

SHAKESPEARE v. SHAKESPEARE

position of certain words in the lines and columns, and he declared that he was able to work out a system of 'key numbers'; which had also to be altered by the addition or subtraction of certain 'variables'. Guided by these numbers he picked out an exciting story about Bacon, Shakspere the actor, and Queen Elizabeth which proved to his satisfaction that Shakspere could not have written the plays.

A new line was taken up by Mrs Elizabeth Wells Gallup. She began to investigate Bacon's 'Bi-Literal Cipher' which is described with one or two other ciphers in *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, published in 1623. (Spedding's edition gives both Bacon's Latin works and an English translation.) The basis of this cipher is that each letter of the alphabet may be represented by a combination of *a*'s and *b*'s in groups of five. The same system is used in the Morse code, with its group of dots-and-dashes in print, and its combination of long and short flashes or tappings according to whether lights or sounds are used. But to make it possible to write in cipher without it being obvious, each letter represents also an *a* or *b* according to a pre-arranged code, so that every group of five letters in an ordinary-looking sentence is really a group of *a*'s and *b*'s and equals one letter of the cipher. Just to help things along Bacon also suggests using two different founts of letters, one kind representing *a*'s and the other *b*'s, so that an *m* say, would be an *a* in one fount and *b* in an other. Mrs Gallup, using Bacon's cipher key, worked away on the plays, but like Donnelly, she was held up until she was able to get hold of original editions or facsimiles, not only of the plays, but also of Bacon's acknowledged works, and, being struck with the number of words and letters in italic founts, she worked on these, and found that it was only the italics that mattered. After investigating not only Shakespeare and Bacon, but much of the Elizabethan literature, she evolved a story, that at first sight seems so fantastic as to be quite incredible. The cipher messages tell, she says, that Bacon was the son of Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

(History tells us that during 1560 Elizabeth's infatuation for Leicester was so marked as to cause comment, and Bacon's birth-date is given as January, 1561. Robert Deve-