

SHAKESPEARE v. SHAKESPEARE

war the Library became a member of the Bacon Society, whose enthusiastic secretary, Mr Valentine Smith, was pleased at the contact with a library at this faraway end of the world. He was instrumental in getting for the Library a very good set of the Society's magazine, *Baconiana*, going back to the first volume, but not altogether complete, and also procured some of the Society's pamphlets and books by members, some of which are now out of print. It was indirectly through the Society, too, that there came to the Library the largest donation it has yet received on the Bacon-Shakespeare question and on Bacon generally. This was the collection of Mr Harold Large, of Napier, an ardent Baconian of more than half-a-century's standing. When Mr Large was troubled about the disposition of the books that he had spent so long collecting, Mr Valentine Smith suggested that he should make contact with the Library, and the result was that we were presented with close on a hundred items—books, pamphlets and typescripts—dealing with the subject.

That the whole question, depending as it does on the sifting of evidence for and against the various claimants, has had a fascination for the legal mind is obvious by the number of lawyers who have taken part in the argument, and it is not surprising, therefore, that it had an interest for one of Wellington's leading lawyers, Sir Francis Dillon Bell. Amongst the books from his library presented recently by his son, Mr Cheviot Bell, there were several on this subject, the most useful, perhaps, being Mrs Gallup's *The Bi-Literal Cipher of Sir Francis Bacon*, the Library having only Part III, published in 1910, from Mr Large's collection. Other items from the Bell Library include E. Bosman's *Francis Bacon's Cryptic Rhymes*, Edwin Reed's *Francis Bacon our Shakespeare*, and W. A. Sutton's *The Shakespeare Enigma*.

Those who have not studied the subject are probably unaware that the beginning of the Baconian idea goes back to the middle of the eighteenth century. As far back as 1769 there appeared a book called *The Life and Adventures of Common Sense*, by Herbert Lawrence, in which the theory that the plays and poems ascribed to Shakespeare were the work of Francis Bacon appears to have been first pro-