

**BACON AND SHAKESPEARE: AN
INQUIRY TOUCHING PLAYERS,
PLAYHOUSES, AND
PLAY-WRITERS IN THE DAYS OF
ELIZABETH**

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Bacon and Shakespeare: An Inquiry Touching Players, Playhouses, and Play-Writers in the Days of Elithabeth by William Henry Smith

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WILLIAM HENRY SMITH

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BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.

AN INQUIRY TOUCHING

PLAYERS, PLAYHOUSES, AND PLAY-WRITERS

IN THE DAYS OF ELIZABETH.

BY

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH, ESQ.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED AN ABSTRACT OF A MS. RESPECTING

TOBIE MATTHEW.

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TO HIS READERS AND REVIEWERS.

By the Scotch Review, which bears the outward semblance of Buchanan, we have been reviled as a "Caviller" and a "Smith." The editor might have reflected that our names and lineaments we inherit, whilst our words and actions are our own.

If his pages were as full of wisdom as ours are free from cavil, the visage without his book, would not be regarded as a mask, whose brains we vainly seek within: and the Review might yet hope to attain a fame coextensive with our name—a name which some wise, and many worthy men, have borne—which, though not unique, is perfectly genteel—and which has, of late years, become such a

tower of strength that, for it, a King of the French was glad to forego his own high-sounding title.

In our little pamphlet (a letter to Lord Ellesmere), it is written—"I purposely abstain from any attempt to compare the writings of the author I am about to mention, with the Plays which are attributed to Shakespeare; not merely because that is a labour too vast to enter upon now, but more particularly because it is essentially the province of the literary student."

We did not, and do not, pretend to be equal to a literary labour. We merely, to use an expression of Bacon's, "have taken upon us to ring a bell, to call other wits together, which is the meanest office." But as, like unready servants, they stared at the bell instead of answering it, we are compelled to do our own errand, and reluctantly make some further entrance into the subject.

Though our faith is sincere, we feel that it wants confirmation, and that we are constitutionally more fit to form one of a congregation of old believers, than to become the preacher of a new creed.

What Bacon says of his book on the *Advancement of Learning*, we may say of our humble production—"In which if I have in any point receded from that which is commonly received, it hath been with a purpose of proceeding *in melius*, and not *in aliud*; a mind of amendment and proficiency, and not of change and difference. For I could not be true and constant to the argument I handle, if I were not willing to go beyond others, but yet not more willing than to have others go beyond me again: which may the better appear by this, that I have propounded my opinions naked and unarmed, not seeking to preoccupate the liberty of men's judgments by confutations."

And we will conclude by quoting his paper on the *Pacification of the Church*, where he says—
“Knowing in my conscience, whereto God beareth witness, that the things which I shall speak spring out of no vein of popularity, ostentation, desire of novelty, partiality to either side, disposition to intermeddle, or any such leaven: I may conceive hope, that what I want in depth of judgment may be countervailed in simplicity and sincerity of affection.”

THE AUTHOR.