

**BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: HIS
POSITION AS REGARDS THE
PLAYS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649281381

Bacon and Shakespeare. William Shakespeare: his position as regards the plays by William Henry Smith

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH

**BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: HIS
POSITION AS REGARDS THE
PLAYS**

BACON AND SHAKESPEARE.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE :

HIS POSITION
AS REGARDS THE
PLAYS, ETC.



BY
WILLIAM HENRY SMITH,

AUTHOR OF

*"Bacon and Shakespeare," an Inquiry touching Players,
Playhouses, and Play-Writers in the days of
Elizabeth.*

LONDON:
SKEFFINGTON & SON,
163, PICCADILLY.

M. DCCC. LXXXIV.

TO THE READER,

Most of the facts, or seeming facts, in the following pages, reached me after my publication in 1857.

I present them, "naked and unarmed, not seeking to preoccupate the liberty of men's judgments by confutations."

THE AUTHOR.

London,

June, 1884.

BACON & SHAKESPEARE.

" One of these men is *genius* to the other,
And so of these, which is the natural man,
And which the spirit ? who decyphers them ?"
—*Comedy of Errors.*

WHEN in 1856, in a "Letter to Lord Ellesmere," the late President of the Shakespeare Society, "printed for private circulation," we suggested that Francis Bacon might have been the author of the Plays attributed to Shakespeare, we expected to have received from the persons to whom that pamphlet was sent prompt replies containing statements of facts and argument irrefragable, sufficient to have immediately convinced us that our supposition was erroneous and untenable.

Instead of this, though some adopted the safer course of saying nothing—or simply contented themselves by vilifying and abusing the person who had the audacity to broach so unpardonable a heresy—other some—in combating our statements exhibited so little know-

ledge of the Plays and Writings attributed to Shakespeare, and so much less of those which are and always have been acknowledged as Bacon's—that the impression which had been made upon us by reading the authors themselves was confirmed and strengthened by reading the arguments of those who resisted the conclusion towards which we felt ourselves so greatly, though unwillingly, impelled.

Under these circumstances, although in our "Letter" we had stated that "we should abstain from any attempt to compare the writings of the two authors, not merely because it was a labour too vast to enter upon" then, but "more particularly because it is essentially the province of the literary student," which we do not pretend to be—yet as we—to use an expression of Bacon's, "had taken upon us to ring a bell, to call other wits together, which is the meanest office," and as, like unready servants, they had stared at the bell instead of answering it, we were compelled to do our own errand, and reluctantly made some further entrance into the matter, by publishing our little book, entitled "An Inquiry touching Players, Play-houses, and Play-writers, in the days of Elizabeth." London: J. R. Smith, 1857.

The late Lord Campbell wrote a book upon "Shakespeare's Legal Attainments," published in 1859, which has brought that portion of Shakespeare's writings which have considerable bearing upon the subject under discussion, rather prominently before the public. It is a superficial work, hardly worthy of the high legal functionary from whom it emanated.

Mr. William Lowes Rushton has some reason to complain that Lord Campbell's work has obtained so much notice whilst his very able little pamphlet on the same subject, published fully a year before Lord Campbell's book, has met with comparatively little attention in this country, though highly appreciated in Germany, into the language of which country it has been translated. We have no hesitation in saying that Mr. William Lowes Rushton's pamphlets, "Shakespeare a Lawyer," published in 1858, "Shakespeare's Legal Maxims," published in 1859, "Shakespeare Illustrated," by old authors, parts 1 and 2 published in 1867-68, and "Shakespeare's Testamentary Language," published in 1869, are amongst the most erudite and valuable works that have been contributed to Shakespearian literature. They convincingly prove that the writer of the plays had profoundly studied the principles, and was

well acquainted with the practice of the law in all its departments, a knowledge which could not be acquired by the greatest possible genius, even if he had spent years in an attorney's office.

When Mr. Nathaniel Holmes entered the field of this discussion we felt that providence had provided exactly the champion the cause required, and as we were not fit to fight in the fore-rank at his side, we thought it better to retire to the rear of this unexpected American contingent, and endeavour to make ourselves useful in the commissariat department.

But now that the triumph seems so near at hand, we cannot resist coming to the front to congratulate those that have fought the battle upon their success, and we candidly own to show ourselves as a veteran who has survived the campaign, and is ready to give an honest account of the stores which still remain on his hands.

They may seem matters of small importance—yet in totting up the column of evidence—the sum of them—like the outermost row of pence and farthings in a large account—may be found to have some weight and value, and be essential in order to make up the full tale.

The first statement that we have to make is,

that since our last publication a stigma which has made Francis Bacon infamous in the eyes of a large portion of the religious public has happily been removed.

A tract, entitled "The Characters of a Believing Christian in Paradoxes, or Seeming Contradictions," was published in a volume known as the "Remains," a book "to which nobody stands sponser," in 1648, twenty-two years after Bacon's death.

These "Paradoxes" have since that time been included in collected editions of Bacon's Works, and have almost universally been considered as having been written by Bacon, and being misunderstood, he has suffered much obloquy in consequence.

In his "Lives of the Lord Chancellors," Lord Campbell writes, respecting "The Character of a Christian in Paradoxes or seeming Contradictions," "Notwithstanding the stout denial that he (Bacon) was the author of the Paradoxes, I cannot doubt that the publication is from his pen, and I cannot characterize it otherwise than as a profane attempt to ridicule the Christian faith."

We did not venture an opinion as to the authorship of the Paradoxes, but we made the charitable suggestion that Lord Campbell had