

SHAKESPEARE v. SHAKESPEARE

reux, afterwards Earl of Essex, is supposed to be a second son.) Francis was given into the care of Sir Nicholas and Lady Bacon, and brought up as their son, but discovered his real birth when he was about fifteen, and was sent to France for a time by the Queen to get him out of the way, returning to England while still a young man. He was never acknowledged publicly by Elizabeth, and, frustrated and embittered by being deprived of what he considered his rightful position, he wrapped up the story of his life, and much of the secret history of the reign, into his various works, giving at the same time clues to the 'word cipher' that Dr Owen had stumbled on independently, and revealing the other names under which he wrote. According to these revelations he was the author of not only the Shakespeare plays and poems, and of his acknowledged works, but—hold your breath!—of the works of Marlowe, George Peele, Robert Green and Edmund Spenser, and of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. He also did some translating of Homer, and is supposed to have had a hand in revising the works of the translators of the 1611 Bible.

Now what is the ordinary reader to think of all this? The fact that only original editions or facsimiles are of any use puts any checking up beyond the reach of the great majority of people, and, any attempt to wade through Donnelly's two volumes, with their pages and pages of exploration, their rows and rows of figures, with all their additions and subtractions, can only cause the reader to join in the poignant cry of 'Lost in the Wilderness!' with which Donnelly himself, struggling through the thickets of his 'cipher', heads one of his chapters. Even many convinced Baconians are somewhat suspicious of Donnelly's 'variables' and do not place much reliance on him. The 'Bi-Literal cipher', to which Bacon himself has given the key, seems to be more acceptable, and most Baconians now take for granted the story which is claimed to be revealed by it. The literature on the subject is already considerable and is growing. The new General Catalogue of the British Museum under the entry for Bacon, has a section headed 'Concealed life and writings', under which are listed 37 items.

H. C. Batchelor and Lord Penzance, members of an older