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Biography, "Books and Reading X (pp.235-247)"

WARE MC14

Friends, pupils and acquaintances, often wondered how it was that his literary output, in bound and published form, in mere bulk compared so unfavorably with what other men ^{better} no[^] equipped seem to find time to produce. It seemed as if there must be some ~~special~~ reason why a man with so well stored a mind, so obviously fully informed in all the facts and theories relating to his art, so occupied daily in their discussion, a man moreover whose work clearly evidenced the capacity of the able writer, one whose literary style was clear, perspicuous, and - at need - concise, ^{there must be} some reason why such a man should neglect to avail ^{himself} of his opportunities, should ^{so} shrink from fulfilling his clear duty to his contemporaries and to posterity. There was such a reason, or rather there were several ^{reasons}. It might be enough to allege, that, though a great lover of books that are worth while, and holding the writers of such in the greatest esteem, he held in great abhorrence the larger numbers of books of commonplace or negative value, and had no fancy for increasing the amount of what is really mere literary rubbish. If at any time he had anything in mind that he felt would be really desirable to share with the public, he preferred to put it into the shape of the pamphlet or the even briefer tract. Moreover, the writing and issuing of even really valuable books is a matter involving great wastefulness of mental effort. Many an excellent book, wise, profound, able, ^{winning} deserving of ~~winning~~ a permanent place in literature, and accomplishing the ends its author hoped to attain, has fallen flat and "died at birth" because it chanced to be issued at an unpropitious moment, or because its publisher did not bestow on it the proper amount of fostering and

advertising, Consideration of these facts may disclose one of the reasons.

But another and more valid reason is to be found in the fact that his personal, professional and professorial correspondence was of large volume, always increasing, and he felt obliged to give to it ^{as} so much time an^d energy as he in anyway could marshal for its handling, actually devoting to it ~~a~~ ^{more} greater part of his spare time than was right and proper. And the draft on his strength and health because of this was the greater, seeing that he always refused to avail ^{himself} of the services of stenographer and typewriter. ~~Actually,~~ ^I It is hardly too much to say that he liked letter-writing more than any form of occupation; he was in fact a letter writer ⁿ enragé, and he knew it, knew that he was rather ^{ie} yielding to a vice than practising a virtue. In one of his letters he defends his attitude in these words: "After all, there is nothing so satisfactory as writing letters. Here, at least, there are some results for time and labor spent."

At another time, obviously dismayed by the way in which his correspondence had got ahead of him, he exclaims: " Letters! letters! letters! They are the burden of life. I neither sleep nor ^{dream} ~~draw~~ because of them."

Much of the advice, suggestion and encouragement these many letters contain was, of course, ^{of} general applicability, and might, perhaps profitably, have been incorporated in a book; but there is always a great uncertainty whether the wisdom and help that is enclosed between the covers of a book may ever be discovered at the propitious moment by those who stand in need of their assistance. He seems to have felt that he could render a greater service, better satisfy the moralities of life, by applying balm to the actual open wound, encouragement to the bruised spirit at the moment of its greatest soreness; that it was more the part of the humanitarian to place his hand under the chin of the struggling swimmer at the very moment of need than to leave him to accidentally find, or ^{to} miss, the salvation afforded by the life-buoy carelessly thrown toward him in the shape of a published book. Whatever the

reasons really were, he unquestionably preferred to expend his time and energies in writing letters rather than books.

X The earliest of his book-making occupations were involved in two or three serial publications undertaken by L. Prang & Company of Boston, and consisting largely in the preparation and arrangement of their illustrations in which lay the great value of the undertaking. The times, early times so to speak, were not yet ready for such books, a sufficient demand for them could not be discovered or stimulated.

His next and most important book, "Modern Perspective", was a success, has achieved a place as a standard and authoritative text-book, and is still to be had in the market. Equally useful and successful was his "American Vignola", a very model of simplification and lucidity of expression, a most useful text-book for beginners, and a constantly serviceable reference-book for the practising architect. His last book, "Shades and Shadows", had many of the good qualities of its immediate predecessor, but its usefulness is less general, being intended mainly as a text-book for draughtsmen and students.

Late in life he found amusement and mental occupation in writing a Latin grammar, -- not exactly the normal occupation one would expect to find a retired architect resorting to! This grammar was projected on novel and very interesting lines, and was intended in the main to enable adults of fair general education to acquire a good reading knowledge of the language without having to go through the preliminary drudgery of mastering ^{rules} paradigms and conjugations. Essentially, it sought to teach Latin as a still living language, encouraging the student to feel that he was moving about daily amongst Latin men and women and picking up the language by word of mouth. Although the heads of the Ancient Languages departments in several Universities, to whom the manuscript was submitted for criticism, all admitted the ingenuity and entire practicability of the method advocated, neither they nor sundry

publishers of text-books, to whom the manuscript was later submitted, could descry a sufficiently large and promising field of usefulness for the book to warrant its publication.

As an indication of his vigor of mind, the undertaking, as a mental relaxation, in old age, of a work of this sort, one not germane to his own life work, the incident is instructive.

About the same time he became deeply interested in the Baconian cipher controversy, and -- short, of course, of Shakespear's earliest folio editions -- procured, read and studied every book dealing with the matter that he could find in this country or import from abroad. The examination was as full and as judicial as could, probably, be made by anyone, and the conclusion he reached seems so well supported by his argument that it seems worth while to reproduce here the concluding portion of his paper.

This paper, which makes a critical examination of the Bacon-Shakespear controversy, is, after the manner of the great British Quarterlies, based on a review of nine books that advocate the Baconian ^{claims,} ~~claims~~ beginning with Miss Delia Bacon's "Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespear unfolded", published in 1856, and ending with Mrs. E. W. Gallup's "Bi-Literal Cipher", published in 1905-10.

"It appears from this review that, of the nine attempts to find a hidden meaning in works written, or supposed to have been written, by Lord Bacon, Mrs. Gallup's is the only one which even pretends to meet reasonable requirements. The results reached by it, though surprising, are not incredible; and the methods said to have been employed, both in concealing and revealing the hidden narrative, are clearly set forth, and are reasonable and practicable. They are methods, moreover, which Bacon declares himself to have used.

"In one respect, however, they exhibit weakness. For Mrs. Gallup's success with the Bi-Literal Cipher has not, so far, been attained by anyone else. Although Mr. Mallock, Mrs. Pott, Mrs. Kindersley, and some other persons

less well known, have succeeded, as they declare, in deciphering these italic printings to a certain extent, no considerable portion of Mrs. Gallup's work with this Bi-Literal Cipher has yet been duplicated. If this could be done, controversy would be at an end, and the position of the Baconians formally established. For no one could dispute the testimony of Bacon himself, except, perhaps, by contending that he was the victim of a life-long hallucination.

^ But although the testimony offered is at variance with accepted beliefs and traditions, the Baconian theory explains a good many things that have puzzled historians. No reason, for example, has elsewhere been found for Bacon's apparent idleness during the thirty best years of his life; or why he should have excused his neglect of the Law on the ground that he was busy with making a living in more lucrative labors; or for his friendly treatment of Essex; or for the familiarity with Law, Classical Literature, Foreign Countries, of the manners of the aristocracy and of Courts, that are found in the Shakesperian dramas; or why, in writing to Sir John Davies, Bacon should have spoken of himself, and John Aubrey, Milton's friend, should have spoken of him as a "concealed poet"; or why Sir Tobie Matthew should have said that Bacon had "concealed his greatness under another ^{name} means". It also accounts for the silence of Shakespeare's Will in regard to either books or manuscripts; for the publication of many new plays seven years after his death, with the old ones added to or revised; for the hints of Shakespeare in Bacon's Promus, and for the occurrence of his name in conjunction with Bacon's in the Northumberland Manuscript. It also explains the origin of the "Scandal about Queen Elizabeth" which has become a Proverb, and which dates from her own day. For among the law cases of that time ^s if that of an obscure person who "not having the fear of God before his eyes, but misled by the instigation of the Devil narravit et publicavit de dicta domina, regina nunc, haec falsa, seditiosa et scandalosa verba Anglicana sequentia, viz.: that the queen hath had by the

Lord Robert Dudley (praenobilis garteriae miles), two or three children, in magnum scandalum et contemptum dictae reginae et dignitatis suae".

It accounts for the Queen's saying, after Leicester had married another lady, that "No rascal's son should sit upon her throne," for the mention of a son of Leicester and the Queen in the books of Shrewsbury School, and of the name of "Robart Tider" carved upon the wall of the Tower of London, which seems to have been cut by Essex, no since prisoner of that name is recorded in the books and Tider, or Todder, is a recognized variant of Tudor; also for the inscription in the Canonbury tower at Islington, a building occupied by Bacon during the reign of James. On the staircase wall is a frieze bearing a list of the Kings of England. As quoted in the "History of the Parish of St. Mary, Islington," published in 1811, it concludes as follows"-

HENRICUS
OCTAVIUS, POST HUNC EDW: SIXTUS, REGINA MARIA,
ELIZABETHA SOROR: SUCCEDIT FR
JACOBUS.

In the last word of the third line all but two of the letters have been obliterated.

"The story told in the Bi-Literal Cipher gives also the only explanation that has been offered of the enigmatical Title-Pages of Bacon's History of Henry VII, of his Sermones Fideles, of the Advancement of Science as printed in Holland some years after Bacon's death, of those prefixed to the English translation of Montaigne's Essays, by Florio, printed in London in 1632; of that prefixed to an edition of Spencer's Poems, in 1611, also printed in London, with the publication of both of which Bacon seems to have been in some way connected, and of the elaborately pictorial Title-Page of the Duke of Brunswick's treatise on Ciphers, by him, as has been said. It is to be said, however, that the Duke's letter of instructions to his engraver offer a simpler, though not so complete, ~~an~~ explanation of these puzzling pictures.

On the other hand it seems impossible that Bacon could have made the historical blunders that occur in Shakespeare's Historical Plays. He also knew better than to speak of "the Nine Sibyls", or to follow, in blundering paths with which he must have been perfectly familiar, in the footsteps of second-rate chroniclers and historians.

"It may be borne in mind also that since it seems incredible that Bacon should have written these plays, and equally incredible that the Stratford man should have done so, the fact that it seems incredible is really nothing against either hypothesis. Improbability will be a characteristic of the truth, whatever it may ultimately prove to be.

"Deciphering an obscure text is like reading bad writing. A whole sentence may be plain though each of the words that compose it is doubtful, and the separate letters shapeless. Thus the deaf understand several words better than one. If, as Mr. Mallock says, ^{that} it does, his reading of the Bi-Literal Cipher agrees with Mrs. Gallup's in two letters out of three this is perhaps as complete a confirmation of her results as it is reasonable to expect.

"Besides these six ciphers and the puzzle-pictures upon the title-pages of his books, Bacon is said to have used the form of concealment, which consists in substituting figures for letters, making 1 stand for A, 2 for B, ^{etc.} &c. On this system the number which stands for Bacon is 33 and $(2+1+3+14+13 = 33)$ It is claimed that in the 33rd line of some page in the First Folio are concealed Baconian secrets. It is said moreover that the 33rd page is wrongly number 32, "to call attention to it", and that allusions to Bacon are to be found upon it. Such allusions also, it is said, are sometimes signaled by printing an ornamental head piece, or even a portrait, upside down.

"Bacon has also been said to have constantly put into his writings hints of the Free-Masons, or of the Rosicrucian Society, which he is said to have had a hand in founding, all this to reveal, while it concealed, his authorship.

" The main question at issue is, of course, whether the stories told by Dr. Owen and Mrs. Gallup are true. To this question it is, at present, impossible to give an answer. The most tenable opinion seems to lie half way between the views that either Bacon or Shakespeare did all the work. It is that maintained by Rev. Walter Begley in his Nova Resuscitatio, published in 1903 and again in the anonymous volume published as by a "Cambridge Graduate", in that year. This writer holds that while Bacon is the author of the Poems and of the Sonnets, a position for which he finds much independent evidence, and of the chief part, and the best passages, of the Plays, the coarser dialogue which the audiences of that day apparently expected was probably supplied by the actor-manager from Stratford. These conclusions are based upon the evidence afforded by contemporary letters and by the works themselves. He makes no account of the work of the decipherers of Bacon's undoubted interest in methods of concealing ideas. This is what he says:-

" I think that the attempt to exclude Shakespeare totally from the immortal plays is most absurd. I exclude him totally from "Lucrece" and Venus and Adonis", and from the "sugared sonnets", which certainly would not have proved very tasty to his friends, either of the stable or the tiring-room. But to exclude Shakespeare from working up and patching up the various old plays he had scraped together is to go against all good evidence and against all the inferences from contemporary allusions, and is almost as great an error as the supposition that he wrote the last revision of "Hamlet" and "Love's Labour's Lost,"

" I cannot answer for other Baconians, but my own opinion is that a considerable part of several plays in the First Collected Edition (1623) were not from Bacon's pen. Collaboration was such a usual method in those days that it was quite a common occurrence for two, three or even four, writers to prepare a play for Henslowe or any other manager who wanted

something new for his audience, with as little delay as possible. Why should not some of the plays in the First Folio have been got together in this manner by William Shakespeare? This view certainly removes some great difficulties. It explains how the plays came to be accepted as Shakespeare's plays without any protest against the title. They were accepted as his plays because he provided them for the company; but who worked them up, or what share each took in the authorship, was a bootless question to ask. Though I hold there is a good quantity of non-Baconian work in the plays, I do not pretend to be able to point it out. Bacon was such a marvellous adept at changing his style in accordance with his subject, that altogether the task seems hopeless."

"I do not hold the extreme theory that Bacon wrote the whole of the wonderful dramas from beginning to finish, including all the excellent stage arrangements and all the subsidiary parts and scenes, and that we have not a word or a character which is due to Shakespeare the player. I think such a theory will not stand for a moment, and is absolutely impossible when we consider the contemporary attitude towards Shakespeare taken by his fellow players, friends and enemies. Even his enemies never said he was a mere puppet in other peoples' hands. There are some Warwickshire places and characters here and there in the Plays, and some of the names of the roystering dramatis personae are well-known Stratford names which appear in municipal documents, and in the proceedings against recusants in Shakespeare's father's time. I should attribute such scenes and incidents of the Plays to Shakespeare rather than to Bacon. It seems far more likely that Shakespeare, being a broker and reviser of old stage-property, and an expert at it, should touch up and arrange extra stage business for Bacon's plays, rather than that he should put them on the boards just as they came, ^{and} make no alteration whatever. Indeed, I see plain evidence of Ben Jonson's discriminating between Bacon the dramatist and Ovidian poet, and Shakespeare the player--the Luscus who rants with his buskins on, and swears "by the

welkin", and is after all only Poet-ape, and a parcel-poet with an unrestrained flow of words at times ridiculous rather than sublime. But he was not a bad fellow, and had a good flowing stream of language, thought Ben Jonson, Henry Chettle, and others who knew him."

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" 1.- In Mr. Black's work we find well-authenticated methods of concealment, and interpretation. But the forms he presents are unintelligible and his results meaningless.

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" 2.- Mr. Donnelly supposes methods of concealment for which there is no evidence, nor is there any for his methods of decipherment, so far as they have been explained. But he refused to explain them in full, and the results he reached are preposterous in form, though he rearranged them so as to make them read intelligibly.

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" 3.- Mr. Booth has shown that the method of concealing Acrostics which he thinks Bacon adopted is a perfectly practicable one, but he finds no precedents for it, and it seems perfectly possible that the coincidences he exhibits are due to accident. The careless assurance, moreover, with which he stated his results does not inspire confidence, and the forms in which he presents them are in great part fantastic. His books contribute to the discussions only a new set of improbabilities.

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" 4.- Sir Edwin Lawrence's argument is based chiefly on a misconception of the nature of anagrams, and an over valuation of arithmetical coincidences.

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" 5.- The method of concealment used in Dr. Owen's Word Cipher finds some authority in Mrs. Gallup's Bi-Literal Cipher. But the methods of discovery employed by him have never been explained by him in full, and, so far as they have been published, seem so loose, and to have been used by him with so little scrupulousness, as to destroy confidence, both in him and in his results. But the form in which they are presented, both by him, and by the assistants who have used his methods, has literary merits which

inspire confidence.

" 6. Mrs. Gallup's work rests upon a method of concealment which Bacon himself invented and used, her methods of decipherment strictly follow his prescription. But though her method is thus faultless, nobody else has succeeded in making it work."

XX

His interest once aroused, he found both amusement and occupation in keeping track of the controversial writings of the Baconian and Anti-Baconian champions and made frequent reference to the matter in his correspondence.

(To F.D.S. Aug. 22, '08)

" Meanwhile the Shakespeare riddle still engages my idle moments, and grows more interesting as it grows insoluble. The heretics offer facts and argument, the true believers refuse to pay any attention to either. Yet they are the only persons in position to judge. At present I am looking into one of the details which presents the phenomenon known to philosophers as that of 'Contradictory Inconceivables.' It seems to present alternatives one of which must be true - like, the world having either had a beginning or not having had one - but neither of which - like these alternatives - can be entertained for a moment.

" On my table lies 'The Tragedy of Anne Boleyn' made up of over a thousand sentences and paragraphs, all of which, it is said, are to be found in the published works of Shakespeare, B. Jonson, Marlowe, Spencer, Greene, Peele, Burton and Bacon. So far as I have had opportunity to look for them, I have found them. There they are! Now it seems as if two things must have happened, either the play was written 300 years ago, cut into fragments and then printed, scrap by scrap, in over a hundred different books by half a dozen different authors - which is unthinkable, or - which is equally inconceivable -- somebody has taken it into his head to make a play on this

subject by concocting a cento out of this miscellaneous mass of Elizabethan literature, and succeeded in doing it! The 'purpose' and the 'result' as the Latin grammars say, seem equally impossible.

"The theory that Bacon himself wrote the play first and then wrote all these other books, and hid his play away in them is equally preposterous.

"But here is the play, and there are the disjecta membra"

(To J. H. C.

March 11, 1914]

"I was very glad to get your letter though idleness and laziness--my chief ailments-- have prevented my saying so till now. The form that these chiefly take is lying down and being read to. Under this dispensation I have had administered to me Mr. Morley's [Bryce's] "South America" and the biographies of Alex Agassiz, John Bright, C. F. Adams and half a dozen other people.

"What chiefly impresses me in most of them is their matter-of-fact Religiosity, so to speak, their reliance upon opinions in regard to this life and the next which seem to be quite without warrant, and which are apparently contrary to ^{an}alogy and to human experience. They attribute everything they like to the kindness of a "Protecting Providence" and whatever they don't like to the "Nature of Things". This seems silly, especially as experience and observation show that, in fact, neither they nor other people are shielded from evil, not even the good; that rain and sun visit alike the just and the unjust, and that all animals, including mankind, presently perish. We cannot, indeed, conceive of ourselves as non-existent, and all races, from the Egyptians to the North American Indians, have cherished the idea of a Future Life. But the prospect of being imprisoned forever in the viewless winds, is not only, as Shakespeare says, horrible, it is inconceivable, for the life we know is spent in a world of form and color,

and we cannot imagine an existence without senses - all in the dark. The Animal Kingdom, of which we are a part, seems, like the Vegetable Kingdom, to be a temporary phenomenon, and any purpose these creations may be intended to answer would seem to be as well answered by successive generations as by the millions of immortals which an unimaginative fancy has supposed. Even Scripture gives little countenance to this idea of immortality, though it is one of the things that Christianity is held to have revealed.

"In these fields all the Protestant sects, including the Universalists and Unitarians, seem to have inherited much from the Early Christians, through the medium of the Papacy, rejecting indeed a good many of the more unacceptable hypotheses, while retaining others equally fanciful. They all, for example, piously believe in the occurrence of the daily miracles known as 'Special Providences,' and find great comfort in so doing.

"But I am not always in this sceptical temper, and am sometimes disposed to go to the other extreme, as, for example, in the case of the Bacon and Shakespeare heresy which seems to me not to be entirely without foundation, foolish as most of its advocates seem to be. These views I have set forth at length in the paper which I enclose, which it may amuse you to look over. The best thing to be said for the Baconians is that their Scheme is countenanced by Francis Bacon himself, and that it explains all difficulties."

Of casual reading as an improving mental exercise, and as the means of disclosing untravelled paths to unfamiliar goals, he held a high opinion, and was much disposed to share his "finds" with those of his correspondents who he thought would be likely to appreciate them. The following extracts show this, and they no less indicate the catholicity of his literary taste.

[To F.D.S. 1888]

X "I am led to consider, if when, once in a year, I get a couple of leisure evenings in my friends' houses, I find, in the two first books I open, proximate solutions of life-long problems, shedding sudden light upon man's relations to God and to his fellowman --- what illuminations might I not find if I should sometime arrange to read a book in my own house! I am sure life is perplexing enough for us not to neglect such suggestions as our neighbors can offer, and who is my soul 's neighbor, if not the writer and speaker who make me think?"

[To F. D. S.]

"What a mistake it is not to read! How can one think, otherwise. Yet some people seem to get such an intemperate appetite for other peoples' thoughts that they never have any of their own."

[To F.D.S July '91]

"I venture to send you a pamphlet you probably have not seen and the first paper in which will, I think, interest you. Philosophy and Political Economy are excellent reading for summer. It isn't absolutely necessary to understand them. They are very much like a Wagner concert or a Browning Club reading, affording a certain pleasurable titillation at the moment, with a feeling that though you don't get much still you are not absolutely wasting your time, as it will probably make things more intelligible on another occasion."

[To F. D. S.]

"Just now I have been indulging my laziness and reading Ruskin's letters to Mr. Norton. I never could abide him, as manifested in his books, but he is delightful in these letters, as modest and kindly as he is, in his books, intolerant and intolerable. But it is a piteous and pathetic story. Mr. Norton's part in the book is exquisitely done, though I find a letter occasionally which it hurts me to be reading, and I think had better not have seen the light."

[To F. D. S.]

"I send you the little blue book, for your Sunday reading, though I have not yet had a chance to copy for you the illustrative paragraphs I spoke of and for which I have kept it back. They are out of some of Theodore Parker's letters which I have been reading with the greatest surprise and delight. Somehow, I had never come across them before and I find I had so mistaken a notion about him that I feel a certain shame at having ignorantly misjudged him. I had fancied him a sort of Boanerges. But his life reads like that of the beloved disciple. It is delightful to be in the presence of so clear an intelligence and so devout a spirit. It is Mr. Weiss's "Life" that I had --- the man of whom it was said that he was 'one part body and four parts flame! Joe Choate lent it to me, as his own favorite book."

[To F. D. S.]

"I enclose a few paragraphs which I have been moved to pen by my impatience at reading a little volume of Mr. Royce's, which I dare say you have not seen. It has given me a great deal of trouble, rewriting it a number of times so that it might be 'fit to print.'

"But this is nothing to the labor I have expended upon Genealogy, an interesting but laborious pursuit unless one is equipped, as some, with a neat pen. When one is so constituted that he can no longer read his own pencil-marks, the task becomes a hard one, especially if he allows his studies to carry him outside the range of his own family, into regions where he has not even piety to support him. You will be able to follow my thought if I add, as I do, that I have undertaken to straighten out the tangle that envelopes the Wars of the Roses. It is a favorite theory of mine that the task of the true historian is to make things seem a great deal simpler than they really are. You will at once see that the succession to the Crown of England during the Fifteenth Century is a test case. When it is all done, which will be presently, I will send you a copy, for I am going to the extravagance of paper and printer's ink. This will give me a chance to revenge myself on all the friends who sent me Christmas Cards.

"But I really think I have succeeded pretty well."