

toward him was due to madness. It is difficult to think he was not sincere at this time. Is it not possible that, in a moment of exceptionally clear vision, he was enabled to survey past actions and perceive how irrational they were? I know an insane person that asked me, "Would you like to read about my case? You will find it in the article on Insanity in the cyclopedia."

My opinion, to conclude, is still that Hamlet was a man of exceptional intellectual power, but whose mind was clouded by a melancholy that was very near to madness, and that sometimes passed well over the line. This affliction began before his interview with the ghost, but was aggravated by that and subsequent experiences. This diagnosis may be absurd to an expert alienist. Would it, however, seem absurd to Shakespeare, who, for all his genius, must have depended for his knowledge on the subject to chance observations, some reading, and perhaps mainly to introspection—who, in short, was not a specialist, and had no statistics or laboratory methods to aid him?

JOSEPH C. ALLEN.

MR. GEORGE BRANDES ON THE SHAKESPEARE-BACON PROBLEM.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

In your pages for April, 1904, your learned and able contributor, Edwin Watts Chubb, Esq., quotes Mr. George Brandes as follows:

"It is well known that in recent years a troop of less than half educated people have put forth the doctrine that Shakespeare lent his name to a body of poetry with which he had really nothing to do . . . which has fallen into the hands of raw Americans and literary women."

Mr. Brandes is one of the most brilliant of the younger generation of Scandinavian critics. Attracted, as most Continental critics are, sooner or later, to Shakespeare, he produced in the year 1898 a work that is universally admitted by English-reading people to be almost the very finest work on Shakespeare ever written outside of England, almost equaling Gervinus in Germany, and certainly surpassing Taine, Stapfer, and Jusserrand in France. But—*Quando dormitat bonos Homerus*; and Mr. Brandes overlooked a passage on page 48 of Sir James Prior's *Life of Edmund Malone* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1859, line 1, *et seq.*). From that passage Mr. Brandes would have learned that the anti-Shakespearean Authorship Theory sprang up, or at any rate existed, in London, in and about the year 1780, among men, and not among women; and among Englishmen and not among Americans (who at that date were not exploiting literary but rather very strenuously fighting for certain political theories). Sir James Prior's work is entirely a record of the first "Shakespearean Revival" (as we should call it now) in England. Up to that "Revival," Shakespeare had been taken for granted and read and praised unstintedly by such great authorities as Dryden, but no examination had been attracted to his biography or environments, his circumstances or neighborhoods.

Mr. Brandes, in putting together a history of Opinion on Shakespeare, should by no means have overlooked this volume, since nowhere else is the subject so detailedly followed as in these five hundred or so pages. To find that, actually concurrent with the examination of Shakespeare's biography, a doubt of his authorship occurred, was a fact too important to have been

overlooked by a historian of Shakespearean criticism, certainly too important to have been concealed, if that historian had come across it. In either case, Mr. Brandes's oversight would excuse a suggestion that there might possibly be other things connected with the English Shakespeare which his Scandinavian critic may also have overlooked. Even in the teeth, then, of Mr. Brandes's authority, Mr. Chubb must acquit the half-baked American and the literary woman of these days of the initiative of the doubt.

May I suggest to him something nearer to his own date and focus?

In January of the year 1900, in the City of New York, two "raw Americans" participated in a joint debate upon the Shakespeare authorship question. The Shakespeare interest in that debate was entrusted to Dr. Appleton Morgan, a dignified and scholarly barrister, for thirty years president of the Shakespeare Society of that city, while the Baconian side was in the able hands of Dr. Isaac Hull Platt, long renowned as a foremost and alert champion of the Heretics, and for a lifetime a student of Elizabethan matters.

This debate was of course not discussive of the problem *ab ovo*, but rather a summary disposition of the postulates already proposed on both sides. And I should recommend Mr. Chubb, before reading it, to fortify himself with Mr. Edwards's *Shaxper not Shakespeare* (which does not mention the name "Bacon" at all, but is confined to an examination of the London playhouses, audiences, etc., etc., of the required dates, to enquire as to their capacity for mounting or supporting the Shakespeare Plays as printed in the First Folio), and then, having read that book, he might care for Edwin Reed's *Bacon versus Shakespeare*, which boldly places Bacon himself in the midst of the vacua created by Mr. Edwards. As to books written by "literary women," Mr. Chubb must communicate directly with Mr. George Brandes. I confess to never having heard of any except Miss Delia Bacon, but her book only announced the theory, and never pretended to be, or, if it did, is certainly not at present considered as an authority upon the problem itself. And I might add that of thousands of books upon this question twelve, all of them written by Englishmen, or at least by subjects of the British crown and not by Americans, have appeared within the last two years, though to none of these does Mr. Chubb refer.

The conclusions arrived at by these two particular "raw Americans" were embodied in the form of a consensus or "protocol"; which, together with a full report of the debate, was published in the *Conservator* and later in *New Shakespeareana*. That consensus was (I abridge the preamble) as follows:

"1. The Plays were produced as William Shakespeare's in London "between 1584 and 1616, and printed as his without cavil or demurrer from "anybody except Richard Greene and perhaps a few other rival playwrights. "2. As they stand in the First Folio the Shakespeare Plays are the "product of either the growth or the augmentation, by their author or "others, of the quarto versions, and contain thousands of eloquent lines "and twelve entire plays which, so far as any record can be discovered, "never saw the light in Shakespeare's lifetime, or until seven years after "his death. 3. There are so many thousands of identities of thought, "opinion, circumstance, error and simultaneous correction of error, in the

“literatures we call respectively Shakespeare and Bacon, and so many coincidences between Bacon’s known circumstances, doings, and studies and the material of certain Shakespeare Plays, that it is a well-nigh successful demonstration that Bacon had more or less to do with the issuing of the First Folio Edition of the Plays. 4. The spirit of the whole series of plays is dominated by one man, though he might have had and probably did have, helpers and coadjutors.”

I read this debate with peculiar interest for the reason below given and I wrote Dr. Morgan as follows:

“ In our correspondence of December, 1899, which was printed in *The New York Times’s Saturday Review* of January 6, 1900, you said: ‘I long since accepted the orthodox Shakespeare as the author of the Plays. . . . Shakespeare is a miracle as he stands. But, as he stands, he is a much less complicated miracle than he would be if any of the current explanations of him were accepted.’ It seems to me that your and Dr. Platt’s Consensus or ‘Protocol’ is a little irreconcilable with this statement.”

To this letter I received an answer in part as follows:

“My Dear Mr. Langford:—I do accept Shakespeare as the ‘Author,’ etc. But I am anxious to take the opportunity to say that my Debate with Dr. Platt was not a perfunctory agreement between us to put into print what we each thought upon questions that we had both studied and guessed about for so many years, but a genuine effort to convince each other. The Debate was an education to me at any rate. I confess myself staggered by the flood of coincidences which Dr. Platt poured in. Such as that the arms of Nicholas Breakespeare (Pope Adrian the Fourth), who was a native of St. Albans, were used to frame the draft of arms for Shakespeare by the Herald’s College, thus bringing Shakespeare in some sort into the neighborhood of St. Albans just as the fact that King Cymbeline, who is the subject of one of Shakespeare’s Plays (and who is nowhere else mentioned in English literature except in Holinshed), is brought into the neighborhood of Bacon when we learn that Cymbeline’s Court and Royal seat were at Verulam. And what was I to say to the fac-simile of the volume entitled *Baconiana or Certaine Genuine Remaines of Sir Francis Bacon*, etc., printed by J. D. for Richard Chiswell, in London in 1679, in which occurs a reference to some Folio of 1623 as one in which ‘the forme of the letters of the Alphabet in which much of the mysterie consisteth’ is observed, etc., and in which the letters T. T. in identically the same curious form in which they are used in the first edition in 1609 of the ‘Sonnets’ printed in London by G. Eld for T. T. occur? Typographers tell us that types are not preserved or do not last in use for seventy years, but must be reproduced. Who reproduced these, and why? Learned book reviewers tell us that these and the like things are mere trifles and mare’s nests. But it is my experience that learned Judges in Courts of Justice have called less things than these ‘items of circumstantial evidence.’ And when Dr. Platt remarked: ‘But, Dr. Morgan, do you not think it curious that whenever we scratch the cuticle of a Shakespearean reminiscence we uncover an association with Francis Lord Bacon?’ I don’t remember that I was prepared just then with any rejoinder to that!

"I think that it would be at least safe for anybody who proposes to be cocksure about these problems to read Dr. Platt's argument in that Debate. And so — being very far from cocksureness myself — I propose, as you quote me, to still 'accept the orthodox Shakespeare as the author of the plays, and so the less complicated form of the miracle,' etc.

"And now let me make one more attempt to close what I have to say in the matter. Let me put it historically:

"1. Several gentlemen have lately been searching the probate (or what answered to probate) records for the inventories of personal property filed by executors and administrator in Stratford-on-Avon during the years covering Shakespeare's lifetime. They have been unable to find mention of a single library, printed book or manuscript in any of those inventories, though books were of exaggerated value in those days and were plentiful enough in London at the time.

"2. Mrs. Shakespeare was buried August 8, 1623.

"3. In the year sixteen hundred and twenty-three the First Collected edition of Shakespeare's plays was published by Messrs. Jaggard and Blount, who first, however, made this entry upon the Records of the Stationers' Company: '8 Nouembris 1623, Rr. Jac. 21. Mr. Blounte Isak Jaggard. Entred for their copy vnder th' hands of Mr. Doctor Worrall and Mr. Cole war-den. Mr. William Shakspeers Comedyes Histories and Tragedyes soe monie of the said copies as are not formerly entred to other men.'"

[Here follows the sixteen names of the previously unentered plays.]

"4. In this same year, 1623, Ben Jonson was Lord Bacon's Private Secretary. He contributes to the First Folio of 1623 the Lines to Shakespeare's portrait and the Commendatory verses.

"Now, here again, learned book reviewers say that these are only trifles and coincidences and mare's nests. But I am afraid that if I were professionally employed to search the title to the Shakespeare Plays I should be obliged to advise my client that my conclusions from this array of facts were:

"1. That at Mrs. Shakespeare's death in 1623 some trust or personal possession in or to sixteen Shakespeare plays terminated, and permitted Messrs. Jaggard and Blount to acquire the copyright. (That they or their solicitors spelled the name 'Shakspeer' means nothing, I think. That the Editors of a book should spell its title one way and its publishers another, only indicates that people spelled as they pleased in those days.)

"2. That, therefore, though these Plays could not have been written in Stratford-on-Avon, they had belonged to the William Shakespeare whose wife this Mrs. Shakespeare was; and,

"3. That Lord Bacon, whose Secretary Ben Jonson was, knew of the existence of these Plays.

"So far I should find what seemed to me conclusions of fact. If I should be asked why Bacon, in all his voluminous memoranda, notes, correspondence and printed works, never mentions his most illustrious contemporary, William Shakespeare, though his lordship was constantly 'scouring the Universities' and the community for 'good pens' (which I take to mean, that he was a careful observer of literary matters), if asked this, I think I should discreetly answer that I did not know.

"So now, my dear sir, you have all the facts in my possession. Please "go ahead and solve the Shakespeare Enigma. I have been at it for almost "thirty years and have given it up. Yours faithfully,

"APPLETON MORGAN."

"New York, March 6th, 1904."

I suppose if Mr. George Brandes sees this, he will add Dr. Morgan to his list of "raw Americans." Will he please also add the name of

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THE PRAISE OF HYPOCRISY—A REJOINER.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

I have read the reply to my letter in your issue of May, which reply I presume is by Dr. Knight, and fail to see that he in any way touches the question that I raised. This question was, allowing that the utterances of "the defenders of Christianity" which he so lavishly quotes are true, is his "Praise of Hypocrisy," a judicious or well timed paper? Will it prove helpful to any one, especially to one who,—weakly perhaps, if Dr. Knight is right,—is clinging to his or her church as the only thing that can save that one's faith? Let me commend to Dr. Knight a study of the warning which he quotes from Matthew xxvi. 52: *cmfwyp cmfwyp shrdlu shrdlu shrdlu cmfwyp shrdlu shrd* And looking at the spiritual signification of the ear, may it not be possible that Dr. Knight, in the mighty swing of his sword, has struck off some one's right ear, with no loving power at hand to touch and heal the wound? I think he *has* done this, and in this opinion I am not alone.

When Dr. Knight's article came to hand, I read it with much interest. Its power, whatever his intent may have been, is indubitable. I took it up to the home of a very dear old friend, one to whom hypocrisy, or sympathy with hypocrisy, is an impossibility. Her daughter and grandson, a youth of seventeen, were present, and I began to read the article. I had not proceeded far when I noticed signs of unrest and disturbance, and the mother sent the boy out of the room. A little further on both interrupted me, and earnestly desired me to cease reading it, declaring it "the most unbalancing attack on simple, trusting faith they ever listened to."

Dr. Knight denies Paul's regard for the "law of conformity," but will he favor us with an "exegesis" on I. Corinthians ix. 19-22.

I did not say that reformation is to be effected by *an* individual, but by *the* individual,—*each* individual, if this will make my meaning plainer. It seems to me that too much stress is laid on the reformation of "the church," which is only an aggregation,—and a very incongruous one,—of individuals. If I run up against a case of scarlatina in a family, I do not dose the whole family with aconite and belladonna. I bestow my attention on the *sick member*, and when he or she recovers the whole family is well.

Dr. Knight tenders me a free prescription, "Truth, Honesty, Sincerity," in heroic doses. Many thanks to him,—it is a fine, "all round" tonic, equally good for the layman or the Doctor of Divinity. Doubtless Dr. Knight has used the prescription to some purpose himself, but,—in the interests of