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HOW TO WORK THE CIPHER.

The first time I talked with Dr. Owen concerning the cipher he gave me a few rapid instructions regarding the "wheel," and then placed in my hands the first published volume which was worked out by the cipher, telling me to read carefully the "Letter to the Decipherer," after which I might come to the office and make application of the directions therein given, which suggestion I acted upon as before stated. Upon page 3 I found the following:—

"Take your knife and cut all our books asunder,
And set the leaves on a great firm wheel
Which rolls and rolls, and turning the
Fickle rolling wheel, throw your eyes
Upon FORTUNE, that goddess blind, that stands upon
A spherical stone, that turning and incessant rolls
In restless variation.
Mark her the prime mover:
She is our first guide."

This advice has been literally acted upon. An immense wheel has been constructed, consisting of two reels, on which is rolled a great stretch of cloth, 1,000 feet long and over two feet wide. The arrangement is so simple that by turning the reel in one direction for a time the entire 1,000 feet of canvas come under the eye, and by reversing the motion all passes back again in the other direction. Upon this stretch of cloth are pasted the printed pages of all the works of all the supposed authors above mentioned. A more simple or convenient arrangement for examining a great number of pages in a short time could not be devised.

THE KEY WORDS.

The "Letter to the Decipherer" now goes on to add to "the first great guide"—Fortune—four others, Nature, Honour, Reputation, and Pan, the god of nature. The next act of Dr. Owen after pasting

all the works upon the wheel, was to carefully scan them, every word, and with coloured pencils to mark these guide words every time they occurred, which of itself was no small task, the first four words being repeated 10,641 times by actual count.

Let it now be borne in mind that these five words are not keys to the hidden stories, but guides whereby to find the key words. And around every guide clusters these keys. They are repeated over and over, so plainly and definitely that the earnest seeker cannot fail to find them. The next thing done is to pencil around every sentence containing the guide word being used, thus enclosing the keys as well, and these sentences are now read from the wheel to an operator, who typewrites them upon sheets of paper. At the head of every page thus written is placed the key word, or words, of the sentences, thus avoiding all confusion when the papers come to be sorted.

I find to be absolutely true the instructions given in the "Letter to the Decipherer" on page 8 of the first volume:—

"And, sir, though far and wide the secret thread
Of these rules seem scattered,
This distribution ceases if you
To one place carry all the words of your cue.
Then may you see the great flood
Or confluence of materials carries along with it
The key of every story for the instruction
Of the decipherer."

The sorting of the papers means placing in piles by themselves all pages containing the same key words, thus bringing to one place all the words of the cue, or all that relates to the story to be deciphered from these especial sentences or paragraphs:—

"And sifting it as faithful secretaries and clerks
In the courts of kings, set to work with diligence and
Judgment, and sort into different boxes, counnaturals,
Concerning matter of state, and when he has
Attentively sorted it, from the beginning to the end,
And united and collected the dispersed and distributed
Matter, which is mingled up and down in combination,
It will be easy to make a translation of it."

CONCORDANT WORDS.

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Dr. Owen worked and delved for nearly eight years before he discovered how to decipher the hidden stories. But for me, under his instructions, the task was a comparatively easy one. It is also a

fascinating, though complicated one, for I soon found that not by key words alone could the stories be deciphered, but that about the keys again cluster concordant words, designed to help the searcher on his way, and leading him on and on into almost illimitable mazes of connecting sentences, which, though collected from perhaps scores of places in half-a-dozen different works,

“Scattered wider than the sky or earth,”

still, by this rule, bringing out hidden histories and astounding revelations.

I will give an example of these concordant words. Let us suppose that the key words are “love” and “king.” We must not look for “love” and “king” only, by which to be guided, but for all synonymous words. For “love’s” synonyms we find “devotion,” “adore,” “adoration,” etc. For “king” we follow such words relating to royalty as “majesty,” “highness,” “kingdom,” “court,” etc. As long as sentences containing a repetition of these words are found the student may safely continue to walk along the outlined path, gathering the story as he goes. If, however, a paragraph contains the keys, and yet refuses to “make sense,” turn it how you may—in fact, seems superfluous—it should be put aside for the time being, and by-and-bye a gap will be found into which it fits with astonishing exactness.

WHEN THERE ARE COMPLICATIONS.

Occasionally there comes a disconnection in the story. Something is missing; it does not read smoothly. In taking the matter from the wheel a passage has been overlooked, or in sorting the papers one has been placed in the wrong box.

Now comes a hunt. A whole day has been given to the finding of a single line or paragraph. But it is there somewhere, and simply must be found. Then is the time when, as Dr. Owen expresses it, “my hair stands up on end,” and the brain fairly reels with the immensity of complications which might arise from one small oversight.

Sometimes passages intrude themselves which do not contain the key being used, and which actually have no bearing on the story in progress. Simply leave these over, reserving them for future use.

They belong to some other story, and will fall into place in good time. Nothing will be lost. Again a sentence reads in a vague or unnatural manner. In this case the decipherer is plainly instructed to transpose it, when the true meaning is revealed at once:—

“Therefore let your own discretion be your tutor,
And suit the action to the word, and the word to the action,
With this especial observance that you match
Conjugates, parallels and relatives by placing
Instances which are related, one to another,
By themselves; and all concordances
Which have a correspondence and analogy
With each other should be commingled with the connaturals.”

The above is from *Hamlet, Novum Organum, Aphorisms, and Advancement of Learning*. For the first time it is brought together in the “Letter to the Decipherer,” on page 8. This is a good example of the way the sentences are scattered. On page 21 are also found these lines:—

“Some of the story
Has more foot than the verses would bear,
And you must exercise your own judgment;
And give it smoothness when it lamely halts.”

PROPER NAMES.

Reference is made to compound words, and the question is asked: “What mean you, sir, by compound words?” And the answer is given:—

“No one can be so dull as to believe
That we would set the whole name of any man
Open among the subject matter.
That certainly would be childish in the highest degree.
On the contrary, though, the names are set
So frequent, you must understand the device,
(And our device, I think, will outstrip all praise)
Before you can discover how we overcome the difficulty
We use the simple and safe plan of consort.
The similarity of word with word
Contributes to save the whole from discovery.
However, we will show you how, for the speedy
And perfect attaining of names, to fit the words.
And if you know how one is obtained,
You know how all are coupled.
So please take our on-hers, and we'll strive
To let you understand the method that you must employ
In unravelling and unlocking the double words.”

I quote an example of a name hidden on page 142 of the 1623 edition of Shakespeare. It is a part of *Love's Labour Lost*, where

the company of counterfeit actors play before the queen. Read the passage of wit between them and the spectators, see how one of the auditors compounded the name of one of the actors:—

“‘Therefore, as he is an asse, let him go;
And so adiou, sweet Judo. Nay, why dost thou stay?’
‘For the latter end of his name.’
‘For the asse to the Jude; give it him, Jud-as away.’”

PARALLEL SENTENCES.

Here may be given an illustration of parallel sentences taken from seemingly widely different sources, yet mingling like the fragrance of the very flowers described:—

“O'er-embellished with knaps and flowers of all kinds
Cut in puro gold, pomegarnets, lavender, mint, savory,
Marjoram, marigold, gillivors, maidenheads, carnations,
Lilies (the flower-d-luce being one), columbines, pinks,
Honeysuckles, roses, sweet satirium, poppies, wild thyme,
Beau flowers, daisies, anemones, tulips, hyacinth-orientals,
Porrywinkles, bullices and virgin branches of the almond, etc.”

This description of flowers and trees covers nearly all of page 39 of the “Letter to the Decipherer.” Anyone who will look upon page 292, act IV., scene 4, *Winter's Tale*, and the “Essay on Gardens,” by Bacon, will at once see where all the flowers mentioned were taken from. In other words, the parallels, concordances and similar matter.

FINDING THE COMMENCEMENT OF A HIDDEN STORY.

“How does the decipherer know where a story begins?”

This is as plain as anything can be. Having collected the material for the story, by means of the guides and keys, I find that somewhere among the passages the eye is startled with words like these: “Begin here,” “We will commence here,” “We will now commence,” etc. Could anything be more definite? A good example of this is found in Shakespeare's *Life and Death of King John*, act I., scene 1:—

“My Dear Sir:

“Thus leaning on my elbow I begin the letter,” etc.

The question of knowing what the next story will be, when one is completed, seems an important one, but I find that Bacon has inserted the title of the one to follow, very plainly, at or near the close of each story. At the close of the “Letter to the Decipherer,” he tells in

plain English, "The next letter is the author's 'Epistle Dedicatory.'" At the close of the "Epistle" I find:—

"The next letter that followeth is the 'Description
Of the Queen, the General Curse, and the Story of Our Life,'
Which, the instant you begin, will bring forth secret
And original narratives woven into a continuous history."

PICKING OUT THE KEYS.

Following this naturally comes the question, "How find the keys for stories?" These, too, are at the close of each story, being one or more words of significance, strong enough to attract attention. As soon as the passages containing the key or keys are collected, and the student begins work, it is almost startling to discover the numerous keys that cluster around the one or two that lead, and concordant words sometimes almost countless.

"We have enclosed our name without regard to safety, in the different texts," says Bacon in his letter to the decipherer, "in such capital letters that, as the prophet saith, 'He that runneth by may read.' And if you have digested a sufficient number of our books no doubt the first point you found was our name." This astonishing statement is literally true. Any one who will search the 1623 edition of Shakespeare, and the other works mentioned, will find Bacon's name appearing frequently, and in capital letters, as in Shakespeare's *Henry IV.*, "I have a gammon of BACON," or in Peele's "Old Wife's Tale," "My grandmother was a gammon of BACON." And yet Bacon often warns the decipherer concerning the danger attendant upon its discovery. He says:—

"For my good lord, in this secret way
We enfold a dangerous chronicle, and by starts
Unclasp a secret book to your quick conceiving,
And read you matter deep and dangerous."

"Swear never to publish that we conceal under the names
Of others our own, till we are dead."

Notwithstanding the intricacy of the cipher, Bacon alludes to the ease with which it may be worked if the rules are strictly followed. "You will not fail, if to the work you give time enough," he says, "for it is translated so easy it is almost mechanical." This is my experience, for the key-words to the hidden stories are

“ Interspersed in sufficient quantities to allow
 The correspondence to be revealed so clearly
 That any purblind eye may find them out.
 They are so clear, so shining, so naked, and so evident,
 That they will, in the full course of their glory,
 Glimmer through a blind man's eye.”

Bacon does not assert that every man can plunge into the labyrinth and find his way safely out again unscathed. He even tells the would-be decipherer:—

“ Yet you may not be
 Capable of detecting the ciphers. Many a man
 Promises to himself more than he can perform,
 And it is impossible to discover the subtlety of the work
 Unless he that works loves it.”

AS TO CHANCE.

“ Does every story continue through all of the works used ? ” was the question I asked. The answer was, “ Yes, and no.” That is, if the facts of the story or history were not complete until the whole number of books had been written, portions of it were concealed in all. But the narration of some events came to an end prior to the publication of Bacon's later works. Consequently it would be useless to search for more after all had been given. For example, if a person is dead his history is ended, and the world cannot consistently expect any more from him.

Upon page 28 the decipherer says to Bacon concerning the deciphered stories:—

“ But may they not say it is chance that doth this ? ”

The answer is:—

“ We thought of that ; and if any man conceive
 That it is done without system or common
 Center, let him proceed to form a history,
 And neglect the guides. He cannot go through with it
 To its completion, for if a man runs the wrong way,
 The more active and swift he is, the further will
 He go astray ; for the lame man that takes the right road
 Outstrips the runner that takes the wrong.”

And so the cipher stories are worked out:—

“ As many arrows loosed several ways come to one mark ;
 As many winding ways meet in one town ;
 As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea ;
 As many straight lines close in a dial's center,
 Then so may a thousand ciphers, once afoot,
 And in one purpose be all well borne.”