calamity in others. For examples give a quicker impression than argument; and, besides, they certify us, that which the Scripture also tendereth for satisfaction, "that no new thing is happened unto us." This they do the better, by how much the examples are liker in circumstances to our own case; and more especially if they fall upon persons that are greater and worthier than ourselves. For as it savoreth of vanity to match ourselves highly in our own conceit; so, on the other side, it is a good sound conclusion, *that, if our betters have sustained the like events, we have the less cause to be grieved.*

In this kind of consolation I have not been wanting to myself, though, as a Christian, I have tasted, through God's great goodness, of higher remedies. Having, therefore, through the variety of my reading, set before me many examples, both of ancient and later times, my thoughts, I confess, have chiefly stayed upon three particulars, as the most eminent and the most resembling. All three persons had held

chief place of authority in their countries; all three ruined, not by war, or by any other disaster, but by justice and sentence, as delinquents and criminals; all three famous writers, insomuch as the remembrance of their calamity is now as to posterity but as a little picture of night-work, remaining amongst the fair and excellent tables of their acts and works: and all three, if that were anything to the matter, fit examples to quench any man's ambition of rising again; for that they were every one of them restored with great glory, but to their farther ruin and destruction, ending in a violent death. The men were—Demosthenes, Cicero, and Seneca.

Thirty years previously he had written—in Richard II., v, 5:

> Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves
> That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,
> Nor shall not be the last; like silly beggars,
> Who, sitting in the stocks, refuge their shame,
> That many have, and others must, sit there:
> And in that thought they find a kind of peace,
> Bearing their own misfortune on the back
> Of such as have before endur'd the like.

Surely, he must have re-read some of his dramatic writings, and some of the Sonnets—this one, for instance—in his old age, with grim interest.

Relatively to the charges against Bacon, William Aldis Wright, in 1873, wrote:

"That Bacon took bribes for the perversion of justice no one has ventured to assert. Not one of the thousands of decrees which he made as Chancellor was ever set aside. None of his judgments were reversed. *Even those who first charged him with accepting money admitted that he decided against them.*

What his own opinions were concerning judicial bribery we know from many passages in his writings, and it would argue him a hypocrite of the deepest dye to suppose that he openly practiced what he as openly denounced. In his speech in the Common Pleas (May 3, 1617) to Justice Hutton, he admonishes him: 'That your hands, and the hands of your hands (I mean those about you) be clean, and uncorrupt from gifts, from meddling in titles, and from serving of turns, be they of great ones or small ones.' In his Essay 'Of Great Place,' first published in 1612, and reissued in 1625, he says: 'For corruption: Do not only bind thine own hands, or thy servants' hands, from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also from offering.' In confessing himself guilty of corruption, therefore, does he admit that the whole practice of his life had been a falsification of his principles? Let us see. Of the twenty-two cases of bribery with which he was charged, and which we may safely assume were all that the malice of his enemies could discover against him, there are but four in which he allows that he had in any way received presents before the causes were ended; and even in these, though technically the presents were made *pendente lite*, there is no hint that they affected his decision. During the four years of his Chancellorship he had made orders and decrees to the number of two thousand a year, as he himself wrote to the Lords, and of the charges brought against him there was scarcely one that was not two years old. The witnesses to some of the most important were Churchill, a registrar of the Court of Chancery, who had been discharged for fraud; and Hastings, who contradicted himself so much that his testimony is worthless. But we are more concerned with Bacon's confession of guilt than with the evidence by which the charge was supported. In a paper of memoranda which he drew up at the time, and which has been printed by Mr. Montagu (Bacon's Works, XVI., pt. 1, p. cccxlv), he writes:

'There be three degrees or cases, as I conceive, of gifts or rewards given to a judge. The first is of bargain, contract, or promise of reward, *pendente lite. And of this my heart tells me I am innocent; that I had no bribe or reward in my eye or thought when I pronounced any sentence or order.* The second is a neglect in the judge to inform himself whether the cause be fully at an end, or no, what time he receives the gift; but takes it upon the credit of the party that all is done, or otherwise omits to inquire. And the third is, when it is received *sine fraude*, after the cause ended; which it seems, by the opinions of the civilians, is no offence.' In another draft he adds this comment: '*For the first, I take myself to be as innocent as any born on St. Innocents' Day in my heart. For the second, I doubt in some particulars I may be faulty. And for the last, I conceived it to be no fault.*'

"Such is Bacon's own interpretation of his confession, and we are bound to accept it, for it is borne out by twenty-two of the articles of the charge. To the twenty-third article, that he had given way to great exactions by his servants, 'he confessed it to be a great fault that he had looked no better to his servants.' With this confession, we may leave his name and memory, as he left it in his will, 'to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages.' The verdict can hardly be other than that he pronounced himself: 'I was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years; but it was the justest censure in Parliament that was these two hundred years.'"

13–14.—*Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;*
Till then not shew my head where thou may'st prove me.

Compare Troilus and Cressida, III, 2:

Praise us as we are tasted, allow us as we prove; our head shall go bare till merit crown it: *no perfection in reversion* shall

have a praise in present: we will not name *desert* before his birth; and, *being born, his addition shall be humble.*

Compare Sonnet LXVI, line 2:

As, to behold desert a beggar born.

The full significance of the clause—"no perfection in reversion shall have a praise in present"—can be understood and appreciated thoroughly only after our becoming acquainted with Bacon's unpleasant experience as the holder of the reversion of an office.

About 1597 Bacon wrote to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper: "* * * I see opened unto me three not unlikely expectations of help: the one my practice; the other, some proceeding in the Queen's service; the third, *the place I have in reversion*—which, as it standeth now unto me, is but like another man's ground reaching upon my house, which may mend my prospect, but it doth not fill my barn."

Compare Richard II., II, 2, l. 38: "'Tis *in reversion that I do possess*"; and the style of the passage from Troilus and Cressida with The Preface of the Players, to the First Folio, Ed. 1623.

Through oversight of mine—not by fault of the printer—this beginning of a letter of Bacon's to Essex, "on his Lordship's going on the expedition against Cadiz," was omitted from its proper page above:

"I have no other argument to write on to your good Lordship, *but upon demonstration of my deepest and most bounden duty* [but *to witness duty*], in fulness whereof I moan for your Lordship's absence. * * * Your Lordship's ever deepliest bounden,

FR. BACON.

In conclusion, I will ask Shakspereans:

If *Shaksper could* write and *did* write this Sonnet to *Southampton*, why could he not write, or why did he not write, *at least one letter* to the Earl? Or, granting that he did write one letter to that nobleman—who was an appreciative patron of literary genius and talent—why should that letter not have been preserved?

LXVI.

TIR'D with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

1.—*Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry.*

Bacon was, as we have read, for more than twenty years a persistent but always disappointed aspirant to office in the Queen's service. He exclaims in Sonnet XXIX:

> When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state,
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself and curse my fate, &c.

And writing from "Gray's Inn, this 21st of March, 1594," to the Lord High Treasurer, he begs of his noble uncle: "* * * If I did shew myself too credulous to idle hearsays, in regard of my right honorable kinsman and good friend, Sir Robert Cecil (whose good nature did well answer my honest liberty),

your Lordship will impute it to the complexion of a suitor, *and of a tired, sea-sick suitor*," &c.

To Foulk Grevil (undated): " * * * 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,[1] and so in infinitum, *I am weary of it; as also of wearying my good friends*, of whom, nevertheless, I hope in one course or other gratefully to *deserve*."

To the Lord Treasurer (undated): " * * * I will use no reason to persuade your Lordship's mediation but this, that your Lordship and my other friends shall in this *beg my life of the Queen; for I see well the bar will be my bier*, as I must and will use it rather than my poor estate or reputation shall decay; *but I stand indifferent whether God call me, or her Majesty*."

To Sir Robert Cecil (undated): " * * * I think my fortune will set me at liberty, *who am weary of asserviling myself to every man's charity*."

Observe how naturally Bacon's feelings and emotions came to the surface in the Plays. Thus, in Coriolanus, II, 3:

> Better it is to die; better to starve,
> Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.

And in Titus Andronicus, I, 2 (written at least twenty years before Coriolanus) (Titus is burying his slain sons):

> In peace and honor rest you here my sons;
> Rome's readiest champions, repose you here,
> Secure from worldly chances and mishaps!
> Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells,
> Here grow no damned grudges; here no storms,
> No noise, but silence and eternal sleep!

---

[1] Compare Coriolanus, I, 3: "I saw him run after a gilded butterfly; and when he caught it, he let it go again; and after it again."

And in Hamlet, III, 1:

> To be, or not to be, that is the question—&c.

2.—*As, to behold desert a beggar born.*

That he was an express embodiment of merit and desert was to Bacon himself a visible, palpable fact. There was as much truth as poetry intended by lines 7 and 8 of Sonnet LXII:

> And for myself mine own worth do define,
> As I all other in all worths surmount.

To his brother Anthony he complains (as already quoted): "* * * I receive so little thence where I *deserved best.*"

To Essex: "* * * I am sure the latter [the Queen's rejection] I never deserved."

To Lord Henry Howard (about 1601): "I have *deserved better* than to have my name objected to envy."

And in 1617 he writes to the Earl of Buckingham: "* * * I will rely upon your constancy and nature, *and my own deserving.*"

He really meant all that his words signified and implied in lines 9 and 10 of Sonnet XLIX:

> I ensconce me here
> Within the *knowledge of mine own desert;*

just as he would be entirely willing that his language should be understood literally in lines 9 and 10 of Sonnet CXIV:

> 'Tis flattery in my seeing,
> And *my great mind most kingly drinks it up.*

And he surely expressed his feeling for himself when, in Titus Andronicus, I, 1, he made Bassianus say to the Romans assembled before the Capitol:

And suffer not dishonor to approach
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,
To justice, continence, and nobility;
But let desert in pure election shine;

as well as when he made Ulysses declaim, in Troilus and Cressida, III, 3:

For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigor of bone, *desert in service*,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time.

And we hear the thoughts of this Sonnet and of Bacon's letters in the Prince of Morocco's unbashful utterances, in The Merchant of Venice, II, 7:

* * * To be afeard of my *deserving*,
Were but a weak *disabling* of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding.

And he undoubtedly had his own personality in his mind's eye when he put this scholarly speech in the mouth of the servant Adam, in As You Like It, II, 3:

Your virtues, gentle master,
Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.
O what a world is this, when what is comely
Envenoms him that bears it!

The poet writes: "* * * *desert a beggar born*." And Bacon wrote to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal (appointed in 1596): "My estate, to confess a truth to your Lordship, is weak and indebted, and needeth comfort; for both my father, though I think I had greatest part in his love to all his children, *yet in his wisdom served me in as a last comer; and myself, in mine own industry, have rather referred*

and aspired to virtue than to gain: whereof I am not yet wise enough to repent me."

This sentiment respecting virtue and gain he had long before that time incorporated in Pericles, IV, 2:

> I held it ever,
> Virtue and cunning were endowments greater
> Than nobleness and riches.

Bacon was indeed *born* a beggar in the sense of being a beggar from the moment of his entering the field of active business and political life. The earliest record of his begging that I am acquainted with is his letter "From Gray's Inn, this 16th September, 1580," (when he was about twenty years old) to Lady Burghley, requesting that "it please your Ladyship further to give me leave to make this request unto you, that it would please your good Ladyship, in your letters, wherewith you visit my good Lord, to vouchsafe the mention and recommendation of my suit." So we may infer that his suing, or begging, began earlier than that date. And in 1621, after his deposition from the Chancellorship, he informs and reminds Buckingham: "I have lived hitherto upon the scraps of my former fortunes; and I shall not be able to hold out longer. Therefore, I hope your Lordship will now, according to the loving promises and hopes given, settle my poor fortunes, or rather my being."

About the same time he wrote his imploring letter to King James: " * * * My own means, through my own improvidence, are poor and weak—little better than my father left me. * * * I most humbly beseech your Majesty to give me leave to conclude with those words which necessity speaketh; help me, dear Sovereign Lord and Master, and pity me so far, as I, that have borne a bag, be not now, in my age, forced in effect

to bear a wallet; nor I, that desire to live to study, may not be driven to study to live."

His letters begging for intercession with the Queen in behalf of his place-seeking, and for pecuniary assistance, are too numerous to be quoted.

Bacon's statement that he was "a last comer," and the poet's virtual admission that *he* was born a beggar, remind me of two curious passages in Havelock Ellis's A Study of British Genius. On p. 117 that writer says: "In the small and medium-sized families it is the eldest who most frequently achieves fame; in the large families it is the youngest." On p. 118: " * * * Dugald found that the last-born child tends to be a pauper." And in Conclusions of the book, p. 233: "The fact of being either the youngest or the eldest child is a condition favorable for subsequent intellectual eminence."

And a passage in The Advancement, Book I, also comes to mind: "Concerning want, and the fact that *it is the case of learned men usually to begin with little*, and not to grow rich so fast as other men, by reason that they convert not their labors chiefly to lucre and increase," &c.

I fancy Bacon utilized his own experience and sentiments in writing the following part of the conversation in All's Well, I, 3:

Steward: Madam, the care I have ever had to your content I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavors: for then we wound our modesty, and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them.

Countess: What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah. The complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe; 'tis my slowness that I do not: for I know you lack not folly to commit them, and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

Clown: 'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

Countess: Well, sir.

Clown: No, madam; 'tis not so well that I am poor; though many of the rich are damned. * * *

Countess: Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

Clown: I do beg your good-will in this case.

Countess: In what case?

Clown: In Isbel's case, and mine own. *Service is no heritage*, &c.

(Bacon often complained that he was not advanced, or employed, in the Queen's service, as his father had been.)

And that he identified Hamlet with himself, in Hamlet, II, 2:

> Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks.

3.—*And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity.*

Bacon himself had been contemptuously called *nothing*—or "less than the least," by Coke. He now makes occasion to pass the compliment on to others.

In a letter—dated March 30, 1594—to Essex, he complains: "* * * And I must confess this very delay hath gone so near me, as it hath almost overthrown my health; for when I revolved the good memory of my father, the near degree of alliance I stand in to my Lord Treasurer, your Lordship's so signalled and declared favor, the honorable testimony of so many counsellors, the commendations unlabored, and in sort offered by my Lords the Judges and the Master of the Rolls elect; that I was voiced with great expectation, and, though I say it myself, with the wishes of most men, to the higher place [that of Attorney-General]; that I am a man that the Queen hath already done for, and that princes, especially her Majesty, love to make an

end where they begin;[1] *and then add hereunto the obscureness and many exceptions to my competitors:* when, I say, I revolve all this, I cannot but conclude with myself that no man ever read a more exquisite disgrace."[2]

From a letter to the Lord Keeper, of the date July 28, 1595, (printed under line 8, below,) I take the following paragraph:

" * * * On the other side, if I perceive any *insufficient*, *obscure*, *idol man* offered to her Majesty, then I think myself double bound to use the best means I can for myself," &c.

And from a letter to the Queen this excerpt:

MADAM:—

Remembering that your Majesty had been gracious to me both in countenancing me and conferring upon me the reversion of a good place, and perceiving that your Majesty had taken some displeasure towards me, both these were arguments to move me to offer unto your Majesty my service, to the end to have means to deserve your favor and to repair my error.

---

[1] Note how contradictory this opinion of the Queen's constancy is of the opinion expressed in the letter "framed as from Mr. Anthony Bacon to the Earl of Essex" (given above, under Sonnet XXVI, in the notes on the Dedication of Lucrece):

" * * * She hath that character of the divine nature and goodness as *quos amavit, amavit usque ad finem* [those whom she has loved she has loved even to the end]."

[2] Wolsey, in Henry VIII., III, 2, exclaims:

O, how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favors!
There is betwixt that smile he would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have.

Compare Cymbeline, V, 4 (under line 5, below):

Poor wretches that depend
On greatness' favor, &c.

Upon this ground I affected myself to no great matter, but only a place of my profession, such as I do see *divers younger in proceeding to myself, and men of no great note, do without blame aspire unto.*

At this point I will let Montagu speak again:

"In the spring of 1594, by the promotion of Sir Edward Coke to the office of Attorney-General, the Solicitorship became vacant. This had been foreseen by Bacon, and, from his near alliance to the Lord Treasurer, from the friendship of Lord Essex, from the honorable testimony of the bar and of the bench, from the protection he had a right to hope for from the Queen—*for his father's sake, from the consciousness of his own merits and of the weakness of his competitors*, Bacon could scarcely doubt of his success.

"He did not, however, rest in an idle security; for, though, to use his own expression, he was 'voiced with great expectation and the wishes of all men,' yet he strenuously applied to the Lord Keeper, to Lord Burleigh, to Sir Robert Cecil, *and to his noble friend Lord Essex*,[1] to further his suit.

"To the Lord Keeper Puckering he applied as to a lawyer having no sympathy with his pursuits or value for his attainments, in the hope of preventing his opposition, rather than from any expectation of his support; and he calculated rightly upon the Lord Keeper's disposition towards him, for, either hurt by Bacon's manner, of which he appeared to have complained, or from the usual antipathy of common minds to intellectual superiority, the Lord Keeper represented to the Queen that the two lawyers of the names of Bograve and Brathwayte were more meritorious candidates. Of the conduct of the Lord Keeper he felt and spoke indignantly. 'If,' he

[1] Why did he never apply to Southampton, if Southampton was the bosom friend of the Sonnets?—*H.*

says, 'it please your Lordship but to call to mind from whom I am descended, and by whom, next to God, her Majesty, and your own virtue, your Lordship is ascended, I know you will have a compunction of mind to do me any wrong.'"

Despite the Queen's continued, persistent rejection (for the reason that Bacon neglected—even though he did not refuse downright—to humiliate himself by recanting and apologizing for his speech on the Subsidies), Bacon declared that his devotion to her Majesty remained constant. He writes to Essex:

It May Please Your Good Lordship:—I pray God her Majesty's weighing be not like the weight of a balance—"gravia deorsum, levia sursum" ["desert" downward, "needy nothing" upward]. But I am as far from being altered in devotion towards her as I am from distrust that she will be altered in opinion towards me when she knoweth me better.

4.—*And purest faith unhappily forsworn.*

Bacon seemed to cherish his faith in Elizabeth's promises long after the time when he might with reason have thrown that faith to the winds. He was a long while in becoming convinced that, in reality, at heart, Elizabeth cared nothing whatever for him. So, he is continually drumming at the ears of deaf heaven and of his too-acutely hearing friends, telling of the Queen's falseness and indifference.

He writes to Foulk Grevil:

"Sir:—* * * My matter is an endless question. I assure you, I had said, *requiesce anima mea;* but now I am otherwise put to my psalter, *nolite confidere*, I dare go no farther. *Her Majesty had by set speech more than once assured me of her intention to call me to her service; which I could not understand but of the place I had been named to.*"

To the Queen: "* * * *Your Majesty's favor*, indeed, and

access to your royal person, *I did ever, encouraged by your own speeches, seek and desire.*"

And in the letter to Essex, given above under line 3, he said, "I was voiced with great expectation."

Finally, however, the scales fell from his eyes, and he saw the Queen's heart and mind clearly. Then he wrote to his brother Anthony: "I pray you let me know what mine uncle Killigrew will do; for I must be more careful of my credit than ever, since I receive so little thence where I deserved best. And, to be plain with you, I mean even to make the best of those small things I have with as much expedition as may be without loss; and so sing a mass of *requiem*, I hope abroad. *For I know her Majesty's nature, that she neither careth though the whole surname of Bacons travelled, nor of the Cecils neither.*"

I imagine Bacon meant a fling at Elizabeth in Othello, III 3 (even though that play was not written before 1604, as Malone held):

Desdemona: You do love my Lord;
You have known him long; and be well assur'd,
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politic distance.
Cassio: Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.
Desdemona: Do not doubt that; before Emilia here,
I give thee warrant of thy place; assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
To the last article, &c.

Compare Green on the Queen's "shameless mendacity," under line 6. below.

5.—*And gilded honor shamefully misplac'd.*

Under line 3 we read from Montagu's "Life of Bacon" about Bacon's striving and struggling for the Solicitorship. Montagu goes on to tell of the applicant's appeals to Lord Keeper Puckering, to Essex, to Lord Burghley, to Sir Robert Cecil, to the Queen; but in vain. The Queen had made her mind up. Montagu continues:

"When the Queen, with the usual property of royalty—not to forget—mentioned his speech in Parliament, which yet rankled in her mind, and with an antipathy unworthy of her love of letters, said 'he was rather a man of study than of practice and experience,' he reminded her of his father, who was made Solicitor of the Augmentative Office when he was only twenty-seven years old, and had never practiced, and that Mr. Bograve, who had been recommended by the Lord Keeper, was without practice.

"This contest lasted from April, 1594, till November, 1595; and what at first was merely doubt and hesitation in the Queen's mind became a struggle against the ascendency which she was conscious Essex had obtained over her, as she more than once urged that 'if either party were to give way, it ought to be Essex; *that his affection for Bacon ought to yield to her mislike.*' * * * On the 5th of November, 1596, Mr. Sergeant Fleming was appointed Solicitor-General, to the surprise of the public and the deep-felt mortification of Bacon, and of his patron and friend, Lord Essex. The mortification of Essex partook strongly of the extremes of his character—of the generous regard of wounded affection and the bitter vexation of wounded pride. He complained that a man every way worthy had 'fared ill, because he had made him a mean and a depend-

ence'; but he did not rest here—he generously undertook the care of Bacon's future fortunes, and, by the gift of an estate, worth about £1,800, at the beautiful village of Twickenham, endeavored to remunerate him for his great loss of time and grievous disappointment.

"How bitterly Bacon felt the disgrace of the Queen's rejection is apparent by his own letter, where he says that, 'rejected with such circumstances, he could no longer look upon his friends,'" &c.

Mr. Lee, in the Dictionary of National Biography, under "Essex," tells this anecdote, that shows the truthfulness of this line: "Essex's boyish vanity was hurt by the favor Elizabeth showed to Charles Blount [1563–1606] on his first appearance at court. He noticed that Blount wore about his arm a gold chess-queen which the Queen had given him, and he remarked at sight of it, 'Now I perceive that every fool must wear a favor.'"

Bacon's discontent and unhappiness under disappointed ambition are well handled by Macaulay in his Essay on Bacon. That essayist writes:

"The difference between the soaring angel and the creeping snake was but a type of the difference between Bacon the philosopher and Bacon the Attorney-General—Bacon seeking for truth and Bacon seeking for the Seals. * * *

"To be leader of the human race in the career of improvement; to found on the ruins of ancient intellectual dynasties a more prosperous and a more enduring empire; to be revered to the latest generations as the most illustrious among the benefactors of mankind; all this was within his reach. *But all this availed him nothing while some quibbling special pleader was promoted before him on the bench; while some heavy country gentleman took precedence of him by virtue of a purchased coronet*," &c.

Now let us turn to a prose composition of Bacon's, intended for the Queen's perusal, and read the words of a candied tongue licking absurd pomp, and watch him crook the pregnant hinges of the knee, that thrift may follow fawning—"In Praise of Queen Elizabeth":

"What should I wonder on to speak of the excellences of her nature, which cannot endure to be looked on with a discontented eye: of the constancy of her favors, which maketh service as a journey by land, whereas the service of other princes is like an embarking by sea. For her royal wisdom and policy of government, he shall note and observe the prudent temper she useth in admitting access; of the one side maintaining the majesty of her degree, and on the other side not prejudicing herself by looking to her estate through too few windows: *her exquisite judgment in choosing and finding good servants, a point beyond the former; her profound discretion in assigning and appropriating every one of them to their aptest employment: her penetrating sight in discovering every man's ends and drifts: her wonderful art in keeping servants in satisfaction, and yet in appetite*," &c.

Then a sentence or two from his Essays. Essay XIV, Of Nobility: "He that standeth at a stay when others rise can hardly avoid motions of envy." Essay XV, Of Seditions and Troubles: "The causes and motions of seditions are—innovation in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, *advancement of unworthy persons*," &c.

In Richard III., I, 3, Gloster says to Queen Elizabeth, in language indirectly aimed at Bacon's own times:

> The world is grown so bad
> That wrens may prey where eagles dare not perch.
> Since every Jack becomes a gentleman,
> There's many a gentle person made a Jack.

Queen Elizabeth answers:

Come, come; we know your meaning, brother Gloster;
You envy my advancement and my friends:
God grant us never may have need of you.

To which Gloster replies:

Meantime, God grants that we have need of you:
Our brother is imprison'd by your means,
Myself disgrac'd, and the nobility
Held in contempt; while great promotions
Are daily given, to ennoble those
That scarce, some two days since, were worth a noble.[1]

In Cymbeline, v, 4, Posthumus laments, in Baconian strain:

Poor wretches that depend
On greatness' favor dream as I have done;
Wake, and find nothing. But, alas! I swerve:
Many dream not to find, neither deserve,
And yet are steep'd in favors.

(Every scholar knows, of course, that this last passage can be paralleled from Twelfth Night, II, 5; from Chapman's All Fools, v, 1; and from Bacon's Advancement.)

And in the Merchant of Venice, II, 9—written about the same time this Sonnet was composed to lighten a heavy heart, in 1595–'6–'7—Arragon is simply the mouthpiece of Bacon:

Who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honorable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.

---

[1] An example of the abominable quibbling, noticed under Sonnet XXVI.

O, that estates, degrees, and offices,
Were not deriv'd corruptly! and that clear honor
Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honor! and how much honor
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times!

Compare Cymbeline, III, 3, l. 23:

Richer than doing nothing for a bauble—

that is, obtaining a gilded honor without "travailing" for it, as Blount obtained the gold chess-queen, for instance.

Now let us compare with these sentiments from the Plays a sentiment of Bacon's that Montagu justly attaches value and significance to (Life of Bacon):

"As a patron of preferment, his favorite maxim was—*Detur digniori; qui beneficium digno dat omnes obligat.*" (Let reward be given to the more worthy; he who bestows a benefit on the worthy obliges all men.)

And, further, compare this maxim with Parolles's observation, in All's Well, III, 6: "* * * The merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer."

Tyler—Compare Ecclesiastes X, 5–6: "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler. Folly is set in great dignity." (See l. 10.)

6.—*And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted.*

Donnelly, writing on this Sonnet, says: "The bright morning-sun of hope had ceased to shine upon his brow. He 'lacked advancement,' like Hamlet; he had been overriden by the Queen. He despaired. He writes: 'I care not whether God or her Majesty call me.' In the Sonnet he says:

'Tir'd of all these, for restful death I cry.'

And the grounds of his lamentation are those a courtier might entertain, but scarcely a play actor. He beholds 'desert' a beggar. Surely, this was not Shakspere's case. He sees nothingness elevated to power; strength swayed by limping weakness: himself with all his greatness overruled by the cripple Cecil. He sees the state and religion tying the tongue of art and shutting the mouth of free-thought. He sees evil triumphant in the world—'captive Good attending captain Ill.' And may not the 'maiden virtue rudely strumpeted' be a reflection on her of whom so many scandals were whispered; who, it was said, had kept Leicester's bed-chamber next to her own; who had for so many years suppressed Bacon: and for whom, on her death, 'the honey-tongued Melicert' dropped not one pitying tear?"

I should say that Bacon intended this Sonnet to touch the Queen's heart through her eye, which it was to reach either directly or indirectly. The Sonnet is, as every reader knows, *not poetry*, but merely a versified list of grievances, ending with a stereotyped, commonplace expression of regret for leaving the loved one.

No commentator with even a smatter of knowledge of Elizabeth's reputation and character, and of Bacon's (or even of Shaksper's) opportunities of acquainting himself with them, would pretend to believe that the poet was sincere in implying that the Queen was above reproach. We have already read about her recalling Essex from the Continent ostensibly from solicitude for his safety, and then passing the time of his stay with her in feasting and jollity, and about their remaining together "at cards, *or one game or other*," till the birds sang in the morning (a fact, by the way, that *may* explain some of the "wronged-lover Sonnets"). And Essex was only one of—how many, history saith not.

Still, there may have existed a shadow of a reason for the

writing of this—the 6th—line. It is possible that "talk" became exaggerated until it amounted to slander and calumny.

Mr. W. H. Mallock, in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, January, 1903, says:

"No historian denies that during Elizabeth's life-time it was whispered more than once in Court and diplomatic circles that the Virgin Queen had children. But the following curious passage from a little-known book shows that this gossip was at once more precise and more general than has been supposed.

"The book in question is 'Simboleography,' by William West, published in 1618. Little as the title might suggest the fact, this book is a collection of legal cases; and amongst them, on page 114, there occurs the case of some obscure person, who, 'not having the fear of God before his eyes, but misled by the instigation of the devil,' on 'the fifth day' of a certain month, in a certain year, and at a certain place, 'narravit et publicavit de dicta domina, regina nunc, hæc falsa, seditiosa et scandalosa verba Anglicana sequentia—viz.: *That the Queen hath had by the Lord R. D.* (prenobilis garterii miles) *Two or Three Children*, in magnum scandalum et contemptum dictæ reginæ et dignitatis suæ'—the 'R. D.' referred to being obviously Robert Dudley."

I know of no more vividly graphic pen-picture of Elizabeth than Green's, in his Short History of the English People. I will reproduce it here, and let the reader himself make deductions and inferences:

"Her moral temper recalled in its strange contrasts the mixed blood within her veins. She was at once the daughter of Henry and of Anne Boleyn. From her father she inherited her frank and hearty address, her love of popularity and of free intercourse with the people, her dauntless courage, and her amazing self-confidence. Her harsh, man-like voice, her impetu-

ous will, her pride, her furious outbursts of anger, came to her with her Tudor blood. She rated great nobles as if they were school-boys; she met the insolence of Essex with a box on the ear; she would break, now and then, into the gravest deliberations to swear at her ministers like a fishwife. But strangely in contrast with the violent outlines of her Tudor temper stood the sensuous, self-indulgent nature she derived from Anne Boleyn. Splendor and pleasure were with Elizabeth the very air she breathed. Her delight was to move in perpetual progresses from castle to castle through a series of gorgeous pageants, fanciful and extravagant as a Caliph's dream. She loved gaiety and laughter and wit. A happy retort or a finished compliment never failed to win her favor. She hoarded jewels. Her dresses were innumerable. Her vanity remained, even to old age, the vanity of a coquette in her teens. No adulation was too fulsome for her, *no flattery of her beauty too gross.* 'To see her was heaven,' Hutton told her; 'the lack of her was hell.' She would play with her rings that her courtiers might note the delicacy of her hands, or dance a coranto, that the French ambassador, hidden dexterously behind a curtain, might report her sprightliness to his master. *Her levity, her frivolous laughter, her unwomanly jests, gave color to a thousand scandals. Her character, in fact, like her portraits, was utterly without shade. Of womanly reserve or self-restraint she knew nothing.* No instinct of delicacy veiled the voluptuous temper which had broken out in the romps of her girlhood and showed itself almost ostentatiously throughout her later life. Personal beauty in a man was a sure passport to her liking. She patted handsome young squires on the neck when they knelt to kiss her hand, and fondled her 'sweet Robin,' Lord Leicester, in the face of the Court.

"*It was no wonder that the statesmen whom she outwitted held Elizabeth almost to the last to be little more than a frivolous*

woman, or that Philip of Spain wondered how 'a wanton' could hold in check the policy of the Escurial. But the Elizabeth whom they saw was far from being all of Elizabeth. *The wilfulness of Henry, the triviality of Anne Boleyn, played over the surface of a nature hard as steel, a temper purely intellectual, the very type of reason untouched by imagination or passion.* Luxurious and pleasure-loving as she seemed, Elizabeth lived simply and frugally, and she worked hard. Her vanity and caprice had no weight whatever with her in state affairs. The coquette of the presence chamber became the coolest and hardest of politicians at the council board. Fresh from the flattery of her courtiers, she would tolerate no flattery in the closet. She was herself plain and downright of speech with her counsellors, and she looked for a corresponding plainness of speech in return. Her expenditure was parsimonious and even miserly. If any trace of her sex lingered in her actual statesmanship, it was seen in the simplicity and tenacity of purpose that often underlies a woman's fluctuations of feeling. It was this, in part, which gave her her marked superiority over the statesmen of her time.

"No nobler group of ministers ever gathered round a council board than those who gathered round the council board of Elizabeth. But she is the instrument of none. She listens, she weighs, she uses or puts by the counsels of each in turn, but her policy as a whole is her own. It was a policy, not of genius, but of good sense. Her aims were simple and obvious: to preserve her throne, to keep England out of war, to restore civil and religious order. Something of womanly caution and timidity, perhaps, backed the passionless indifference with which she set aside the larger schemes of ambition which were ever opening before her eyes. She was resolute in her refusal of the Low Countries. She rejected with a laugh the offers of the Protestants to make her 'head of

the Religion' and 'mistress of the Seas.' But her amazing success in the end sprang mainly from this wise limitation of her aims. She had a finer sense than any one of her counsellors of her real resources; she knew instinctively how far she could go, and what she could do. Her cold, critical intellect was never swayed by enthusiasm or by panic either to exaggerate or to under-estimate her risks or her power. * * *

"She revelled in 'bye-ways' and 'crooked ways.' She played with grave cabinets as a cat plays with a mouse, and with much of the same feline delight in the mere embarrassment of her victims. When she was weary of mystifying foreign statesmen, she turned to find fresh sport in mystifying her own ministers. Had Elizabeth written the story of her reign she would have prided herself, not on the triumph of England or the ruin of Spain, but on the skill with which she had hoodwinked and outwitted every statesman in Europe during fifty years. * * *

"*Nothing is more revolting in the Queen, but nothing is more characteristic, than her shameless mendacity. It was an age of political lying, but in the profusion and recklessness of her lies Elizabeth stood without a peer in Christendom.* A falsehood was to her simply an intellectual means of meeting a difficulty; and the ease with which she asserted or denied whatever suited her purpose was only equalled by the cynical indifference with which she met the exposure of her lies as soon as their purpose was answered. * * * Her vanity and affectation, her womanly fickleness and caprice, all had their part in the diplomatic comedies she played with the successive candidates for her hand. If political necessities made her life a lonely one, she had at any rate the satisfaction of averting war and conspiracies by love-sonnets and romantic interviews, or of gaining a year of tranquility by the dexterous spinning out of a flirtation. * * *

"If in loftiness of aim her temper fell below many of the

tempers of her time, in the breadth of its range, in the universality of its sympathy, it stood far above them all. Elizabeth could talk poetry with Spenser and philosophy with Bruno; she could discuss Euphuism with Lyly, and enjoy the chivalry of Essex; she could turn from talk of the last fashions to pore with Cecil over despatches and treasury-books; she could pass from tracking traitors with Walsingham to settle points of doctrine with Parker, or to calculate with Frobbisher the chances of a north-west passage to the Indies. The versatility and many-sidedness of her mind enabled her to understand every phase of the intellectual movement of her day, and to fix by a sort of instinct on its higher representatives.[1]

"We have had grander and nobler rulers, but none so popular as Elizabeth. The passion of love, of loyalty, of admiration, which finds its most perfect expression in the 'Faery Queen,' pulsed as intensely through the veins of her meanest subjects. To England, during her reign of half a century, she was a virgin and a Protestant Queen; *and her immorality, her absolute want of religious enthusiasm*, failed utterly to blur the brightness of the national ideal. Her worst acts broke fruitlessly against the general devotion. A Puritan, whose hand she hacked off in a freak of tyrannous resentment, waved the stump round his head, and shouted, 'God save Queen Elizabeth!' Of her faults, indeed, England beyond the circle of her Court knew little or nothing."

Contrast with this characterization of Green's one by Bacon in the last paragraph of "The Felicities of Queen Elizabeth":

"But, to make an end of this discourse, *certainly this princess was good and moral, and such she would be acknowledged;*

[1] See Sonnet LXIX, l. 9:

They look into *the beauty of thy mind.*

she detested vice, and desired to purchase fame only by honorable courses. And, indeed, whilst I mention her moral parts, there comes a certain passage into my mind, which I will insert. Once giving order to write to her ambassador about certain instructions to be delivered apart to the Queen-mother of the house of Valois, and that her secretary had inserted a certain clause that the ambassador should say, as it were to endear her to the Queen-mother, 'That they two were the only pair of female princes from whom, for experience and arts of government, there was no less expected than from the greatest kings.' She utterly disliked the comparison, and commanded it to be put out, saying, 'That she practiced *other principles and arts of government* than the Queen-mother did.'"

I will say in comment merely this—that Green has added to our understanding of the line—*And purest faith unhappily forsworn.*

7.—*And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd.*

We have read so much under line 2 of this Sonnet about Bacon's good opinion of himself, and so much under foregoing Sonnets about his "disgraces," that it would be superfluous to comment at length and in detail on this line.

Maybe we can with good grace allow the self-laudatory appellation of Right Perfection to the man who possessed, self-consciously, "the most exquisitely constructed intellect that has ever been bestowed on any of the children of men"—according to Macaulay.

Regardless of what I said about "superfluousness" above, I will take a passage here from a letter to Essex, of October 4th, 1596—because Bacon's own experience with the Queen is so faithfully mirrored there.

"* * * Win the Queen; if this be not the beginning, of any other course I see no end. And I will not now speak

of favor of affection, but of other correspondence and agreeableness, which, whensoever it shall be conjoined with the other of affection, I durst wager my life (let them make what prosopopœas they will of her Majesty's nature) that in you she will come to the question of 'quid fiet homini, quem rex vult honorare?' But how is it now? A man of nature not to be ruled, that hath the advantage of my affection and knoweth it, of an estate not grounded to his greatness, of a popular reputation, of a military dependence. I demand whether there can be a more dangerous image than this represented to any monarch living, much more to a lady, and of her Majesty's apprehension? And is it not more evident than demonstration itself, that whilst this impression continueth in her Majesty's breast, you can find no other condition than inventions to keep your estate bare and low; crossing and disgracing your actions, extenuating [lessening, diminishing] and blasting of your merit, carping with contempt at your nature and fashions; breeding, nourishing, and fortifying such instruments as are most factious against you; repulses and scorns of your friends and dependants that are true and steadfast; winning and inveigling away from you such as are flexible and wavering; thrusting you into odious employments and offices to supplant your reputation, abusing you, and feeding you with dalliances and demonstrations, to divert you from descending into the serious consideration of your own case; yea, and percase venturing you in perilous and desperate enterprises. * * * "

May we not quote, and compare with this extract, a passage from Hamlet's Soliloquy?

> For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes?

8.—*And strength by limping sway disabled.*

Donnelly told us, in the passage quoted under line 6: "He sees nothingness elevated to power; strength swayed by limping weakness; himself with all his greatness overruled by the cripple Cecil."

Bacon himself confirms these views of Donnelly's.

In 1616 he writes to Sir George Villiers: " * * * In the time of the Cecils, the father and the son, able men were by design and of purpose suppressed."

And his brother Anthony adds his testimony in a letter to his mother, of the date 5th February, 1593–'94, printed in Spedding:

"Two vacancies among the puisne judges had been recently filled up, but the Mastership of the Rolls was still empty; no one had yet been appointed to succeed Walsingham, who had been dead now nearly four years; and there was another secretaryship vacant besides. Burghley, weary of the delay, had begun to press the Queen for a decision, and 'straitly urged her to the nomination of Coke to be her Attorney-General'—the Rolls seemed to have been all along destined for Sir Thomas Egerton—'and also to the nomination of a pair of secretaries, Sir Robert Cecil and Sir Edward Stafford, and a pair of other officers in her household.' But Essex set his face against all these appointments, and in a conversation with Sir Robert Cecil (30th January, 1593) declared himself more resolutely than ever in favor of Bacon. Sir Robert [here begins Spedding's extract from Anthony Bacon's letter] 'prayed him to be better advised; saying, "If your Lordship had spoken of the *Solicitorship*, that might be of easier digestion to the Queen." "Digest me no digesting (said the Earl); for the Attorneyship is that I must have for Francis Bacon; and in that I will spend my uttermost credit, friendship, and authority, against whomsoever"; and that

whosoever went about to procure it to others, that it should cost both the mediators and the suitors the setting on before they came by it. "And this be you assured of, Sir Robert," quoth the Earl, "for now do I fully declare myself; and for your own part, Sir Robert, *I do think much and strange both of my Lord, your father, and you, that can have the mind to seek the preferment of a stranger before so near a kinsman;* namely, considering if you weigh in a balance his parts and sufficiency in any respect with those of his competitor, excepting only four poor years of admittance, which Francis Bacon hath more than recompensed with the priority of his reading, in all other respects you shall find no comparison between them." ' "

Dr. Rawley, in his Life of Bacon, says:

"His birth and other capacities qualified him above others of his profession to have ordinary accesses at Court, and to come frequently into the Queen's eye, who would often grace him with private and free communication, not only about matters of his profession or business in law, but also about the arduous affairs of estate; from whom she received from time to time great satisfaction. Nevertheless, though she cheered him much with the bounty of her countenance, yet she never cheered him with the bounty of her hand; having never conferred upon him any ordinary place or means of honor or profit, save only one dry reversion of the Register's Office in the Star Chamber, worth about 1,600 l. per annum, for which he waited in expectation either fully or near twenty years; * * * which might be imputed, not so much to her Majesty's averseness and disaffection towards him, as to the arts and policy of a great statesman then, who labored by all industrious and secret means to suppress and keep him down; lest, if he had risen, he might have obscured his glory."

To this, Spedding adds the note:

"The person here alluded to is probably his cousin, Robert

Cecil, who, though he always professed an anxiety to serve him, was supposed (apparently not without reason) to have thrown obstacles secretly in the way of his advancement."

That Bacon *was* disabled by his lame, limping kinsman, Cecil, is an historical fact. It does not follow as a matter of course, though, that Cecil is indicated by the words "limping sway." The participle may be used metaphorically, thereby making the designation applicable to some other wielder of sway. In fact, Lord Keeper Puckering was as unfriendly to Bacon's aspirations as either of the Cecils was.

Montagu says: "That Bacon had a powerful enemy was evinced not only by the whole of Elizabeth's conduct during this protracted suit, but by the anger with which she met the earnest pleadings of Essex, by her perpetual refusals to come to any decision, and, above all, by her remarkable expressions, that 'Bacon had a great wit, and much learning, but that in law he could show to the uttermost of his knowledge, and was not deep.' Essex was convinced that his enemy was the Lord Keeper, to whom he wrote, desiring that the Lord Keeper would no longer consider him a suitor for Bacon, but for himself; that upon him would light the disgrace as well of the protraction as of the refusal of the suit; and complained with much bitterness of those who ought to be Bacon's friends."

Here follows the opening of one of Essex's letters:

To the Right Honorable the Lord Keeper:—

My Lord:—In my last conference with your Lordship I did entreat you both to forbear hurting of Mr. Fr. Bacon's cause, and to suspend your judgment of his mind towards your Lordship, till I had spoken with him.

Essex's letter was written "31 August, 1595." Just one

month previously—"from Gray's Inn, the 28th of July, 1595"—Bacon himself had written to the Lord Keeper:

It May Please Your Lordship:—There hath nothing happened to me in the course of my business more contrary to my expectation than your Lordship's failing me, and crossing me now in the conclusion, when friends are best tried. But now I desire no more suit of your Lordship than I would do if I were a suitor in the Chancery—which is this only, *that you would do me right.* And I, for my part, though I have much to allege, yet, nevertheless, if I see her Majesty settle her choice upon an able man, such a one as Mr. Sergeant Fleming, I will make no means to alter it.

On the other side, if I perceive any insufficient, obscure, *idol* man offered to her Majesty, then I think myself double bound to use the best means I can for myself, which I humbly pray your Lordship I may do with your favor, and that you will not *disable* me farther than is cause. And so I commend your Lordship to God's preservation.

That beareth your Lordship all humble respect,

Fr. Bacon.

After the accession of James, Bacon wrote this letter to his inveterate enemy, Sir Edward Coke:

Mr. Attorney:—I thought best, once for all, to let you know in plainness what I find of you and what you shall find of me. You take to yourself a liberty to *disgrace and disable* my law,[1] experience, and discretion; what it pleases you I pray think of me. I am one that know both mine own wants and

[1] Macaulay says: "The Cecils, we suspect, did their best to spread this opinion [Elizabeth's, just now given] by whispers and insinuations. Coke openly proclaimed it with that rancorous insolence which was habitual to him. No reports are more readily believed than those which disparage genius and soothe envy of conscious mediocrity."

other men's; and it may be, perchance, that mine may mend when others stand at a stay. And, surely, I may not in public place endure to be wronged, without repelling the same to my best advantage to right myself. You are great, and therefore have the more enviers, which would be glad to have you paid at another's cost. Since the time I missed the Solicitor's place—*the rather, I think, by your means*—I cannot expect that you and I shall ever serve as Attorney and Solicitor together, but either to serve with another upon your remove, or to step into some other course. *So as I am more free than ever I was from any occasion of unworthy confirming myself to you* [I—captive Good—am more free than ever I was from attending you—captain Ill], more than general good manners, or your particular good usage, shall provoke; and if you had not been short-sighted in your own fortune (as I think), you might have had more use of me; but that tide is past, &c.

Compare the language of the Prince of Morocco, under line 2, above:

> To be afeard of my deserving
> Were but a weak *disabling* of myself.

In this line Baconians accept the word Strength as standing metaphorically, metonymically for *Me, Bacon.* And there seems to be ground to base the acceptation on.

About the year 1591 he wrote to Lord Treasurer Burghley the famous letter in which he avows that he has taken all knowledge for his "providence"; and in that letter occur these two sentences: "And I do easily see that place of any reasonable countenance doth bring commandment of more wits than of a man's own, which is the thing I greatly affect. And for your Lordship, perhaps, you shall not find more *strength* and less encounter in any other." (See the letter at the beginning of Sonnet XXV.)

And years afterwards he writes to King James, "touching the Solicitor's place": "And I hope my former service shall be but beginnings to better, when I am *better strengthened.*"

Compare with this line Troilus and Cressida, I, 3, l. 114:

Strength should be led of [by] imbecility.

And Bacon, Advancement, Book II:

The most absolute monarch is sometimes led by his servants.

Tyler thinks that this line 8 "describes the injury inflicted by an incompetent and feeble government."

9.—*And art made tongue-tied by authority.*

Donnelly—as quoted under line 6—says: "He sees the State and religion tying the tongue of art and shutting the mouth of free thought."

In Bacon's philosophical writings we meet with passages justifying a different construction. Thus, in The Interpretation of Nature, he says:

"Whereas the earliest quests for truth, made in better faith and with more fortunate result, used to cast into aphorisms, or sentences short, scattered, and untrammelled by method, the knowledge which it was their object to gather from the consideration of things and to store up for use; which—showing simple representations of things discovered, and evident spaces and vacancies for things not discovered—were less fallacious, and invited men's talents and thoughts alike to criticism and invention.

"But now sciences are exhibited in such forms as to claim belief, not to solicit judgment, *and they check with a sullen authority the generous springings of invention* [of art]: so that every succession and development of philosophy bears the character of master and disciple, not of inventor and continuer;

whence it necessarily follows that sciences remain in their own footsteps and never stir from their ground. This has been done for many ages, so that what is positive is fixed, and that which is in question is kept in question, and continues wholly in the same state. * * *

" * * * In the orders and customs of schools, colleges, and such conventual bodies, all is found to be adverse to the further progress of the sciences. For much the greater part are professors and in the receipt of emoluments. And the lectures and exercises are so arranged that nothing out of the common routine can easily arise in any one's mind. But if a man chance to use liberty of inquiry and judgment, he will soon find himself left in a great solitude. And if ever he can bear this, he will yet find that, in achieving his fortune, this industry and magnanimity will be much hindrance to him. For in places of this kind men's studies are almost confined to the writings of certain authors; from which, if any one disagrees, or propounds matter of argument, he is immediately set down as a turbulent person and an innovator. Though, if one judge fairly, there is a great difference between the government of civil affairs and the arts; for the danger is not alike of new light, and of new motion. It is true that in civil affairs change, though for the better, is suspected from fear of disorder; since governments rest on authority, consent, credit, opinion, not on demonstration and truth in abstract. But in the arts and sciences, as in mines, all sides should resound with new works and further progress. And it is so in right reason. But in real life * * * the government and administration of the knowledge which is in use presses cruelly and checks the increase and growth of science."

Paragraphs 78–84 of the Novum Organum, Book I, are of interest under this line. From § 84 I take the following:

"Again, the reverence for antiquity and the authority of men who have been esteemed great in philosophy and general unanimity, have retarded men from advancing in science, and almost enchanted them. * * * With regard to authority, it is the greatest weakness to attribute infinite credit to particular authors, and to refuse his own prerogative to time, the author of all authors, and, therefore, of all authority. For truth is rightly named the daughter of time, not of authority. It is not surprising, therefore, if the bonds of antiquity, authority, and unanimity have so enchained the power of man that he is unable—as if bewitched—to become familiar with things themselves."

And these sentences from § 88:

"* * * One excuse, now from its repetition become familiar, is to be observed in every art—namely, that its promoters convert the weakness of the art itself into a calumny upon nature; and whatever it in their hands fails to effect, they pronounce to be physically impossible. But how can the art ever be condemned whilst it acts as judge in its own cause? Even the present system of philosophy cherishes in its bosom certain positions or dogmas, which * * * are calculated to produce the thorough conviction that no difficult, commanding, and powerful operation upon nature should be expected by means of art. * * * The only object of such philosophy is to acquire the reputation of perfection for their own art, and they are anxious to obtain the most silly and abandoned renown by causing a belief that whatever has not yet been invented and understood can never be so hereafter."

Still, Donnelly's understanding, too, may be right. For *multum in parvo* on the subject I have selected a few sentences from Harness's Life of William Shakspeare:

"That so little should be known with certainty of the history of his life was the natural consequence of the events

which immediately followed his dissolution. It is true that the age in which he flourished was little curious about the lives of literary men, but our ignorance must not wholly be attributed to the want of curiosity in the immediate successors of the poet. The public mind soon became violently agitated in the conflict of opposite opinions. Every individual was called upon to take his stand as the partisan of a religious or political faction. Each was too intimately occupied with his personal interest to find leisure for so peaceful a pursuit as tracing the biography of a poet. If this was the case during the time of civil commotion, under the puritanical dynasty of Cromwell the stage was totally destroyed, and the life of a dramatic author, however eminent his merits, would not only have been considered as a subject undeserving of inquiry, but only worthy of contempt and abomination. The genius of Shakspeare was dear to Milton and Dryden, to a few lofty minds and gifted spirits, but it was dead to the multitude of his countrymen, who, in their foolish bigotry, would have considered their very houses as polluted if they had contained a copy of his works. *Even in the reign of Elizabeth the enmity against the stage was carried to a great extent; play-books were burnt privately by the bishops and publicly by the Puritans.*"

Irving quotes Dowden: "Can this line refer to the censorship of the stage?"

10.—*And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill.*

A lecture from Bacon is the best annotation I know how to make on this line. In the Novum Organum, Book I, §§ 64, 65, we read:

"64.—The empiric school produces dogmas of a more deformed and monstrous nature than the sophistic or theoretic school: not being founded in the light of common notions

(which, however poor and superficial, is, yet, in a manner, universal and of a general tendency), but in the confined obscurity of a few experiments. Hence this species of philosophy appears probable and almost certain to those who have daily practice in such experiments, and have thus corrupted their imagination; but incredible and futile to others. We have a strong instance of this in the alchymists and their dogmas; it would be difficult to find another in this age, unless, perhaps, in the philosophy of Gilbert.[1] We could not, however, neglect to caution others against this school, because we already foresee and augur that, if men be [not] hereafter induced by our exhortations to apply themselves seriously to experiments (bidding farewell to the sophistic doctrines), there will be imminent danger from empirics, owing to the premature and forward haste of the understanding, and its jumping or flying to generalities and the principles of things. We ought, therefore, already to meet the evil.

"65.—The corruption of philosophy by the mixing of it up with superstition and theology is of a much wider extent, and is most injurious to it, both as a whole and in parts. For the human understanding is exposed to the impressions of fancy no less than to those of vulgar notions. The disputatious and sophistic school entraps the understanding, whilst the fanciful, bombastic, and, as it were, poetical school, rather flatters it. There is a clear example of this among the Greeks, especially in Pythagoras, where, however, the superstition is coarse and overcharged, but it is more dangerous and refined in Plato and his school. This evil is found also in some branches of other systems of philosophy, where it introduces abstracted forms, final and first causes, omitting frequently the intermediate, and the like. Against it we must use the greatest caution; *for the*

[1] Gilbert of Colchester, "the Columbus of magnetism," whom Bacon failed to appreciate rightly.—*H.*

apotheosis of error is the greatest evil of all, and when folly is worshipped it is, as it were, a plague-spot upon the understanding. Yet, some of the moderns have indulged this folly with such consummate inconsiderateness, that they have endeavored to build a system of natural philosophy on the first chapter of Genesis, the book of Job, and other parts of Scripture; thus seeking the living amongst the dead. And this folly is the more to be prevented and restrained, because not only fantastical philosophy but heretical religion springs from the absurd mixture of matters divine and human."

Tyler: In these lines—9 and 10—there seem to be allusions to universities and their technical phraseology. This view accords with the use of *doctor-like*, and line 9 (where *art* will denote "learning") may be taken to refer to opinions obnoxious to those in authority being forbidden to be expressed and published.

11.—*And simple truth miscall'd simplicity* [weak- or simple-mindedness; foolishness].

Bacon—Advancement, Book II: Nay, an honest man can do no good upon those that are wicked, to reclaim them, without the help of the knowledge of evil. For men of corrupted minds presuppose that honesty [simple truth] proceedeth from simplicity of morals, or manners, &c.

Compare, too, the letter to the Lord Treasurer, under Sonnet LVIII, lines 13–14.

12.—*And captive Good attending captain Ill.*

All his mature life Bacon was a captive, of one kind or another. Montagu says:

"Through the whole of his life he endeavored to burst

his bonds and escape from law and politics—from mental slavery to intellectual liberty. Perhaps the charge of inconsistency, so often preferred against him, may be attributed to the varying impulse of such opposite motives."

Yet, he described himself as a captive because he was *not permitted* to enter the Queen's service. In a letter to the Queen (the first lines of which are given at the beginning of the notes on Sonnet LVII), he says: " * * * I would to God that I were hooded, that I saw less; or that I could perform more; for now I am like a hawk that bates, when I see occasion of service, but cannot fly, because I am tied to another's fist."

As to the self-characterization—captive *Good*—we were prepared to hear that, by Bacon's autobiographical line in The Interpretation of Nature (quoted in the introductory part of this work): "And, in addition to this, because those things of whatever kind penetrate not beyond the condition and culture of this life, the hope occurred that I, born in no very prosperous state of religion, might, if called to civil affairs, contribute somewhat to the safety of souls."

His view of the right "end of aspiring" he expressed in this classical, almost biblical, style:

"*Power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring;* for good thoughts, though God accept them, yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place as the vantage and commanding ground." (And from "power and place" Bacon was "barred"—was held a "captive" in "disgrace.")

On this line I will re-quote some sentences from Donnelly that appear above in the Argument, in the explanation of the purposes of the Plays:

"Being himself a mighty *spirit*, he saw through 'the

muddy vesture of decay' which darkly hems-in ruder minds, and beheld the shadowy outlines of that tremendous spirit of which he was himself, with all created things, but an expression.

"He believed that God not only was, but was all-powerful and all-merciful, and that He had in His everlasting purposes to lift up man to a state of perfection and happiness on earth; *and* (as I have shown) *he believed that He had created him—even him, Francis Bacon, as an instrument to that end; and to accomplish that end he toiled and labored almost from the cradle to the grave.*

"He was—in the great sense of the words—*a priest and prophet of God, filled with the divine impulses of good.* If he erred in his conceptions of truth, who shall stand between the Maker and His great child and take either to account?"

He was, indeed, as Donnelly calls him, "a priest and prophet of God"—and he was, moreover, an active, vocal *preacher of good.* He had studied his Seneca until he became saturated with that philosopher's "Morals." He seems to have had always floating before his mental vision the divine saying of that thinker, "Qui non vetat peccare cum possit, jubet"—"He who does not forbid sin when he is able to do so, gives the command to sin." His Essays are theological and moral sermons.

And, finally, weigh this advice to Essex:

"It is true that, in my well-meaning advices, out of my love to your Lordship, and perhaps out of the state of mine own mind, I have sometimes persuaded a course differing: 'ac tibi pro tutis insignia facta placebunt': be it so, yet remember that the signing of your name is nothing unless it be to some good patent or charter, whereby your country may be endowed with good and benefit: which I speak both to move you to preserve your person for further merit and service of her Majesty and your country," &c.

It is an easy task to identify "Captain Ill." He surely was no other than Sir Edward Coke.

Montagu says:

"Who can forget his treatment of Bacon, who, when reviled, reviled not again? * * *

"Of Coke's bitter spirit there are so many painful instances that, unless Bacon had to complain of unfairness in other matters, the acrimony which overflowed upon all could not be considered altogether the effect of personal rivalry. It would have been well had his morbid feelings been confined to his professional opponents; but, unmindful of the old maxim, 'Let him take heed how he strikes who strikes with a dead hand,' his rancorous abuse extended to prisoners on trial for their lives, for which he was severely censured by Bacon, who told him that in his pleadings he was ever wont to insult over misery.

"Who can forget Coke's treatment of Raleigh, entitled as he was by station and attainments to the civil observances of a gentleman, and, by long imprisonment and subsequent misfortunes, to the commiseration of all men? * * * Fierce with dark keeping, his mind resembled some of those gloomy structures where records and muniments are piled to the exclusion of all higher or nobler matters. . For genius he had no love; with philosophy he had no sympathy.

"Upon the trial of Raleigh, Coke, after denouncing him as an atheist and traitor, reproached him, with the usual antipathy of a contracted mind to a superior intellect, for being a genius and a man of wit.

"When Bacon presented him with a copy of his Novum Organum, he wrote with his own hand, at the top of the title-page, *Edw. C. ex dono auctoris.*

Auctori Consilium.

Instaurare paras veterum documenta sophorum:
Instaura Leges Justitiamq. prius.

And over the device of the ship passing between Hercules's pillars he wrote the following verses:

'It deserveth not to be read in schools,
But to be freighted in the Ship of Fooles.'

From professional altercations with this contracted mind, Bacon was rescued by his promotion."

To Bacon this "educated" ruffian was the arch-fiend incarnate. "Captain Ill" was a mild, refined appellation to have been bestowed by Bacon. And he virtually gave him the same appellation elsewhere, in his famous Letter of Expostulation to Lord Coke, in which he tells his enemy: "* * * You cannot but have much of your estate, pardon my bluntness, *ill got*."

In 1594 Coke was promoted from the office of Solicitor to that of Attorney-General. Bacon hoped, expected, and—as we have seen—failed, to obtain the Solicitorship. For many years he was compelled to "attend" Coke. The story of their animosities, friction, and clashing is too long to be recounted here. I will, though, remind the reader of the letter of Bacon's about Coke, of which a part was quoted under line 9 of Sonnet XXXVII, above; and of the one to Coke under line 8 of this Sonnet, in which Bacon rejoices that he is freer than he had been from any occasion of confirming himself to Coke—of "attending" him.

And from a paper entitled Remembrances of His Majesty's Declaration Touching the Lord Coke, I make this selection:

"That for things passed, his Majesty had noted in him [Coke] a perpetual turbulent carriage, first towards the liberties of his church and estate ecclesiastical; towards his prerogative royal, and the branches thereof; and likewise towards all the settled jurisdictions of all his other courts, the high commission, the Star Chamber, the chancery, the provincial councils, the admiralty, the duchy, the court of requests, the commission of

inquiries, the new boroughs of Ireland; in all which he had raised troubles and new questions; and lastly, in that which might concern the safety of his royal person, by his exposition of the laws in cases of high treason.

"That, besides the actions themselves, his Majesty in his princely wisdom hath made two special observations of him: the one, that, *having in his nature not one part of those things which are popular in men, being neither civil, nor affable, nor magnificent, he hath made himself popular by design only, in pulling down government.*"

Verily, Bacon *must* have regarded Coke as "Captain Ill."

The philosopher-poet-statesman's disappointments, slights, wrongs, rankled and festered in his very heart's fibre. It was his soul-crushing and clouding experience with Elizabeth, Burghley, Puckering, Coke, that made it possible—almost necessary—for him to write, in Sonnet LVIII,

> And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check,
> Without accusing you of injury.

And in Hamlet, III, 1:

> Who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes, &c.

And I imagine that, when, in 1st Henry IV., III, 1, he caused Hotspur's "evil manners to live in brass," he was pillorying for all time the unamiable disposition and boorish character of Edward Coke. Worcester remonstrates with Hotspur:

In faith, my lord, you are too *wilful plain;*
And, since your coming hither, have done enough
To put him quite beside his patience.
You must needs learn, lord, *to amend this fault:*
Though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood
(And that's the dearest grace it renders you),
Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage.
Defect of manners, want of government,
Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain:
The least of which, haunting a nobleman,
Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a stain
Upon the beauty of all parts besides,
Beguiling them of commendation.

Compare this extract from the Letter of Expostulation:

"As in your pleadings you were wont to insult over misery, and to inveigh bitterly at the persons, which bred you many enemies, whose poison yet swelleth, and the effects now appear, so are you still wont to be a little careless in this point, to praise or disgrace upon slight grounds, and that sometimes untruly; so that your reproofs or commendations are for the most part neglected and condemned; when the censure of a judge, coming slow but sure, should be a brand to the guilty, and a crown to the virtuous. You will jest at any man in public, without respect of the person's dignity or your own: this disgraceth your gravity, more than it can advance the opinion of your wit; and so do all actions which we see you do directly with a touch of vainglory, having no respect to the true end. * * * God in this case is the only and best physician; the means he hath ordained on the advice of friends, the amendment of ourselves: for amendment is both physician and cure."

Donnelly—Great Cryptogram, pp. 475–476:

"I have already shown that Bacon and the writer of the

Plays were tolerant in the midst of the religious passions of the time.

"Willliam Henry Smith—Bacon and Shakspere, p. 58—says: 'In an age of bigotry and religious persecution we find Bacon and Shakespeare expressing a toleration of all creeds and religions.'

"Hepworth Dixon—Personal History of Lord Bacon, p. 325—says, alluding to the appropriations for war expenses:

"'James takes this money, not without joy and wonder; but when they ask him to banish recusants from London, to put down masses in ambassadors' houses, to disarm all the Papists, to prevent priests and Jesuits from going abroad, he will not do it. In this resistance to a new persecution, his tolerant Chancellor [Bacon] stands at his back and bears the odium of his refusal. Bacon, who thinks the penal laws too harsh already, will not consent to inflame the country, at such a time, by a new proclamation; the penalties are strong, and in the hands of the magistrates; he sees no need to spur their zeal by royal proclamations or the enactment of more savage laws. *Here is a chance for Coke.* Raving for gibbets and pillories in a style to quicken the pulse of Brownites, men who are wild with news from Heidelberg or Prague believe in his sincerity and partake of his heat. To be mild now, many good men think, is to be weak. In a state of war, philosophy and tolerance go to the wall; when guns are pounding in the gates, even justice can be only done at the drumhead.'

"Bacon's downfall, as we shall see hereafter, was largely due to this refusal to persecute the helpless at the bidding of the fanatical, *led on by the brutal and sordid Coke.*

"And in the same spirit he at all times preached mercy and generosity, in both his acknowledged works and the Plays.

"Bacon, in his essay Of Discourse, enumerates, among the

things which ought to be privileged from jest, 'religion, matters of state, and *any case that deserveth pity*.'

"While Carlyle says of Shakespeare: 'His laughter seems to pour forth in floods. * * * Not at mere weakness—*at misery or poverty never*.'

"Bacon says—in the Prayer or Psalm that he composed: 'The state and bread of the poor have always been dear to my heart.'

"He labors 'to lift men out of their necessities and miseries.'

"He seeks, 'in a despised weed, the good of all men.'

"Bacon describes one of the fathers of 'Solomon's House,' in The New Atlantis, and says: 'He had an aspect *as if he pitied men*.'

"We turn to Shakespeare and we find the same great traits of character.

"Charles Knight speaks of 'Shakespeare's unvarying kindness toward wretched and oppressed humanity, in however low a shape.'

"Gerald Massey—Sonnets of Shakespeare, p. 549—says: 'He has infinite pity for the suffering and struggling and wounded by the way. The most powerful and pathetic pleadings in behalf of Christian charity, out of the New Testament, have been spoken by Shakespeare. He takes to his large, warm heart much that the world usually casts out to perish in the cold. There is nothing too poor or mean to be embraced within the circle of his sympathies.'

"Barry Cornwall refers to 'the extensive charity which Shakespeare inculcates.'

"Birch—Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare, p. 10—says: 'He has, more than any other author, exalted the love of humanity. However he may indulge in invective against the artificial systems of religion, and be found even speaking

against Christianity, yet in his material and natural speculations he endeavors to give philosophical consolation to mankind, to inculcate submission to inevitable circumstances, *and encourage scientific investigation into the nature of things.*'

"The reader will probably pause to see whether I have not misplaced this quotation, so completely does it fit the character and purposes of Francis Bacon. But no; it was written by an English clergyman, in an essay upon the religion of Shakespeare, and the author probably never heard of the theory that Bacon wrote the Plays.

"I append a few illustrative extracts from the Plays in corroboration of these opinions:

Henry VIII., v, 2:

> 'Tis a cruelty
> To load a falling man.[1]

Pericles, II, 3:

> Neither in our hearts nor outward eyes,
> Envy the great nor do the low despise.

Henry V., IV, 1:

> There is a soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distil it out.

---

[1] It is noteworthy that we find also in Henry VIII., III, 2:

> Press not a falling man too far; 'tis virtue:
> His faults lie open to the law.

And in a letter of Bacon's, written in 1621, to Sir Humphrey May, after the bringing of charges of bribe-taking against the writer: "* * * Satis est lapsos non erigere; urgere vero jacentes, aut præcipitantes impellere, certe est inhumanum. (It is enough not to raise up those who have fallen; but to press the prostrate, or to push the stumbling, assuredly is inhuman.)"—*H.*

Lear, III, 4:

> Oh, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp:
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
> And show the heavens more just."

It is an easily tenable belief that the same aching heart that wrote this Sixty-sixth Sonnet also wrote the heart-cry of King Henry, in 2d Henry IV., III, 1:

> O heaven! that one might read the book of fate,
> And see the revolution of the times
> Make mountains level, and the continent—
> Weary of solid firmness—melt itself
> Into the sea! and, other times, to see
> The beachy girdle of the ocean
> Too wide for Neptune's hips; how chances mock,
> And changes fill the cup of alteration
> With divers liquors! O, if this were seen,
> The happiest youth—viewing his progress through,
> What perils past, what crosses to ensue—
> Would shut the book,[1] and sit him down and die.

A little above we read Donnelly saying that Bacon "at all times preached mercy and generosity, in both his acknowledged works and the Plays."

---

[1] This figurative use of the word "book" is one of the many little peculiarities in "Shakespeare" that point to Francis Bacon as their true author. Bacon's mind was strongly dominated by books, although he inveighed against them unsparingly; and Bacon himself admitted (in an unaddressed letter): "I, who am a man of books"; and in a letter to Sir Thomas Bodley: " * * * Knowing myself by inward calling to be fitter to hold a book than to play a part."

We remember, without effort, Portia's speech—

The quality of mercy is not strain'd—

in The Merchant of Venice; and Isabel's—

Alas! alas!
Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
And he that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy: How would you be,
If He which is the top of judgment should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made,

in Measure for Measure; and

Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge,

in Titus Andronicus; and

Pity is the virtue of the law,
And none but tyrants use it cruelly,

in Timon of Athens.

Then, in Bacon's acknowledged writings, we find, amongst numberless passages in praise and advocacy of mercy, these fine sentiments:

"Compassion ever beateth in the veins of noble blood," in his Submission and Supplication to the Lords of Parliament, in 1621; and—

"In causes of life and death, judges ought (as far as the law permitted) in justice to remember mercy, and to cast a severe eye upon the example, but a merciful eye upon the person," in Essay LVI—Of Judicature.

Now, Shakspereans have the right to ask "Baconians" how they harmonize these exquisite moral and humane sentiments and teachings with Bacon's "true character" "as portrayed by Macaulay"; and they are not diffident in exercising their right.

Macaulay—who was both one of the meanest of Bacon's detractors and one of the most eulogistic of his encomiasts—says:

"Intellectually, he was better fitted than any [other] man that England has ever produced, for the work of improving her institutions. But, unhappily, we see that he did not scruple to exert his great powers for the purpose of introducing into those institutions new corruptions of the foulest kind.

"The same, or nearly the same, may be said of the torturing of Peacham. If it be true that in the time of James the First the propriety of torturing prisoners was generally allowed, we should admit this as an excuse, though we should admit it less readily in the case of such a man as Bacon, than in the case of an ordinary lawyer or politician.

"But the fact is that the practice of torturing prisoners was then generally acknowledged by lawyers to be illegal, and was execrated by the public as barbarous."

William Aldis Wright (who was not a believer in the Baconian authorship of "Shakespeare's" Plays) answers these accusations in dispassionate, judicial style:

"Peacham's case was of a different nature [from that of Oliver St. John], and the charge against Bacon founded upon it is even more serious. There were difficulties, both of law and fact, to be met, and Bacon, according to Macaulay, 'was employed to settle the question of law by tampering with the judges, and the question of fact by torturing the prisoner.' Edmund Peacham, a Somersetshire clergyman, having brought libellous accusations against his diocesan, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, was sent up to Lambeth to be tried before the High Commission, and sentenced to be deprived of his orders on the 19th of December, 1614. Before the sentence his house was searched' and a finished sermon was discovered, the contents of which

were decided by the Council to be of a treasonable nature. It was thought, moreover, to indicate a state of disaffection in the part of the country to which Peacham belonged, and as he refused to criminate any accomplices, the Council resolved that he should be put to the torture. *In this there is no evidence that Bacon had any hand whatever, further than that he, as Attorney-General, was one of the Commission appointed by the Council to attend the examination of the prisoner.* It is clear that by the common law the use of torture for extracting *evidence* was regarded as illegal; but it is equally clear that it was employed by the Council for *discovery*, and not for *evidence;* that is, not to make a prisoner criminate himself, but to get from him other information which it was desirable to obtain. *Bad as we may think this to be, it is not Bacon who was to blame for it. There is proof in his own letters that he engaged in the proceeding with reluctance, and that the step was taken against his advice.*

"How far he can be justified against the other charge, of tampering with the judges, depends upon a clear knowledge of what his interference really amounted to, and this is not easy to arrive at. As the torture had utterly failed to extort from Peacham any proof of the existence of a conspiracy, it became a question whether he himself could be proceeded against for treason. On this point of law the King was anxious to obtain the opinion of the judges of the King's Bench. It is not denied that the Crown had a right to consult the judges on points of this kind, but it does not appear to have been the custom to consult them separately, as was done in this case. There was no question with regard to Peacham's authorship of the sermon, which was in his handwriting. The points for the judges' consideration were, first, whether the sermon, had it been published, would have supported an indictment for treason; and, secondly, whether it was possible to establish a treasonable charge on the mere fact of composition. *The idea of consulting the judges sepa-*

rately originated with the King. Whether he thought by this means to get a more genuine opinion from the others when they were not influenced by the presence and authority of Coke, or what was his motive, we have no means of knowing. *That Bacon had anything to do with suggesting such a course, there is no evidence to show.* What he did was to carry out the King's instructions, and to lay the case before the Lord Chief Justice for his opinion. Coke's opposition was not exerted against the consultation of the judges, but against their being consulted separately. None of the judges of the King's Bench had to try the case, *and therefore it is hard to see with what truth Bacon's conduct can be described as tampering with the judges in order to procure a capital conviction.* Peacham was ultimately tried at the assizes at Taunton, on the 7th of August, 1615, and convicted of high treason, but the capital sentence was never carried into effect, because, as the report of his trial says of his offence, 'many of the judges were of opinion that it was not treason.' That his case excited any indignation in the country is a simple invention of Lord Campbell's."

In conclusion, finally, I will express my opinion that we shall be quite as fair to Macaulay as Macaulay is to Bacon, if we tax that biographer with mixing discreditable envy and jealousy and malice with the truth in the portrayal of his subject, and that we may still confidently regard Bacon as Captive—indeed, even as *Captain*—Good.

Under Sonnet CXIX we shall become acquainted, better than we have yet become, with some reasons for Bacon's weariness and his willingness to die.

And under future Sonnets we shall discover how little worthy—at heart—his "love," the Earl of Essex, really was of

the life-sustaining affection and solicitude that Bacon felt for him and manifested for him, even to the executioner's block.

Compare Bacon's expression of devotion to his love in the last line of this Sonnet with his relation of his devotion in the extract from the Apology, quoted in annotation of the first two lines of Sonnet XXVI.

As a post-script to the foregoing notes and comments, I will insert a page or two from Richard Grant White's Studies in Shakespeare:

"Shakespeare was forty-one years old when he wrote 'King Lear.' Just at the time of life when a well-constituted, healthy man has attained the maturity of his faculties, he produced the work in which we see his mind in all its might and majesty. He had then been an actor some fifteen years, and of his greater plays he had written 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'The Merchant of Venice,' 'King Henry IV.,' 'Much Ado About Nothing,' Hamlet,' and 'Measure for Measure.' *In the case of a writer whose work was of a nature that left him personally out of it*, it is not safe to infer the condition of his mind from the tone of his writings. But it is worthy of remark that 'King Lear' quickly followed 'Measure for Measure,' and came next to it as an original play, and was itself followed next by 'Timon of Athens,' and that in these three plays the mirror that is held up to human nature tells more revolting and alarming truths than are revealed in all his other plays together. *Not in all the rest is the sum of the counts of his indictment of the great criminal so great, so grave, so black, so damning.* Hardly is there to be gathered from all the others so many personages who are so bad in all the ways of badness as the majority of those are which figure in these three.

"It is, however, apart from this fact that these plays are so

strongly significant of Shakespeare's judgment of mankind in his forty-second year. For, types of badness as these personages are, what they say is ten-fold more condemnatory than what they do. The aphoristic anthology of 'Measure for Measure,' 'King Lear,' and 'Timon of Athens' would make the blackest pages in the records of the judgments against mankind. Moreover, the chief dramatic motives of all these plays are selfishness and ingratitude; while in two of them, 'King Lear' and 'Timon,' we find the principal personage expecting to buy love and words of love with bounteous gifts, and going mad with disappointment at not receiving what he thinks his due. For Timon in the forest, although he is not insane, is surely the subject of a self-inflicted monomania. *Difficult as it is to trace Shakespeare himself in his plays*, we can hardly err in concluding that there must have been in his experience of life and in the condition of his mind some reason for his production within three years, and with no intermediate relief, of three such plays as those in question. And the play which came between 'Measure for Measure' and 'King Lear'—'All's Well that Ends Well'—although it is probably the product of the working over of an earlier play called 'Love's Labour's Won,' can hardly be said to break the continuity of feeling which runs through its predecessor and its two immediate successors. In 'All's Well' we have Parolles, the vilest and basest character, although not the most wickedly malicious, that Shakespeare wrought; and its hero, Bertram, is so coldly and brutally selfish that it is hard to forgive Helena for loving him. Indeed, the tone of the play finds an echo in the last lines of the Clown's song:

With that she sigh-ed as she stood,
And gave this sentence then:
Among nine bad if one be good,
Among nine bad if one be good,
There's yet one good in ten.

Was it sheer chance and hap-hazard that Shakespeare reverted to this unpleasant story and these repulsive personages at the time when, within three years, he wrote 'Measure for Measure,' 'King Lear,' and 'Timon of Athens'?"

In comment on White I will say, first, that, despite that author's opinion, the probability indistinguishable from certainty is that the man who wrote King Lear was not just then forty-one years old, and was not named Shakespeare—unless pseudonymically—but was about forty-five years old and was named Francis Bacon.

No Baconian wonders at the inability of *Shakspereans* (not Shakespeareans) to find Shaksper personally in the Poems and Plays. That actor and manager cannot be discovered—does not reveal himself—in those productions, for the very simple reason that he did not write even a single line of them.

White says: "Not in all the rest [of the Plays] is the sum of the counts of his indictment of the great criminal so great, so grave, so black, so damning. * * * Difficult as it is to trace Shakespeare [he means, of course, William Shaksper] himself in his plays, we can hardly err in concluding that there must have been in his experience of life and in the condition of his mind some reason for his production within three years, and with no intermediate relief, of three such plays as those in question."

Now, if we regard William Shaksper as Shakespeare, we might substitute "guessing" or "conjecturing" for "concluding," in White's second sentence, with perfect propriety and truth; for we really have no good ground for believing or concluding that that business man actually had any such experience of life and condition of mind as White alludes to. On the other hand, we know with certainty that Francis Bacon did have the very experience of life and the very condition of mind that would account for the production of the Plays in question.

This—the sixty-sixth—Sonnet gives considerable insight in t Bacon's life, and explains his cynicism, his seeming misanthropy, in the Plays, to a great extent. Under an earlier Sonnet I have brought forward facts from the career and the trial of that arch-conspirator, Essex—the *friend* whose outrageous conduct wrung from Bacon's heart the cry of anguish—

> For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee bright,
> Who art as black as hell, as dark as night—

that tell of the supreme, shocking, crushing disillusionment of Bacon's life by "the great criminal." Shortly—two or three years—after the discovery of the true nature of his bosom friend, the *lord of his love*, his "good old mistress" the Queen died, without redeeming a single one of her countless promises to him. His trusted but untrustworthy cousin, Robert Cecil, had proved to be his secret enemy. His early patron, Southampton—liberated in 1603 from the Tower, where he had expected to serve out a sentence of imprisonment for life for complicity in Essex's attempt against the Queen and the Government—had turned a cold shoulder on him and slighted his assurances of constant, uninterrupted friendship and loyalty. And Coke was as contemptuously, as maliciously, as rancorously inimical to him as he had been during the last decade of the Queen's lifetime. The world—as Bacon saw and understood it—was going money-mad, commodity-mad; it cared nothing for pure learning—not a whit for Bacon. Bacon was a lonesome, melancholic, disappointed, suppressed, impecunious, embittered, cynical, almost misanthropical *dreamer*, a philosopher-poet, a moralist, a prophet, in a half-crazy, half-savage world of stupid, selfish, idealless, workers, fighters, carousers, money-seekers, adventurers, *Shakspers*. Unquestionably, *Bacon* had the experience of life and the condition of mind requisite for writing the three Plays in question. There need be *no* conjecturing, *no* guessing, about Bacon's qualifiedness. There can be *only* conjecturing, *only* guessing, *only* concluding from imaginary, nebulous premises, of a very unsatisfactory, very unscholarly kind, about *Shaksper's* qualifiedness.

Conclusion.

Some opinions and sentiments of a few distinguished writers respecting the Sonnets may prove a pleasing conclusion of this little book to readers who have permitted their acquaintance with the literature of the question to grow rusty.

First, I will again quote from White's Studies in Shakespeare—this time from the famous chapter entitled The Bacon-Shakespeare Craze (giving the exact language of the challenge to Baconians):

"To one stumbling-block in the path of the Bacon-Shakespeare theorists they seem to be quite blind—the 'Sonnets.' They busy themselves with Bacon's writings, with the Plays, and the Concordance; and with their eyes fixed upon the one point which they hope to attain, these literary steeple-chasers, with their noses in the air, look right over this obstacle, which is one of many, each of which would bring them to the ground. They have little to say about it; and what they do say is not all to the purpose. If there is one fact in literary history which, upon moral grounds, and upon internal and external evidence, is as certain as any recorded fact in general history, or as any demonstrated mathematical proposition, it is that the writer of the Plays was also the writer of the Sonnets, both of which bear the name of Shakespeare. In spirit, in manner, and in the use of language, their likeness is so absolute that if either one of the two groups had been published anonymously there would have been no room for doubt that it was by the writer of the other. Now, the Sonnets, or a considerable number of them, had been written before the year 1597; for, as all students of the literature of the period know, they are mentioned by Francis Meres in his 'Palladis Tamia,' which was published in 1598. They were not then published; they were not written for the

public, as Meres tells us; they were not printed until eleven years afterwards, when they were procured for publication in some surreptitious or *quasi*-surreptitious way. Meres mentions them as Shakespeare's 'sugred sonnets among his private friends.'[1]

"Now, if Bacon wrote the Plays, he also wrote the Sonnets [and *vice versa*, if he wrote the Sonnets, he also wrote the Plays, of course]; and consequently we must believe that the lawyer, philosopher, and statesman, who at twenty-six years of age had planned his great system of inductive investigation, who never took his eye from that great purpose, who was struggling with unpropitious fortune, who was a ceaseless place-hunter, who had difficulty in procuring the means of living in modest conformity to his position as a gentleman of good birth and high connection, who was a hard-working barrister conducting great public as well as private causes, an active member of Parliament and a scheming, if not an intriguing, courtier,[2] occupied himself, not

[1] But neither Meres or any other contemporary of Shaksper told the world *after* 1609—the year in which the Sonnets were published—that the published Sonnets were the same as Shaksper's 'sugred sonnets.' Nor has any one whoever been able to adduce historical proof, or to advance good reasons for believing, that Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, was at any time one of William Shaksper's "private friends."—*H.*

[2] All this fine writing of White's about Bacon's devotion of his entire time to occupations and pursuits that would have made impossible the writing by him of the Sonnets and the Plays, is a good instance of the ignorant assuredness of the typical Shaksperean as an anti-Baconian. Had White read one of Bacon's letters to his brother Anthony, written in 1594 (in one of the years in which, Mr. Lee and other authorities say, most of the Sonnets were written), he would have known more about his subject. At the close of the letter Bacon writes:

"* * * I have here an idle pen or two, specially one, that was cozened, thinking to have got some money this term. I pray you send me somewhat else for them to write out besides your Irish col-

only in writing plays, for which he might have got a little (for him a very little) money, but in writing fanciful sonnets—not an occasional sonnet or two, but one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, more than Wordsworth bestowed upon the world—which were not to be published or put to any profitable use, but which he gave to an actor, to be handed about as his own among his private friends, for their delectation and his glory.

"This Bacon did, or he did not write the Plays. That he did so is morally impossible; and indeed the supposition that he could have done so is too monstrously absurd to merit this serious examination[1] of its possibility. * * * Bacon certainly did not write the Sonnets; and therefore, as certainly, he did not write the Plays. * * * There is no visible avoidance of this conclusion."

Before proceeding with quotations I will insert here the Dedication of the Sonnets. It is as follows:

TO THE ONLIE BEGETTER OF
THESE ENSUING SONNETS
MR. W. H. ALL HAPPINESS
AND THAT ETERNITIE
PROMISED BY
OUR EVER-LIVING POET
WISHETH
THE WELL-WISHING
ADVENTURER IN
SETTING
FORTH.
T. T.

---

lection, which is almost done. There is a collection of King James, of foreign states, largeliest of Flanders, which, though it be no great matter, yet I would be glad to have it."

Another letter, written to Sir Robert Cecil, "after the defeat of the Spaniards in Ireland," has a clause of the same tenor:

"* * * As one that wisheth you all increase of honor, and as one that cannot leave to love the state, * * * and as one that now this dead vacation time have some leisure *ad aliud agendum*," &c.—*H.*

[1] Mr. White deceived himself. His examination is not serious.—*H.*

About this Dedication Tyler, in his well-known edition of the Sonnets, says:

"With respect to the initials, it may be remarked that on the titles of books the representation of names by initial letters was formerly much more common than is the case at present. As to who was intended by the final 'T. T.' there need be no question, since under date '20 May,' 1609, 'Shakespeare's sonnettes' were entered in the Stationers' Register to Thomas Thorpe:

'Thomas Thorpe Entered for his copie vnder th[e h]ands of master Wilson and master Lownes Warden a Booke called Shakespeare's sonnettes vjd.'

"Thorpe, therefore, was 'the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth,' that is, of course, in publishing; and there can be no question as to the meaning of 'our ever-living poet.' This can refer to no other than the author of the Sonnets. There remain, however, two questions which have given rise to much discussion: What is meant by the expression 'the only begetter'? and Who was 'Mr. W. H.'? * * * This [the second] question will be further considered in the sequel (chap. VII). But there are several answers which, supported by no valid evidence, need only the slightest mention. Thus there have been suggested Mr. William Hughes, Mr. William Hall, Mr. William Hart, Mr. William Hathaway, Mr. William Shakespeare (the H. of the Dedication being a misprint for S.), and also Mr. William Himself."

Mr. Tyler finally decides the question in favor of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. He is as certain and sure in his identification as in his belief, his conviction, his *knowledge*, that William Shaksper—*not* Francis Bacon—wrote the Sonnets and the other Poems and the Plays.

But, after Tyler there came and wrote one mightier with the pen than Tyler—Mr. Sidney Lee.

In his Life of William Shakespeare, Chapter VII—The Sonnets and Their Literary History—that distinguished biographer and commentator writes:

"It was doubtless to Shakespeare's personal relations with men and women of the Court that his sonnets owe their existence.[1] * * * Shakespeare had lightly experimented with the Sonnet from the outset of his literary career. [Of course every reader will understand that by "Shakespeare" Mr. Lee means "the poet and dramatist"—not *necessarily* William Shaksper, the theatre manager.—*H.*] Three well-turned examples figure in Love's Labor's Lost, probably his earliest play; two of the choruses in Romeo and Juliet are couched in the sonnet form; and a letter of the heroine, Helen, in All's Well that Ends Well, which bears traces of very early composition, takes the same shape. * * * But these were sporadic efforts. It was not until the spring of 1593, after Shakespeare had secured a nobleman's patronage for his earliest publication, Venus and Adonis, that he became a sonnetteer on an extended scale. Of the hundred and fifty-four Sonnets that survive outside his Plays, the greater number were in all likelihood composed between that date and the autumn of 1594, during his thirtieth and thirty-first years. His occasional reference in the Sonnets to his growing age was a conventional device traceable to

[1] Yet Dr. Ingleby, a high Shakespearean authority, who was commissioned by the Shakspereans themselves to ascertain all that could be ascertained about Shaksper's acquaintance and relations with the prominent and literary men of his time, reported: "The bard of our admiration was unknown to the men of that age. * * * Doubtless he knew his men, but assuredly his men did not know him."—*H.*

Petrarch—of all the sonnetteers of the day, and admits of no literal interpretation.[1] * * *

"Very few of Shakespeare's 'sugared sonnets' have a substantial right to be regarded as untutored cries of the soul. It is true that the Sonnets in which the writer reproaches himself with sin, or gives expression to a sense of melancholy,[2] offer at times a convincing illusion of autobiographic confessions; and it is just possible that they stand apart from the rest, and reveal the writer's inner consciousness [correct—they do reveal *Bacon's* "inner consciousness"], in which case they are not to be matched in any other of Shakespeare's literary compositions [incorrect—*Bacon's* feelings, opinions, sentiments, "inner consciousness," are plentifully revealed in the other Poems and in the Plays]. But they may be, on the other hand, merely literary meditations, conceived by the greatest of dramatists, on infirmities incident to all human nature, and only attempted after the cue had been given him by rival sonnetteers. At any rate, their energetic lines are often adapted from the less forcible and less coherent utterances of contemporary poets, and the themes are common to almost all Elizabethan collections of sonnets. * * *

"Genuine emotion or the writer's personal experience very rarely inspired the Elizabethan sonnet, and Shakespeare's Sonnets proved no exception to the rule [wrong, Mr. Lee]. A personal note may have escaped him involuntarily in the Sonnets, in which he gives voice to a sense of melancholy and self-

---

[1] Probably Lee is right, respecting Shaksper. But it is a fact that Bacon had the habit of alluding, in his letters, to his advancing age. So, no Baconian is at a loss to understand the presence of similar allusions in the Sonnets. About 1591, Bacon wrote to the Lord Treasurer Burghley: "I wax now somewhat ancient; one-and-thirty years is a great deal of sand in the hour-glass."—*H.*

[2] Just one sentence from a letter of Bacon's to Essex: "I hope her Majesty, of her clemency, yea, and justice, will *pardon me*, and not force me *to pine* here with *melancholy*."

remorse, but his dramatic instinct never slept, and there is no proof that he is doing more in these Sonnets than produce dramatically the illusion of a personal confession.[1] The sole biographical inference deducible from the Sonnets is that at one time in his career Shakespeare disdained no weapon of flattery in an endeavor to monopolize the bountiful patronage of a young man of rank. External evidence agrees with the internal evidence in identifying the belauded patron with the Earl of Southampton, and the real value to a biographer of Shakespeare's Sonnets is the corroboration they offer of the ancient tradition that the Earl of Southampton, to whom his two narrative poems were openly dedicated, gave Shakespeare at an early period of his literary career help and encouragement, which entitles the Earl to a place in the poet's biography resembling that filled by the Duke Alfonso D'Este in the biography of Ariosto, or like that filled by Margaret, Duchess of Savoy, in the biography of Ronsard."

Mr. Lee writes disingenuously, prevaricatingly. He knows that the Earl of Southampton is *not* justly "entitled to a place," &c., because we have only *unreliable tradition* in his favor; whereas we have *reliable contemporary evidence and records* in the cases of the Duke and the Duchess mentioned. His remarks would be faultlessly pertinent, though, to the Earl of Essex in *his* relations with *Francis Bacon*. Mr. Lee simply has an elastic, adjustable, accommodating literary conscience.

That writer continues:

"Her [Elizabeth's] death, on March 26, 1603, drew from

[1] The critical value of the last clause of Mr. Lee's sentence depends on the reader's understanding of, or requirements for, *proof*. Of course, there is no sworn testimony. There is, though, abundant comparative literary proof.—*H.*

Shakespeare's early eulogist, Chettle, a vain appeal to him under the fanciful name of Melicert, to

> Drop from his honied muse one sable teare,
> To mourn her death that grac-ed his desert,
> And to his laies opened her royal eare.
>
> (England's Mourning Garment, 1603, sign. D. 3.)

But, except on sentimental grounds, the Queen's death justified no lamentation on the part of Shakespeare."

True enough, the Queen's death justified no lamentation on the part of the *true* Shakespeare—Francis Bacon. The reader of these notes and comments already understands pretty well *why*. After reading Sonnets CXI and CXIX he will understand even better than now.

On some other points and parts of his subject Mr. Lee is liberal with more-trustworthy information. For instance (and here he gives critical attention to Mr. Tyler's theory and opinion):

"The appearance in a book of a dedication from the publishers' (instead of from the author's) pen was, unless the substitution was specifically accounted for on other grounds, an accepted sign that the author had no hand in the publication. Except in the case of his two narrative poems, which were published in 1593 and 1594 respectively, Shakespeare made no effort to publish any of his works, and uncomplainingly submitted to the wholesale piracies of his plays [imagine the man whose aim in life was, as even Mr. Lee admits, to make money submitting uncomplainingly to robbery!] and the ascription to him of books by other hands. Such practices were encouraged by his passive indifference and the contemporary condition of the law of copyright. He cannot be credited with any responsibility for the publication of Thorpe's collection of his Sonnets in 1609. * * *

"A misunderstanding respecting Thorpe's preface and his part in the publication has led many critics into a serious misinterpretation of Shakespeare's poems. Thorpe's dedication was couched in the bombastic language which was habitual to him. He advertised Shakespeare as 'our ever-living poet.' As the chief promoter of the undertaking, he called himself 'the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth,' and in resonant phrase designated as the patron of the venture a partner in the speculation, 'Mr. W. H.,' 'all happiness' and 'eternity,' such eternity as Shakespeare in the text of the Sonnets conventionally foretold for his own verse. When Thorpe was organizing the issue of Marlowe's First Book of Lucan, in 1600, he sought the patronage of Edward Blount, a friend in the trade. 'W. H.' was doubtless in a like position. He is best identified with a stationer's assistant, William Hall, who was professionally engaged, like Thorpe, in procuring 'copy.' In 1606 'W. H.' won a conspicuous success in that direction, and conducted his operations under cover of the familiar initials. In that year 'W. H.' announced that he had procured a neglected manuscript poem—A Foretold Meditation—by the Jesuit, Robert Southwell, who had been executed in 1595, and he published it with a dedication (signed 'W. H.') vaunting his good fortune in meeting with such treasure-trove. When Thorpe dubbed 'Mr. W. H.,' with characteristic magniloquence, 'the only begetter (*i. e.*, obtainer or procurer) of these ensuing sonnets,' he merely indicated that that personage was the first of the pirate publisher fraternity to procure a manuscript of Shakespeare's Sonnets and recommend its surreptitious issue. In accordance with custom, Thorpe gave Hall's initials only, because he was an intimate associate, who was known by those initials to their common circle of friends. Hall was not a man of sufficiently wide public reputation to render it probable that the printing

of his full name would excite additional interest in the book or attract buyers.

"The common assumption that Thorpe in this boastful preface was covertly addressing, under the initials 'Mr. W. H.' a young nobleman, to whom the Sonnets were originally addressed, ignores the elementary principles of publishing transactions of the day, and especially of those of the type to which Thorpe's efforts were confined. There was nothing mysterious or fantastic, although from a modern point of view there was much that lacked principle, in Thorpe's methods of business. His choice of patron for this, like all his volumes, was dictated solely by his mercantile interests. He was under no inducement and in no position to take into consideration the affairs of Shakespeare's private life. Shakespeare, through all but the earliest stages of his career, belonged socially to a world that was cut off by impassable barriers from that in which Thorpe pursued his calling. It was wholly outside Thorpe's aim in life to seek to mystify his customers by investing a dedication with any cryptic significance.

"No peer of the day, moreover, bore a name which could be represented by the initials 'Mr. W. H.' Shakespeare was never on terms of intimacy (although the contrary has often been recklessly assumed) with William, third Earl of Pembroke, when a youth [nor is there evidence extant that he was at any other time or age on terms of intimacy with that nobleman.—*H.*][1] But were complete proofs of the acquaintanceship forthcoming, they would throw no light on Thorpe's 'Mr. W. H.' The Earl of Pembroke was, from his birth to the date of his

[1] Yet George Wyndham—The Poems of Shakespeare, Introduction, p. 29—says: "Shakespeare's friendships with Southampton and William Herbert [Earl of Pembroke] are so fully attested as to preclude the omission of all reference to their lives from any attempt at reconstituting the life of Shakespeare." Attestation and imagination are, evidently, synonyms in Mr. Wyndham's private dictionary.—*H.*

succession to the earldom in 1601, known by the courtesy title of Lord Herbert, and by no other name, and he could not have been designated at any period of his life by the symbols 'Mr. W. H.' In 1609 Pembroke was a high officer of state, and numerous books were dedicated to him in all the splendor of his many titles. Star-Chamber penalties would have been exacted of any publisher or author who denied him in print his titular distinctions."

Judge Holmes—whom I have quoted in the Argument—says:

"It has scarcely ever been doubted, among critics, that the Sonnets, smaller Poems, and Plays were the work of one and the same author; though many have experienced insurmountable difficulties in the attempt to reconcile the Sonnets with the life of the man William Shakspere. The similitude of thought, style, and diction are such as to put at rest all questions on that head.

"Mr. Boswell doubted whether any true intimations could be drawn from the Sonnets of Shakespeare respecting the life and feelings of the author: certainly no such doubt could have arisen in his mind if he had considered them as the work of Francis Bacon. *In respect of ideas, opinions, modes of thinking and feeling, style, manner, and language, they bear the impress of Bacon's mind, especially in the first half of his life; and they exhibit states of mind and feeling which will find an explanation nowhere better than in his personal history.* Many of them show the strongest internal evidence of their having been addressed to the Queen, as they no doubt were. Bacon tells us that 'she was very willing to be courted, wooed, and to have sonnets made in her commendation; and, as we know, he was himself notoriously given to the writing of sonnets to this 'mistress' eyebrow.'"

Ignatius Donnelly, in his Great Cryptogram, Part II., Chap. VIII—Corroborating Circumstances, Sect. VI—The Sonnets, says:

"And in the so-called 'Shakespeare Sonnets' we find a whole congeries of mysteries. * * * Some one speaks of that collection of Sonnets, published in 1609, as 'one of the most singular volumes ever issued from the press.' Let us point at a few of its singularities. Sonnet LXXVI says:

Why is my verse so barren of new pride?
So far from variation or quick change?
Why, with the time, do I not glance aside
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing my birth and where they did proceed?

"What is the meaning of this? Clearly that the writer was hidden in a *weed*, a disguise; and we have already seen that Bacon used the word *weed* to signify a disguise. But it is more than a disguise—it is a *noted* disguise. Surely the name *Shakespeare* was noted enough. And the writer, covered by this disguise, fears that every word he writes doth betray him—doth 'almost tell his name,' their birth, and where they came from. This is all very remarkable if Shakspere *was* Shakespeare. Then there was no *weed*, no disguise, and no danger of the secret authorship's being revealed.

"But we find Francis Bacon, as I have shown, also referring to a *weed*. 'The state and bread of the poor and oppressed have been precious in mine eyes. I have hated all cruelty and hardness of heart. I have, *though in a despised weed*, procured the good of all men.' [I have ever been "captive Good."]

"Marvelous, indeed, is it to find Shakespeare's Sonnets

referring to 'a noted *weed*,' and Bacon referring to 'a despised *weed*'!—that is to say, Shakespeare admits that the writer has kept invention in a disguise; and Bacon claims that he himself, under a disguise, has procured the good of all men; and that this disguise was a *despised* one, as the name of a play-actor like Shakespeare would necessarily be.

"But there is another incompatibility in these Sonnets with the belief that William Shakspere wrote them. In Sonnet CX we read:

> Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to the view,
> Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear.

And in the next Sonnet we have:

> Oh, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
> The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means, which public manners breeds.
> Thence comes it that *my name receives a brand*,
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.

"These lines have been interpreted to 'refer to the bitter feeling of personal degradation allowed by Shakespeare to result from his connection with the stage.'

"But Halliwell-Phillipps says:

'Is it conceivable that a man who encouraged a sentiment of this nature, one which must have been accompanied with a distaste and contempt for his profession, would have remained an actor years and years after any real necessity for such a course had expired? By the spring of 1602 at the latest, if not previously, he had acquired a secure and definite competence, independently of his emoluments as a dramatist, and yet eight years afterward, in 1610, he is discovered playing in company

with Burbadge and Heminge at the Blackfriars Theater' (*Outlines Life of Shak.*, p. 110).

"It is impossible that so transcendent a genius—a statesman, a historian, a lawyer, a philosopher, a linguist, a courtier, a natural aristocrat; holding the 'many-headed mob' and 'the base mechanical fellows' in absolute contempt; with wealth enough to free him from the pinch of poverty—should have remained, almost to the very last, a 'vassal actor,' liable to be pelted with decayed vegetables, or tossed in a blanket, and ranked in legal estimation with vagabonds and prostitutes. It is impossible that he should have continued for so many years to act subordinate parts of ghosts and old men, in unroofed enclosures, amid the foul exhalations of a mob, which could only be covered by the burning of juniper branches. Surely such a man, in such an age of unrest, when humble but ambitious adventurers rose to high places, would have carved out for himself some nobler position in life; or would, at least, have left behind him some evidence that he tried to do so.

"Neither can we conceive how one who commenced life as a peasant, and worked at the trade of a butcher, and who had fled to London to escape public whipping and imprisonment, could feel that his name 'received a brand' by associating with Burbadge and Nathaniel Field and the other actors. Was it not, in every sense, an elevation for him? And if he felt ashamed of his connection with the stage, why did he, in his last act on earth, the drawing of his will, refer to his 'fellows,' Heminge and Condell, and leave them presents of rings?

"But all this feeling of humiliation here pictured would be most natural to Francis Bacon. The guilty goddess of his harmful deeds had, indeed, not provided him the necessaries of life, and he had been forced to have recourse to 'public means'—to-wit, play-writing; and thereby his name had been 'branded, and his nature had been degraded to the level of the actors."

In my comments on these two Sonnets—CX and CXI—some of my views differ from some of Donnelly's, and I believe I support my interpretation by valid reasoning and apt quotation from Bacon's letters.

George Stronach, M. A., writing in The Pall Mall Magazine, February, 1902, under the title—Did Bacon Write Shakespeare's Plays ?—says:

"Against the Baconian authorship it is urged that Bacon was not a poet. Mr. Leslie Stephen says: 'Bacon was not a poet, as any one may see who looks at his version of the Psalms.' [Judged by a similar performance, Sidney, too, was not a poet, for it would be hard to imagine a worse attempt to write poetry than his versification of the twenty-third Psalm.—*H.*] Shelley, however, has put it on record that 'Lord Bacon was a poet.' * * * If he was not known as a poet to his contemporaries, it is remarkable that Stow, in his *Annales* (1615 edition), includes Sir Francis Bacon, Knight, among 'our moderne and present excellent poets which worthily flourish in their own works, and all of them, in my own knowledge, lived together in the Queen's raigne.' "

Spedding—Francis Bacon and His Times, Vol. I, p. 5—writes: "But in him [Bacon] the gift of seeing in prophetic vision what might be and ought to be was united with the practical talent of devising means and handling minute details. He could at once imagine like a poet and execute like a clerk of the works."

Again, in the fourteenth volume of The Works of Francis Bacon, p. 111, Spedding expresses himself similarly: " * * * Bacon had all the natural faculties which a poet wants [requires]: a fine ear for metre, a fine feeling for imaginative effect in words, and a vein of poetic passion."

Macaulay, in his Essay on Bacon, declares: " * * * The poetical faculty was powerful in Bacon's mind, but not, like his

wit, so powerful as occasionally to usurp the place of his reason, and to tyrannize over the whole man."

Taine, in his English Literature, drew Bacon's mental, intellectual portrait with Michelangelo-like strokes:

"In this band of scholars, dreamers, and inquirers, appears the most comprehensive, sensible, originative of the minds of the age—Francis Bacon, a great and luminous intellect, one of the finest of this poetic progeny. * * * There is nothing in English prose superior to his diction. * * * His thought is in the manner of artists and poets, and he speaks after the manner of prophets and seers. * * * Shakespeare and the seers do not contain more vigorous or expressive condensations of thought, more resembling inspiration. * * * His process is that of the creators: it is inspiration, not reasoning."

Mr. Isaac Hull Platt, in his article—The Testimony of the First Folio of the Shakespeare Plays—in Book News, September 1904, threshes over some old straw, and then asks a shrewd question:

"At Jonson's death he—Jonson—left a book in manuscript called 'Timbre, or Discoveries Made Upon Men and Nature.' It contains two passages * * * . The first refers to Francis Bacon, and he says of him that he 'filled up all numbers and performed that in our tongue which may be compared or preferred either to insolent Greece or haughty Rome, * * * so that he may be named and stand as the mark and acme of our language'; exactly, it will be observed, what he had previously said about the author of the Shakespeare plays, while of William Shakspere, the player, he said that he 'loved the man and honored his memory,' but that 'he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary that he be stopped—snuffed out.' 'But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than pardoned.' In the same volume he

enumerates the greatest 'wits' of his time. The list is: More, Wyatt, Surrey, Challoner, Smith, Eliot, Gardiner, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Philip Sidney, Hooker, Essex, Raleigh, Savile, Sandys, Egerton, and Francis Bacon. *Has he omitted him whom he declared to be the greatest of all, or has he mentioned him by another name?*"

Finally, Mr. Tobie Matthew, writing from the Continent to Bacon, avers in a post-script: "The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation, and of this side of the sea [as well], is of your Lordship's name, *though he be known by another.*"

Query: Were "Bacon" and "Shakespeare" in very truth interchangeable names? I believe they were.