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# Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story.

[DETROIT JOURNAL.]

Readers of the Journal are fully aware that Dr. Orville W. Owen, of Detroit, has claimed to have discovered a cipher in the works of Sir Francis Bacon and the so-called plays of Shakspeare, which when unraveled reveals a story that shows beyond question that Bacon was the real author of the plays that are the literary masterpieces of the world.

Although Dr. Owen has been pursuing his researches for a long term of years, and has devoted the most indefatigable energy, patience and persistence to his tremendous task, very little of the results of his labors have reached the public eye. It will be remembered, however, that the first evidences that his years of digging, delving and mining in the almost inextricably devious courses of his pursuit had reached tangibility were published in the Journal. Contrary to an early formed resolution to withhold from the world the wonderful story whose fragments he had gathered until the whole was in his grasp, Dr. Owen gave the Journal two extracts. These were in no sense complete, but they admirably served a definite purpose.

Previous to their publication Dr. Owen had endured the jibes, the jeers and even the more galling pity of those who looked upon him either as a charlatan or a crack-brained visionary, gone daft over the perennial Bacon-Shakspeare controversy. Yielding to the urgings of his friends, those who were confident of the importance of his work and the clarity of his intellect, he gave the Journal a portion of Bacon's description of Queen Elizabeth, followed shortly afterward by a part of what is called "the General Curse"—in which Bacon calls fearful maledictions down upon his enemies.

These publications had a pronounced effect. They astonished and invited the attention of those who for the first time became aware of Dr. Owen's discovery; they excited the interest of men of intellect who are broad enough to acknowledge that there may be yet new things under the sun; they stayed the jest and hushed the ridicule of those who thought a new literary clown had appeared upon the stage; and they renewed the faith and strengthened the belief of those who looked for a wonderful historical and literary revelation.

It is not the intention here to describe how Dr. Owen became first convinced that a cipher story lay hidden in the plays; nor how he happened upon and picked up its first frail thread; nor how with infinite patience he followed it slowly and painstakingly through the tangled and obscure maze of warp and woof in the various books; nor how years of endeavor, self-

denial and discouragements went by in the search after the necessary editions, in historical verifications, in gropings along blind paths where no man ever walked before. These are to be left to a forthcoming book, which the author will devote to his own story of the discovery after he has told the world the story that Bacon hid away for nearly three centuries. That this will be of intense interest need hardly be said.

The paramount interest now, of course, is in what Dr. Owen has found. A book that has long been waited for is at last issued. From the presses this week comes a small paper-bound volume which contains the first connected and consecutive parts yet published of this wonderful story. It is issued under the title "Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story, Discovered and Deciphered by Orville W. Owen, M. D.," is published by the Howard Publishing Company, and printed by the Detroit Free Press printing house. It has been put into cheap but substantial form that it may reach those who might otherwise be debarred from indulgence in a literary luxury.

"Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story" is in three sections or parts—Sir Francis Bacon's Letter to the Decipherer; the Epistle Dedicatory; and the Description of the Queen, General Curse, and Sir Francis Bacon's Life.

The Letter is under date of London, 1623. This is in the form of a conversation with a second person, and is devoted to minute direction—all in Shakspearean blank verse—for the unraveling of the cipher. The decipherer is directed to place the pages of the books upon "a great firm wheel" to facilitate the work—a direction that Dr. Owen implicitly followed and found to greatly lessen the mechanical labor necessarily attached to thousands of shiftings from page to page, from passage to passage, and from book to book. Then the four great keywords, Fortune, Nature, Honor and Reputation, are disclosed, upon which the whole tremendous structure is reared. From these starting points the trace begins, and the helps to sorting, matching and combining the disjointed fragments, the guides to the inversions and transpositions, the parallels and relatives, are indicated with an iteration that becomes almost verbose. Through all this the mythical second person interpolates with questions. One of these is to the purport why the author—Sir Francis—disposes his story so widely into many books. To which Sir Francis replies:

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"I'll tell you; for fear the finder out  
Of this secret story in inconsiderate zeal  
Might make it known unto our great  
mother,  
Or the king. And then our life and glory,  
Like a shooting star, would from the  
firmament fall  
To the base earth.  
For, my good lord, in this secret way  
We unfold a dangerous chronicle, and by  
starts  
Unclasp a secret book to your quick con-  
ceiving,  
And read you matter deep and dangerous,  
As full of peril and adventurous spirit  
As to o'er-walk a current roaring loud  
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.  
And if we fall in, good night; we could not  
swim.  
And so would sink."

The Questioner—"Will you name the  
works under which you have concealed, hid,  
and masked yourself?"

Bacon—"We will enumerate them by  
their whole titles from the beginning to  
the end: William Shakspeare,  
Robert Green, George Peel, and Christo-  
pher Marlow's

Stage plays; the Fairy Queen, Shepherd's  
Calendar,

And all the works of Edmund Spenser;  
The Anatomy of Melancholy of Robert  
Burton,

The History of Henry the Seventh, the  
Natural History,

The Interpretation of Nature, the Great  
Instauration,

Advancement of Learning, the De Aug-  
mentis Scientiarum,

Our Essays, and all the other works of our  
own."

The Questioner—"I am ready to distrust  
mine eyes and wrangle with my  
Reason that persuades me to any other  
truth but that

I am mad. I fear for certain the world  
will call me mad,

Before it will believe such multiplicity of  
genius.

I have marveled sometimes at the bulk of  
books

Published in the year 1623, and before,  
But I did not think that any one man was

accomplished  
Enough, or capable of writing them."

After a long set of instructions in the  
way of making clear the work of the de-  
cipherer, this passage occurs:

"For we will knit up our secret tales in  
silken

Strings, with twenty odd, conceited, true  
love knots,

And will make a pastime of each weary  
step,

Till the last step has brought you to the  
end;

And there you, my lord, may rest after  
much turmoil,

As doth a blessed soul in elysium; and  
when you, with

Obedience and industry, have engrossed  
this, and

Piled up the winged words like heaps of  
strange achieved gold;

And when you, like the honey bee, cull  
from

Every flower the virtuous sweets, your  
thighs packed

With wax, your mouth with golden honey,  
And have brought it to the hive—for so

work the honey bees,  
Creatures that, by a rule of nature,  
Teach the act of order to a peopled king-  
dom.

For they have a king, and officers of sort,  
Where some, like magistrates, correct at  
home;

Others, like merchants, venter trade  
abroad;

Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,  
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,  
Which pillage they, with merry march,  
bring home

To the tent royal of their emperor,  
Who, busied in his majesties, surveys

The singing masons building roofs of gold,  
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,  
The poor mechanic porters crowding  
In their heavy burthens at his narrow

gate;

The sad-eyed justice, with his surley hum,  
Delivering o'er to executors pale

The lazy, yawning drones—and when, like  
unto a

Pilgrim, you will step by step climb  
Unto the top of fortune's friendly wheel,  
Then we will raise your honor to as high a  
pitch

In this, our strong encounter, as Hector  
Did in the Grecian camp, when he, to  
overdare

The pride of Graecia, set his warlike per-  
son

To the view of fierce Achilles, rival of his  
fame."

Bacon proceeds then to give the impelling  
motive that moved him to write the cipher  
story. A heavenly voice came to him which  
said:

"The Divine Majesty takes delight to hide  
His work, according to the innocent play  
of children,

To have them found out; surely for thee to  
Follow the example of the most high God  
cannot

Be censured. Therefore put away popular  
applause,

And after the manner of Solomon, the king,  
compose

A history of thy times, and fold it into  
Enigmatical writings and cunning mix-  
tures of the

Theater, mingled as the colors in a painter's  
shell,

And it will in due course of time be found.  
For there shall be born into the world  
(Not in years, but in ages) a man whose

pliant and

Obedient mind we, of the supernatural  
world, will take

Special heed, by all possible endeavor, to  
frame

And mould into a pipe for thy fingers  
to sound

What stop thou please; and this man,  
either led or

Driven, as we point the way, will yield  
himself a

Disciple of thine, and will search and seek  
out thy

Disordered and confused strings and roots  
with some

Peril and unsafety to himself. For men  
in scornful and

Arrogant manner will call him mad, and  
point at him

The finger of scorn; and yet they will,  
Upon trial, practice and study of thy plan,

See that the secret, by great and voluminous labour  
Hath been found out." And then the voice  
we heard  
Ceased and passed away.

Then to the decipherer Bacon in the letter gives this direction:

"We think it right to give a catalogue of the titles

Contained in the history, lest you, for want of warning,

Set to work the wrong way. First: Place after this

The Epistle of Dedicatorie; then the third letter is

The description of her majesty, Queen Elizabeth,

Her gifts, her bridal, and her death, the General Curse,

Which to disguise the story of our own origin,

Which, when the proofs shall be revealed, Will make men stand as in a dream.

The General History follows this, in a series

Of separate letters, and the world, Seeing that we have composed so accurate

an history, Will say, in effect, it is (even if found thus by accident)

More accurate and clear than has ever Before been published, and, whether

There be a system or not, it is in all parts complete

And in the same manner of harmony and coherence,

And, it may be, all depends on the unravelling:

But is certain that the several books and volumes,

By the general rule, in despite of sense, Have each formed one entire story, which

is miraculous. And say, 'for this end were we born.' "

Following the Letter is the Epistle Dedicatory, in which dedication is made to the decipherer, and which may be passed over here without description. Into the real story we come at last, which opens with a magnificent description of Queen Elizabeth. Her wondrous beauty is described in those smooth, flowing lines which open thus:

"And if you will but go with me

Unto the shining bower where Cynthia sits

Like lovely Thetis in a crystal robe,

There within pleasant, shady woods,

Where neither storm nor sun's distemperature

Have power to hurt by cruel heat or cold,

Under the climate of the milder heaven

Where seldom lights Jove's angry thunder-bolt,

Far from disturbance, amid the cypress springs

Where whistling winds make music 'mong the trees,

You shall see a nymph, a queen," etc.—

and which formed a part of the fragments published as referred to at the beginning of this article.

And then he paints the queen in blackest colors:

"For she to all licentious lust

'Gan to exceed the measure of her mean

And natural first need

Till, like a jade self willed, herself doth tire

By black lust, dishonour, shame and misgoverning,

For she was guilty of perjury and subornation;

Guilty of treason, forgery and shift;

Guilty of incest, that abomination;

Guilty of murder and of theft,

And accessory by inclination

To all sins past and all that are to come,

From the creation to the general doom."

In the next lines he reveals that Elizabeth was his mother, and curses her—

"O, mother of my life, that brought'st me forth,

Thou nurse infortunate, guilty of all,

Curst mayst thou be for such a cursed son!

Cursed be thy son with every curse thou hast!

Ye elements of whom consist this clay,

This mass of flesh, this cursed crazed corps

Destroy, dissolve, disturb and dissipate

With fire, water, earth and air congealed.

Thou fatal star, what planet ere thou be,

Spit out thy poisons bad and all the ill

That fortune, fate or heaven may bode—"

It is perhaps best here, in order not to take too much from the natural anticipation that will animate the reader of the book, to relate the story that Bacon unfolds only in the barest outline. Suffice it, then, that his disclosure is to the effect that he was the son of Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester by a secret marriage,

and therefore the rightful heir to the throne; he tells how this became known to him; and he relates how Essex, his dearest friend, was murdered at the command of the queen, and how he was made party to his condemnation; how Elizabeth, in her last sickness, acknowledged Bacon as her son to the doctor who attended her; how Elizabeth was poisoned and afterward strangled in her bed by Robert Cecil, and various other startling things that historians of the Elizabethan era have never set down in the books. Except the murder of Elizabeth and the reasons for the execution of Sir Thomas Seymour, all assertions have at least the semblance of collateral historical evidence to sustain them.

The natural question that will force itself upon the mind of the reader of this remarkable book is, has Dr. Owen really discovered a cipher story in the works, or has he laboriously pieced out, with most cunning ingenuity, a story that, in its relations to history, bears close resemblance to reality? Or has he only concocted a clever imposture, written a story shrewdly calculated to find dupes in those who have a leaning toward the Baconian side of the ancient controversy over the authorship of those immortal plays that for centuries have borne the name of William Shakspeare?

It may be stated, in the first place, that this is Dr. Owen's first venture in the field of letters, and that he is a man who has reached middle age; that he has never shown the slightest sign of possessing unusual or extraordinary literary skill or genius; that the story is written in a style that shows great facility in the so-called Shaksperian blank verse; and that the story itself is a production betraying

on almost every page the hand of an author of broad learning, of deep thought, intense poetical feeling, and wide range of intellect. Some extracts at random from the story will illustrate its quality. Take for instance this:

"My lord,  
Life every man holds dear,  
But the dear man holds honour  
Far more precious dear than life.  
I prize life as I weigh grief  
(Which I would spare).  
For honour, 'tis a derivative from me to mine,

And only that I stand for.  
Therefore I beg you,  
Pity my distress and take off my disgrace.  
O, if I could

I would make me a willow cabin at your gate,  
And call upon your soul within the house  
To write loyal cantons of my condemned honour,

And to sing them loud  
Even in the dead of night,  
And hallow my name to the reverbrate hills,

And make the babbling gossips of the air  
With full voices cry out my unnatural fortunes.

You should not rest  
Between the elements of earth and air,  
But you should pity me.  
O, deadly wound that passeth by mine eye,  
O, fatal poison of my swelling heart!  
O, fortune constant in inconstancy!

Fight, earthquakes in the entrails of the earth,  
And eastern whirlwinds in the hellish shades.

Some foul contagion of the infected heaven

Blast all the trees, and in their cursed tops  
Let the dismal night-raven and tragic owl  
Breed and become foretellers of my fall.  
The fatal ruin of my name and me."

Then there is this little bit, where Bacon replies to the injunction to quench his "hate's hot fire:"

"The more you dam it up the more it burns.  
The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
You know, being stopped, impatiently doth rage.

But when his fair course is not hindered  
He curbs himself as fair and evenly  
As doth the smug and silver Trent,  
Or the gentle Severn,  
Who in his sedgy bank doth his crisp head

Turn and wind among the trembling reeds  
And makes sweet music with the enameled stones,

Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage:

And so  
By many winding nooks he strays  
With willing sport to the wild ocean;  
But dammed up, he comes me cranking in  
And from side to side cuts from off the land

A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantele out,  
And gelding the opposed continents  
The river's current doth run and wind  
With deep indent in a new channel.  
Then hinder not my course; let me go on,  
And in a flood

With such a heady currance scouring faults  
Make the period of my course,  
And then I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,

And with exquisite music  
I will unloose the knot."

A wider range of extracts might be given to illustrate the literary quality of the Story, but these should be enough to bring the reader to this point, upon which Dr. Owen lays stress:

If Bacon did not write the cipher story, then Dr. Owen did, and for whatever merit there is in it, Dr. Owen should have the credit. It will be conceded that the Story is a remarkable production, and this conceded, there remains to take the horns of this dilemma: The Story is true, or Dr. Owen is a charlatan, but the most wonderful man who has lived since the beginning of the seventeenth century. We believe that most readers, personally unacquainted with the author, will find it difficult to reach a verdict. They will be stunned with the marvel of it, and still be fortified with the generally diffused dislike to acknowledge that an iconoclast is right. The history is by no means finished with this volume, but it is to be continued in another book, as also shall follow the exposition of the cipher itself. Until these further volumes appear, it will be the preponderating sentiment, perhaps, that in Sir Francis Bacon's cipher Story Dr. Owen has given to the world a most astounding production.

WALTER HUNSAKER,  
Managing Editor.

For seven years I have been intimately acquainted with Dr. Owen, the decipherer of Sir Francis Bacon's writings, and an interested observer of the methods of unravelling the Cipher Story as it has progressed. I have had the Cipher explained to me, and have seen many pages of the story now before the public, taken from the various works claimed by Bacon as his own, without the addition of a word by the decipherer. The entire story has been obtained in the same manner.

CLAY C. COOPER,  
State Editor Detroit Journal.

FROM PASTOR FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

DETROIT, MICH., October 17th, 1893.

\* \* \* "I hope you may succeed in establishing the reality of your discovery to the conviction of the most skeptical."

Z. GRENELL.

# SIR FRANCIS BACON'S CIPHER STORY.

Mr. GEO. P. GOODALE (Signor Max), Dramatic Critic of the "Detroit Free Press," publishes to the world his opinion of the cipher:

## Shakespeare-Bacon.

To the Editor of The Detroit Free Press:

For many years the tide of talk connecting the name of Francis Bacon with the authorship of the Shakspeare plays has flowed and ebbed. The Baconians being the accusers, have had to assume the burden of proof. They have been flouted, scorned and pooch-pooched with pitying and often supercilious superiority by those who insist that William Shakspeare, of Stratford, wrote the plays that are ascribed to him—plays that are, unquestionably, product of "the mightiest mind that ever wore the garments of mortality."

One of the severest blows that the Bacon theorists have suffered was the "break of that ill-advised zealot, Mr. Ignatius Donnelly, whose "Great Cryptogram" naturally proved fattening food for mirth. His pretended cipher discovery had nothing to rest on, though his argument for Bacon was ingenious in many points and entitled to a respectful hearing. I confess that nothing ever came nearer giving me hydrophobia than these efforts to destroy my idol. Shakspeare was too dear and too real a friend to be thrown overboard. His works had yielded me larger measure of delight than all other books with which I had made acquaintance. Sentiment, loyalty, tradition, habit, prejudice—everything that goes to conviction—gave brain and heart assurance that Shakspeare was Shakspeare.

I am now forced to quite another conviction—to-wit: that Francis Bacon wrote the Shakspeare plays. That conviction is the result of more than a year's examination of testimony submitted to me by Dr. Orville W. Owen, of Detroit, the tireless gentleman who not only discovered the hidden cipher, but who has worked out the secret stories which it relates.

In July, 1892, Dr. Owen confided to me the cipher, and together we went over the matter which is contained in the volume just published by him. I was shown how

to apply the cipher for the unfolding of these startling revelations. I saw that there was nothing of conjecture in it, but a simple, unerring mechanical process, that led us into the most wonderful storehouse of treasure the ages have known. During the first few months of my studies amazement obscured my judgment, and I found it impossible to admit what now appears to me the clearest truth. This radical uprooting of all my life's ideas on this momentous issue cost me more than I care to compute; but if ever I saw duty confronting me I see it now; and it leaves me no alternative:—I feel in simplest honor bound to make proclamation that so far as I am concerned the evidence offered by Dr. Owen is overwhelming. My conclusions may not move a single mind to change. Without intending to be pragmatic, or arrogantly to oppose anybody's views, I may say with such modesty as becomes all men that it is not of the least moment what others think on this question. Whether Bacon wrote Shakspeare, or Shakspeare wrote it himself, is of no consequence to me; and I am justified in going still farther and asserting that Dr. Owen stands in the same attitude of serene indifference. There is this to be said, however:

1. Dr. Orville W. Owen, of Detroit, Michigan, U. S. A., is the actual and sole discoverer of a practical scheme of cipher writing in which it is asserted:

(a) That Francis Bacon was the lawful son of Elizabeth, Queen of England, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, those two having been secretly married in the Tower of London.

(b) That Francis Bacon, for the purpose of concealing the secret histories which he wrote "for posterity," composed all the plays of Shakspeare, Christopher Marlow, Robert Green and George Peele; the Anatomy of Melancholy of Robert Burton, and all the works of Edmund Spenser. These, taken in connection with the undisputed works of Bacon, constitute the general fab-

ric into which are woven the threads that form the cypher stories.

2. Dr. Owen has worked out by a process known to me, (and of which any man that so wills may inform himself) various stories, every line of which is taken systematically from the works enumerated in the foregoing paragraph. The first of these secret stories is entitled, "The Letter to the Decipherer." It purports to have been written and signed by Sir Francis Bacon, and it is a luminous exposition of the cue (or key) words and their corollaries that are the basis of the cipher. It instructs the decipherer how to proceed and it was by following these instructions that Dr. Owen achieved his great discovery. This letter naturally comprises the first division of the volume that is now made public.

The second division is entitled "The Epistle Dedicatory," and is likewise addressed to the decipherer, who has been nearly three centuries coming. In this "Epistle" Bacon says: "For thirty-three years have we gone in travail with these, the children of our wit," and he expresses the belief that the confidant of his secret will find it worthy of praise for "the perfection of the stories and histories which we have written, and hid in the whole of our writings."

The third and largest (unfinished) division of the book comprises a description of Queen Elizabeth, an extraordinary composition called the General Curse, and Bacon's Autobiography.

3. Dr. Owen has deciphered, and I have read, other secret writings from the same source, more startling than any in his published volume. Among them are circumstantial accounts of the destruction of the Spanish Armada and the killing of Christopher Marlow, epitomes of the lives of William Shakspeare, Edmund Spenser, George Peele, Robert Green and Robert Burton; "The Knight's Tale" (a story), a

translation of a considerable portion of Homer's "Iliad," and a general History of England. There are abundant indications that we shall have still other disclosures. Meanwhile let us endeavor to account for those that are in evidence.

For my part I could wish that this whole revelation were a dream, and that our immortal Shakspeare's crown were not in dispute. He shall forever be my friend who will so settle the controversy. There are three things in particular to be remembered:

1. The existence of a cipher by use of which these stories are revealed is an indisputable fact.

2. The stories are not Dr. Owen's inventions. He did not compose them, for the reason that neither he nor any man that lives is gifted with the surpassing genius to do it.

3. Nobody has the right to pass judgment on this discovery who has not first read the book. On this point Bacon warns us that

"Inferior men who assert the fabric Of this history has come together through fortuitous

Concurrence or chance, and not by human skill, are Actuated by revenge, or the desire to appear wise to

The people. For such great wits, let them accuse you

Of cunningly suppressing the secret in some way, Or deny the truth of the congregated story. \* \* And let every man make some little trial for Himself of the way which we describe and lay out."

"It is not probable that a man that is Slavishly bent upon blind, stupid and absurd objections

Will bestow time and work enough upon this to make

Trial of the chain. Such a man is not entitled to judge

And decide upon these questions."

GEORGE P. GOODALE.

Detroit, October 14, 1893.

The first folio edition of Shakspeare, the one from which Mr. Willard has arranged "Hamlet" for the coming performances at the Tremont Theatre, is one of the rarest books known. A perfect copy is worth \$5,000—the Baroness Burdett-Coutts paid nearly \$4,000 for the one in her collection—and a defaced or damaged one will easily bring \$1,000.

This is the folio of 1623, which Dr. O. W. Owen uses in working out his startling cipher stories. It was photographed some years ago from a copy in the British Museum, and can now be bought in the original size for about \$60.—*Detroit Free Press, October 22, 1893.*

#### WHAT A PURCHASER OF THE BOOK SAYS :

"I opened it in the middle and read on some twenty pages. It was so astonishing that I immediately took up my Froude and Hume and Encyclopedia Britannica to see what it all meant, and, *I am sorry to say*, it fitted the facts of history like the cogs in a wheel."

