

**THE HIDDEN LIVES OF SHAKESPEARE
AND BACON AND THEIR BUSINESS
CONNECTION; WITH SOME
REVELATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S
EARLY STRUGGLES, 1587-1592**

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The Hidden Lives of Shakespeare and Bacon and Their Business Connection; With Some Revelations of Shakespeare's Early Struggles, 1587-1592 by W. G. Thorpe

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BY

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OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE.

AUTHOR OF "THE STILL LIFE OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE,"
"MIDDLE TEMPLE TABLE TALK," ETC.

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"Tot ou Tard, tout se scait."

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G.L.

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I

INSCRIBE THIS BOOK TO

THOMAS WILLIAM BROOKES

of the Convent, Kingsgate, Thanet, in remembrance of nearly forty years' friendship and esteem.

But I must, in common gratitude, record thus publicly the sympathy, aid, and encouragement accorded me in this novel and difficult inquiry by

SAM. TIMMINS, J.P., F.S.A.,

*Recd
29 Aug. 1932*
of Spring Hill, Arley, Coventry, the widely known scholar and student of Shakespeare, to whose literature he has for over forty years devoted all the powers of his mind, and in whose "The Shakespeare Year" the world of the Poet's admirers yearly find a careful and thoroughly reliable account of all that has occurred to interest them in the previous period.

TO THE READER.

Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps in his "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," seventh edition, thus forecasts the future of the still expanding Shakespeare cult.

"**I**N the absence of some very important and unexpected discovery, the general desire to penetrate the mystery which surrounds the personal history of Shakespeare cannot be gratified.

"It is not likely that much beyond a very imperfect sketch of the material features of his life will ever be revealed . . . but so vivid is the general interest enforced by the publication of the minutest new fact regarding the world's greatest author that this unsatisfactory position hardly accounts for an inclination not unfrequently manifested . . . for the setting up of a mythical Shakespeare.

"Such an inclination may sometimes arise from a reluctance to believe that the object of our idolatry could ever have been human.

"It is a delusion that Shakespeare's transcendent intellect excluded the admission of human frailty."

Thus prophesied the man who has done the most to clear up the mystery! and had he lived to see the revelation of the "important and unexpected discovery" he saw afar off, he would have

found his prediction verified, even had it been his own lot to proclaim to the world, the secret which lay all the while *easily within his reach*.

Hardly, even for him, would publishers have dared to face the (possible, even now) howl of execration awaiting the man who might assert that Shakespeare was not nursed by fairies and cradled in violets, was not lawyer, statesman, linguist, and scientist combined.

In fact, they are equally timorous now, and but for my reliance on the evidence hereafter adduced, and my faith that Truth must prevail in the end, I should not have put forward and challenged criticism on the following astounding propositions, which, however, the chief authority at Stratford-on-Avon has stamped with his approval—the MS. being printed exactly as it left that gentleman's hands. In his own words to me, it fits exactly together, and cannot be got out of; with him, at all events, the Truth is above all sentimental and preconceived considerations of however long standing. In such a spirit, gentle reader, I ask you to approach the following positions, which directly arise from the book in your hands.

(1.) That Shakespeare, at all events up to 1599, kept a gold, silver, and "copper" hell, carrying on this last in the open streets with yokels, and putting on workman's dress in order to appear to be on their level and thus more easily gain their confidence.

(2.) That by this means he supplied the wants of his "hungry famylee" (one of Mr. Halliwell's standing puzzles).

(3.) That he purchased New Place out of the money got by rooking an infant young gentleman; these circumstances being matter of notoriety among his townsmen and neighbours, gentle and simple.

Now take another tack.

A. That deer-stealing was felony punishable in the Star Chamber, for which Bacon (practically the Public Prosecutor until he became Chancellor) prosecuted two men separately as late as 1614.

B. That hence, if an information was laid, it was in Bacon's power to have dealt similarly with Shakespeare any time between the date of the offence in 1587 and the 1614 aforesaid.

C. That if Bacon did not so prosecute, but rather protected him, there must have been good (Baconian) reason for it. Now Bacon blackmailed everybody, and hunted his patron Essex to the death for money.

D. Thirteen years after his Hegira from Stratford, Shakespeare's offence was remembered and cast up against him. He had fled for very fear. Can this be the reason why he did not revisit his native town for ten years, and then only for his

son's funeral, when pity might stay the hand of the avenger? Can this, too, be the cause why he "lay low" and kept out of sight in London, lived in a Bankside lodging, and did not ruffle it bravely as did Henslow, Alleyn, and Burbage, actor-managers like himself? Here are two more of the conundrums Mr. Halliwell despaired of solving.

E. Shakespeare was completely in Bacon's power, by the double ties of profitable employment flowing inwards, and the fear of the terrors of the law which stood ready at Bacon's hand. We know that Bacon caged for the smallest item of "copy" for the Twickenham Scrivenery, so that Shakespeare's theatre-writing would not pass overlooked.

And yet, as often happens, the victim had (perhaps from some hold springing out of Bacon's private life) a back pull which enabled him to constrain his master to put off another pressing creditor (as we know he did), and pay him out of Catesby's fine, really the blood-money for which he had sold Essex, the amount which paid for the Combe Estate; yet one more point which puzzled Mr. Halliwell as he plaintively confesses.

It may be, gentle reader—I trust, indeed, it is—that this investigation which I have had the happy chance to open, may, if followed up by abler