E. H. SOTHERN SCORNS "BACONIAN FLAPDOODLE" ABOUT SHAKESPEARE

Actor Declares Bard Never Horse Tender Nor Unlettered, and Pronounces These as Slanders of Slab-Sided Zealots, as He Points Out the Young Poet's Influential Friends in London.

BY E. H. SOTHERN. ILLIAM SHAKESPEARE Was 24 years of age when he left Stratford and journeyed to London, a distance of about 70 miles. Of his doings upon his arrival there; of how he managed to become an actor and finally co-manager of one of the leading playhouses, we are in well-nigh, abysmal darkness. In point of fact, by some curious turns of affairs, there seems to have been what might be called "a conspiracy of silence."

Shakespeare is not alone in the shadow. All of his wonderful contemporaries suffered a like fate-among others Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massenger and Marlowe. Of these men Massenger and Marlowe. Of these men Emerson said; "Since the constellation of Great Men who appeared in Greece in the time of Pericles, there was never any such society." Yet what we actually know of "these mighty men of old" could be written on the label of a medicine bottle.

old" could be written on the label of a medicine bottle.

It has long seemed to me, however, that so far as Shakespeare is concerned, there has been too ready an acceptance of silly tradition. With many important facts at hand, which cannot be well snifted away, most of the blog-raphers have given ear to the tale that Shakespeare, upon arrival in London, made a precarious living holding horses outside of the playhouses. This tradition gets short of breatn, wheenes dismally, and expires finally when we read in Brandes' Shakespeare, that at the time in question "the practice of riding to theaters had entirely fallen into disuse. People then went to the play by water, Shakespeare may, indeed, have held horses; but that a man of his capabilities should have been pushed into such a paltry business, seems extremely unlikely.

Acquaintance Thought Likely.

Acquaintance Thought Likely.

It does not seem to have occurred to enybody to inquire whether or no Shakespeare did not have acquaintances in London who would have given him ready assistance. That there was at least one such acquaintance, and that he assisted Shakespeare on his arrival in London, seems beyond the shadow of a doubt. This is not a here theory, one of those incongruous traditheory, one of those incongruous tradi-tions which sprung up, nobody knows how, but an incontestable fact.

It may as well be stated here that Shakespeare's father was High Bailiff when the first traveling company of players visited Stratford; and during players visited Stratford; and during the years of 1569 and 1587, the latter year being the one that Shakespeare left Stratford for London—"24 traveling troupes visited the town." On arrival, it was the custom for the players to wait upon the High Bailiff and inform him "in what nobleman's service they were enrolled." That young Shakespeare saw these performances and became acquainted with the actors, who must have visited his father's

who must have visited his father's house, is beyond doubt.
Yet—eight years before Shakespeare left Straiford for London,—then a city of about 300,000 inhabitants,—Richard L. H. Sothern As Opetrical of Imperiod and Solutions,—Richard Field, a local tanner, had taken up his residence in the metropoils. Richard Field and William Shakespeare had been play-fellows at the Stratford grammar school. On arrival in London, young Field,—on August 16, 1579, "put himself at prentis to George Byshop, citizen and stationer of London for the VII yeres from Michaelmus next." A month later Byshop placed Field with "ye said Vantrollier to learne ye arte of printing." This Thomas Vantrollier, by the way, was one of the important printers of London Field, the year Shakespeare arrived in the metropolis, became a freeman, and on Vantrollier's death soon after, married his widow and succeeded to his business as publisher.

So, when William Shakespeare left Stratford, what do we know of him Stratford, what do we know of him suph honorable family, while his mother, "Plutarell's Lives," from which Shakespeare's father a butcher. Shakespeare is proved by the fact that he was tne publisher of any honorable family, while his mother, "Plutarell's Lives," from which Shakespeare's father descended from a distinguished the fact that he was tne publisher of any honorable family, while his mother, "Plutarell's Lives," from which Shakespeare's father descended from a distinguished the fact that he was tne publisher of any honorable family, while his mother, "Plutarell's Lives," from which Shakespeare's father descended from a distinguished the fact that he was tne publisher of any honorable family, while his mother, "Plutarell's Lives," from which Shakespeare's father descended from a distinguished the fact that he was tne publisher of any honorable family, while his mother, "Plutarell's Lives," from which Shakespeare's father descended from a distinguished the fact that he was tne publisher of any honorable family, while his mother, "Plutarell's Lives," from which Shakespeare's muse is proved by the fact that he was tne publisher of any honorable family, while his mother, "Plutarell's Lives," from which Shakespear

Stratford, what do we know of him that is not mere conjecture? There was living in London his schoolfellow. Richard Field, now an important publisher, and it is beyond doubt that he was already acquainted, on account of the frequent visits to his father's house.

All of these absurdities have been that the father descended from a distinguished and honorable family, while his mother, "Plutar speare was living in London his schoolfellow. Bichard Field, now an important publisher, and it is beyond doubt that he was already acquainted, on account of the frequent visits to his father's house.

All of these absurdities have been Stratford. with all of the important actors of the London stage. George Greenwood, the English barrister—who has been at great pains in his weighty book, "The Shakespeare Problem Restated," to prove that Francis Bacon was the author of the plays—seems to have scent-ed the important matter of Field and Shakespeare's friendship. As it would be fatal to his argument to acknowl-edge that Field and Shakespeare were acquaintances, he dismissed the whole matter whiffingly in these words: "There is absolutely nothing to show that Field had any acquaintance with,

or knowledge of Shakespeare."

This is a fatal and egregious statement on Greenwood's part. We know absolutely that Richard Field and William Shakespeare were schoolmates at the Stratford grammar school, and we read in Halliwell-Phillps' "Outlines" that at the time of Greene's Lampoon of Shakespeare, then in London, that the poet's father was busily engaged with his counters in appraising the with his counters in appraising the goods of Richard's father, Henry Field, tanner of Stratford-on-Avon. Surely, that Richard Field and William Shake-Field had any acquaintance with or knowledge of Shakespeare."

It takes a Baconian to make a posi-tive statement that is as easily refuted as that two and two make five. It seems, too, beyond reason that Mr. Greenwood was unaware that Richard the statement that is as easily refuted as that two and two make five. It seems, too, beyond reason that Mr. Greenwood was unaware that Richard Fleld published Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis," called by the poet "The first heir of his invention." Even without the knowledge that Shakespeare's poem, "Venus and Adonis," was published by Fleld, the averment by this out the knowledge that Shakespeare's poem, "Venus and Adonis," was published by Field, the averment by this Baconian would not hold water. That young Shakespeare was intimately acquainted with Field: that he "hung about" his printing office upon his arrival in London, and met there the important literary men of the time, seems unquestionable. As has been seen, Field published Shakespeare's first poem, which may have been carried with him from Stratford. Then, Blade, in his book, "Shakespeare and Topography," points out that the author of the plays must have been intimately acquainted with topography. Blade, for instance, points out that in four the period with the plays must have been intimately acquainted with topography. Blade, for instance, points out that in four the pen of William Shakespeare. 2. "Is it not a fact that Shakespeare." acquainted with topography. Blade, for instance, points out that in four lines in "The Winter's Tale" there are

five distinct typographical words— three of which are especially technical. Richard Field was the publisher of the most important literary works of the time, and so his office must of ne-cessity have been frequented by the leading literary men of the metropolis. That Shakespeare was at hand was proved by the fact that Fleid, his school fellow, published his first work, and furthermore that he was intimately ac-That quainted with the printers' trade. Shakespeare was not discreditably engaged about the theater is further improved by the fact, that so important a person as the Archbishop of Canterbury sanctioned the publication of "Venus and Adonis," which was inscribed to so celebrated a person as Lord Southampton, who we well know was warmly attached to the young poet. Surely, Shakespeare could not have gained the Shakespeare could not have gained the good will and patronage of such people had he been a mere horse-holder about the theaters of the day. And what is further proof of this contention—that the young poet was busy at some other pursuit than a mere hitching-post—is Bue Baconian," will admit that this 5. "That Shakespeare wrote his



"Plutareff's Lives," from which Shake-speare derived many rich dramatic ar-

Curiously enough, Field's shop was located in Blackfriars where also were the players who, when they appeared at aided Baconian zealot.

All of these absurdities have been Stratford, must have called at the poet's grist to be ground up in the mills of the greedy Baconians. The pettifogging Greenwood was the first to see, that to acknowledge that Richard Field and William Shakespeare's in the Globe

William Shakespeare were friends, the Theater E.H.SOTHERN REPLIES TO "TRUE BLUE BACONIAN"

Actor Who Believes Shakespeare Wrote "Shakespeare" Advances More Arguments in Answer to One Who Credits Francis Bacon.

SAN FRANCISCO, Cal., Jan. 30.—(To passage serves to identify Shakespeare, the Editor.)—My attention has the player, as being Shakespeare, the just been called to a letter in | poet. The Oregonian, in which your correspondent, "True Blue Baconian," propounds a number of questions to me in re the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy. The Oregonian, in which your correspondent, "True Blue Baconian," prore the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy. "True Blue Baconian" may rest his soul in peace in one particular-I shall speare were school-fellows, and that with discourtesy. The when Richard's father died, William's worst that need be said of him is what father was his executor, argues Green-wood absurd when he says that there kind: "Some men are born color blind." 'absolutely nothing to show that and cannot distinguish tints; those and had any acquaintance with or must be born color blind that cannot distinguish Bacon from Shakespeare." I shall reply to the various questions

2. "Is it not a fact that Shakespeare was unknown to the people of his own time except as a player-not as a poet?"

No. Shakespeare was known not only as a player, but as a poet. Proof positive of this fact is found in a play called "The Pilgrimage to and positive of this fact is found in a play called "The Pilgrimage to and Return From Pernassus," printed in 1696—10 years before Shakespeare died. In this play there is introduced Kempe and Burbage, two of Shakespeare's players. The following dialogue is put into their mouths:

"Purpage..." little teaching will man a second of the second

"Burbage-A little teaching will mend their faults, and it may be, besides, they will be able to pen a part."
"Kempe—Few of the university pen plays well; they smell too much of that writer, Ovid, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, aye, and Ben Jonson, too. Oh.

Statement Declared False. This statement is entirely untrue. | From 1564 to the time of Shakespeare's death, in 1616, there were over 700 printers and publishers in the city of London, all turning out books and pamphlets. Books at that time were relatively cheap and England flooded with them. This question might well be called an "aberation from the path of accuracy." accuracy." Our friend is at least years out of the way in his cal-

4. "What significance do you give to the fact that Shakespeare was not "What significance do you give to mentioned in any biography of his I give no significance to this fact,

and for the reason that there were no biographies written during Shakespeare's time in which he could be mentioned.

The first biographical collection in English was Fuller's "Worthies of England." This book was begun in 1643 and issued in 1662, and in it Shakespeare is given prominent mention. The data may be accepted as being authentic and, for the reason, that Fuller was able to converse with at least two actors who had been members of Shakespeare's company; with Sir William Davenant, who had known Sir William Davenant, who had known the poet as a child, and, with Thomas Heywood, a contemporary dramatist. But this does not mean that Shake-speare was not mentioned during his time. I would suggest that our friend, the "True-Blue Baconian," should in-spect Hughes' "The Praise of Shake-speare." He will then, hereafter, be

saved from asking, at least, one foolish question less.

5. "Is it possible that a butcher's son of 24 could have written the sonnets attributed to Shakespeare?"
Not only possible, but very likely. Cardinal Wolsey was a butcher's son, so also Michael Drayton. Ben Jonson worked. son worked as a bricklayer and Mar-lowe, a shoemaker. Keats, was an apothecary's boy and Francis Thompson a street-crossing sweeper in Lon-

saved from asking, at least, one foolish

don. "Shakespeare gave his second Oh, best bed to his wife—can you 'marry low! this to his verse?"

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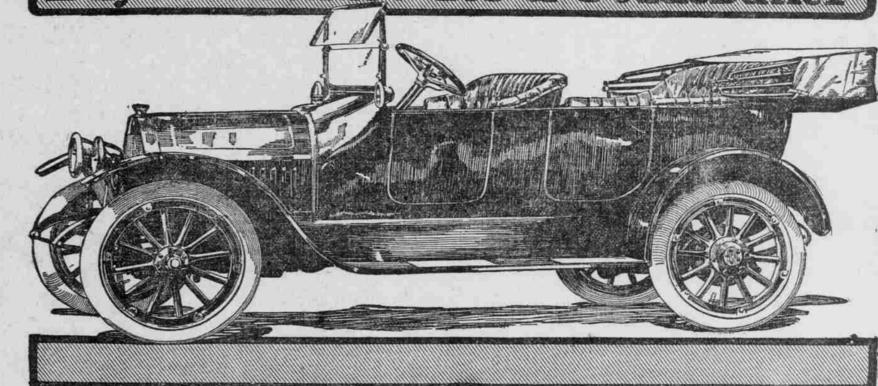
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sort, for it was, strangely, a habit of the time, If Shakespeare is to be branded as illiterate on this account, what about the other great men of his time? Markeyers and attempted to make it appear that he doubted Shakespeare was the surface of what about the other great men of his time? Marlowe's name occurs in 10 different spellings; Gascoigne's in 19; Percy's in 27, and Jonson's in various forms. Sir Walter Raleigh spelled his name Rauley, Rauleigh, Raleghe and name Rauley, Rauleigh, Raleghe and Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney and Ed-

mond Spenser were guilty of the same crime of illiteracy.

8. "Would Francis Bacon, as Lord Chancellor of England, be likely to put his name to a stage play?"

Quite true; only Bacon did not become Lord Chancellor until two years after Shakespeare was dead. Bacon, however, was sent into retirement in 1621, having been found guilty of treason. Then was the time for him to have acknowledged the authorship of the plays. He died 10 years after Shakespeare, and never a whisper or a suggestion that he had anything to do with the sonnets—Lucrece—or the plays.

plays.

9. "It is not likely that Ben Jonson was bribed into silence?" It is the most unlikely thing in the Nothing on earth could ever keep Ben Jonson quiet.

10. "If Ralph Waldo Emerson was a Baconian, do you think it fair to call us idiots?"

name in several ways—fourteen in fact ners, to call anybody an idiot. But the point is that Ralph Waldo Emerson Shakespeare?"

It does not indicate anything of the was not a Baconian, Some dishonest our "True-Blue Baconian" is here

11. style the same?" mond Spenser were guilty of the same It positively is not. Shakespeare often mixes his metaphor and crowds his illusions in a way that Bacon never did. Shakespeare never wrote in the Bacon almost first person. agine that Shakespeare was the author of the following, to be found in the writings of Bacon;

"Witches cannot hurt kings."
"The rainbow touching anything causes a sweet smell." "Eggs laid in the full of the moon Bacon."

Bacon." "Bracelets made from snakes are good for curing cramps."
"The skin of the wolf might cure the

"True-Blue" Held in Error Baconian, do you think it fair to 12. "Is it not a fact that all the all us idiots?"

I do not think it fair, or good man-been of the opinion that he was the

woefully at fault. It is generally ac-knowledged that James Spedding knew more of Bacon and his works than any

man who ever lived. Spedding was challenged by Judge Holmes to reply to his book, "The Authorship of Shakespeare." In this book Judge Holmes undertakes to demonstrate that William Shakespeare did not, and that "Is not Bacon and Shakespeare's Francis Bacon did, write the pluthe same?"

Spedding made the following reply: "I have read your book on the authorship of Shakespeare faithfully to the end. I must declare myself not only unconvinced, but undisturbed. undisturbed. did. It is evident that our friend, the the author of these dramas is like "True-Blue Baconian," has not read asking me to believe that Lord Francis Bacon's works. Can he im-Asking me to believe that Bacon was there were any reason for supposing that somebody else was the real au-thor, I think I am in a position to say that, whoever it was, it was not

I trust that I have replied to True-Blue Baconian in a manner that will not be a jar to his gentler feelings. I trust that I have convinced him of colic, because the wolf has a good di- his errors and that hereafter, we may count upon him as one of our enthusicount upon man asite Shakespeareans. E. H. SOTHERN.

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