

SAINT GERMAIN A SECRET HISTORY

APPENDIX E ABOUT THOSE CIPHERS

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the highest of high tech was cipher writing. As in today's world, governments had to be able to receive reports and send instructions to their agents in foreign lands safely and without the risk of interception. Some of the greatest minds of the time devoted themselves to devising codes that would accomplish the task. Among them was Francis Bacon.

Francis wrote briefly about ciphers in his 1605 *Advancement of Learning*:

For ciphers, they are commonly in letters or alphabets, but may be in words. The kinds of ciphers (besides the simple ciphers, with changes, and intermixtures of nulls and non-significants) are many, according to the nature or rule of the infolding, wheel-ciphers, key-ciphers, doubles, &c. But the virtues of them, whereby they are to be preferred, are three; that they be not laborious to write and read; that they be impossible to decipher; and, in some cases, that they be without suspicion.¹

Francis had been using the Bi-literal Cipher for over twenty-five years at the time *Advancement* was published. In the late 1800s Elizabeth Gallup found the earliest examples of this cipher in *The Shepherd's Calendar*, a book of poems published anonymously in 1579 and attributed to Edmund Spenser after his death. In all those twenty-five years of Francis embedding coded messages in various published works, no one had discovered the cipher. Clearly it met one of Francis's criteria, that the document containing the coded writing should be without suspicion of the existence of the hidden message.

It would not have been safe for the secrets hidden in the ciphers to be revealed in 1605, when *The Advancement of Learning* was published. But eighteen years later, in 1623, circumstances had changed. The cipher had still not been discovered, but many of the people involved in the secret history had died and Francis's succession to the throne was no longer an issue. It seems that he felt safe in giving some further clues.

In 1623 two events took place. Francis translated *The Advancement of Learning* into Latin so that it could be read by people all over Europe, and he took the opportunity to significantly expand it—"a translation, but enlarged almost to a new work."² In this new version, *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, he gave complete instructions for the operation of the Bi-literal Cipher. It was in 1623 that the plays of Shakespeare were published in the First Folio, providing additional material to be decoded.

Mrs. Gallup Discovers and Decodes the Bi-literal Cipher

In the introduction to the book of her discoveries, Elizabeth Gallup describes how she found the Bi-literal Cipher in the works of Francis Bacon:

This Bi-literal Cipher is found in the Italic letters that appear in such unusual and unexplained prodigality in the original editions of Bacon's works. Students of these old editions have been impressed with the extraordinary number of words and passages, often non-important, printed in italics, where no known rule of construction would require their use. There has been no reasonable explanation of this until now it is found that they were so used for the purposes of this Cipher. These letters are seen to be in two forms—two fonts of type—with marked differences. In the Capitals these are easily discerned, but the distinguishing features in the small letters, from age of the books, blots and poor printing, have been more difficult to

classify, and close examination and study have been required to separate and sketch out the variations, and educate the eye to distinguish them....

I became convinced that the very full explanation found in *De Augmentis*, of the bi-literal method of cipher writing, was something more than a mere treatise on the subject. I applied the rules given to the peculiarly Italicized words and “letters in two forms,” as they appear in the photographic Facsimile of the original 1623, Folio edition, of the Shakespeare plays.... Original editions of Bacon’s known works were then procured, as well as those of other authors named in these, and claimed by Bacon as his own....

From the disclosures found in all these, it is evident that Bacon expected this Bi-literal Cipher would be the first to be discovered, and that it would lead to the discovery of his principal, or Word-Cipher, which it fully explains, and to which is intrusted the larger subjects he desired to have preserved. This order has been reversed, in fact, and the earlier discovery of the Word-Cipher, by Dr. Owen, becomes a more remarkable achievement, being entirely evolved without the aids which Bacon had prepared in this [the Biliteral Cipher], for its elucidation.³

Bacon Reveals the Cipher Workings

The following is a description of the Bi-literal Cipher from an English translation of *De Augmentis*, with the illustrations from the original Latin edition. After an introduction to ciphers similar to the one in the *Advancement*, the text continues:⁴

We will annex another invention, which, in truth, we devised in our youth, when we were at Paris: and is a thing that yet seemeth to us not worthy to be lost. It containeth the highest

degree of cipher, which is to signify *omnia per omnia*,* yet so as the writing infolding, may bear a quintuple proportion to the writing infolded; no other condition or restriction whatsoever is required. It shall be performed thus: First let all the letters of the alphabet, by transposition, be resolved into two letters only; for the transposition of two letters by five placings will be sufficient for 32.[†] Differences, much more for 24, which is the number of the alphabet. The example of such an alphabet is on this wise.

A *B* *C* *D* *E* *F*
Aaaaa .aaaab .aacba .aaabb .aabaa .aabab .
G *H* *I* *K* *L* *M*
aabba .aabbb .abaaa .abaab .ababa .ababb .
N *O* *P* *Q* *R* *S*
abbba .abbab .abbba .abbbb .baaaa .baaab .
T *V* *W* *X* *Y* *Z*
baaba .baabb .babaa .babab .babba .babbb

An example of a bi-literary alphabet. Each letter of the alphabet is signified by a five-letter group made up of a unique combination of the letters *a* and *b*. The dots separate the different 5-letter groups.

* Latin, lit. "everything by means of everything": a reference to the fact that any cipher message may be hidden within any outer message.

† Five positions, each of which has two possible options, gives a total of $2^5 = 32$ different possibilities, which is sufficient for the letters of the alphabet. (At that time, the alphabet had 24 letters, the modern *i* and *j* using the same letter, and *u* and *v* using the same letter.) This coding system is similar in principle to binary coding that is used in modern computing systems, which generally use eight positions (eight bits), giving $2^8 = 256$ different possibilities. The most common encoding system is known as ASCII. The 256 different codes are sufficient for upper and lower case letters of the alphabet, numbers, punctuation, accented characters and other symbols. Some protocols for communication between computers have used seven bits, enough for 128 different characters. Languages such as Japanese and Chinese are encoded using sixteen-bit codes, which give $2^{16} = 65,536$ possible characters.

Neither is it a small matter these cypher-characters have, and may perform: For by this art a way is opened, whereby a man may express and signify the intentions of his mind, at any distance of place, by objects which may be presented to the eye, and accommodated to the ear: provided those objects be capable of a twofold difference only; as by bells, by trumpets, by lights and torches, by the report of muskets, and any instruments of like nature.[‡] But to pursue our enterprise, when you address yourself to write, resolve your inward-infolded letter into this Bi-literary alphabet. Say the interior letter be

Fuge.

Example of Solution.

F *V.* *G.* *E.*
Aabab. baabb. aabba. aabaa.

Together with this, you must have ready at hand a *Biformed Alphabet*, which may represent all the letters of the common alphabet, as well capital letters as the smaller characters, in a double form, as may fit every mans occasion.

An example of a bi-formed alphabet. Each letter of the alphabet may be written or printed in one of two styles, shown here as “a” and “b.” The differences are obvious in the capitals and some of the lowercase letters. In a few cases, the variants are more difficult to distinguish, such as the lowercase *a* and *m*. In order to make the principle more obvious, the differences between the two alphabets are exaggerated in this example. A practical application would have two alphabets that

‡ This binary encoding system, invented by Francis Bacon, is the principle that was used by Samuel Morse in his code for telegraphy. Morse code is usually described as using dots and dashes. These could be transmitted as long and short sounds (using radio waves), electrical signals (telegraph), flashes of light (still used by navies for ship-to-ship communication) and other similar methods.

were more closely matched in order not to arouse the suspicions of a casual reader.

a. b.a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b.
A A a.a. B B b.b. C C c.c D D d.d.
a. b.a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b.
E E e.e. F F f.f. G G g.g H H h.h.
a. b.a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b.
I I i.i. K K k.k. L L l.l. M M m.m.
a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a.
N N n.n. O O o.o. P P p.p. Q Q q.q. R
b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a.b.
R r.r. S S s.s. T T t.t. V V v.v. u. u.
a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a. b. a.b. a.b. a.b.
V V w.w. X X x.x. Y Y y.y. Z Z z.z.

Now to the interior letter, which is biliterate, you shall fit a biformed exterior letter, which shall answer the other, letter for letter, and afterwards set it down. Let the exterior example be,

Manere te volo, donec venero.
 An example of accommodation.

a^F b^a a^b b^b a^a b^b a^a b^b a^a b^b a^a b^b a^a b^b a^a
Manere te volo donec venero

Short sample of the Bi-literal Cipher. The lower line shows the exterior text which is used to conceal the interior, coded message. Each letter of the exterior

text is compared with the two letter forms in the chart of the bi-formed alphabet. For example, the *M* in this text matches the “a” style *M* in the bi-formed alphabet. Therefore “a” is written above that letter. The next letter in the exterior text matches the “a” style (more rounded) *a* in the bi-formed alphabet, so “a” is written above it, and so on for each letter of the exterior text. The “a”s and “b”s are then divided into groups of five. (These divisions are indicated by the dots between the groups in the above example.) Each group of five decodes to a single letter using the bi-literary alphabet. For example, the first group of five is “aabab,” which corresponds to *F*.

We have annexed likewise a more ample example of the cipher of writing *omnia per omnia*: an interior letter, which to express, we have made choice of a Spartan letter sent once in a Scytale or round cyphered staff.

All is lost. Mindarus is killed. The soldiers want food. We can neither get hence nor stay longer here.

*Perdita Res. Mindarus cecidit Milites esu-
riunt. Neque hinc nos extricare, neque
hic diutius manere possumus.*

An exterior letter, taken out of the first epistle of Cicero, wherein a Spartan letter is involved [encoded].

*Ego omni officio, ac potius pietate erga te;
 ceteris satisfacio omnibus: Mihi ipse nun-
 quam satisfacio. Tanta est enim magni-
 tudo tuorum erga me meritorum, ut quoni-
 am tu, nisi perfectare, de me non conquies-
 ti; ego, quia non idem in tua causa efficio,
 vitam mihi esse acerbam putem. In cau-
 sa haec sunt. Ammonius Regis Legatus
 aperte pecuniâ nos oppugnat. Res agitur,
 per eosdem creditores per quos, cum tu ade-
 ras, agebatur. Regis causâ, si qui sunt,
 qui velint, qui parati sunt omnes ad Pompe-
 ium rem deferri volunt. Senatus Reli-
 gionis calumniam, non religionem, sed ma-
 levolentiam, et illius Regiae largitionis
 invidia comprobat &c.*

Example of coded message using Bi-literal Cipher. The opening *E* is "a" style, the following *g* is "b" style, the two following *o*'s are "b" style, and the following *m* is "a" style. The first five letters thus decode to "abbba," the sequence for *P*, the first character of the Spartan letter shown on the previous page. The remaining text may be decoded in the same way to give the complete text of the Spartan letter on the previous page: *Perditae res. Mindarus cecidit*, etc.

Bacon Reveals the Word Cipher

As Gallup deciphered the messages hidden in the Bi-literal Cipher, she found instructions for other codes that the works also contained. (It seems that Francis openly published the instructions for only the

Bilateral Cipher. For once this was discovered, it would provide the key to unlock all the others.) Gallup deciphered the following text from Bacon's *Novum Organum*:

We have sometime found our other inventions of some worth, in our work, and we have spent occasional idle minutes making such masks serve instead of the two ciphers so much used [the Bi-Literal Cipher and the Word Cipher], for of so many good methods of speaking to the readers of our works, we must quite naturally have a preference, and we own that the Word-Cipher seemeth to us superior to all others we have invented. We have, however, devised six [ciphers] which we have used in a few of our books. These are the Bi-literal; Word; Capital Letter; Time, or as more oft called Clock; Symbol; and Anagrammatic....

Next the great cipher spoken of so frequently [the Word Cipher]—termed the most important invention, since 'tis of far greater scope—shall here be again explained. More rules and instructions are necessary than were needed in any of the others, but in the first work, only such as will be readily seen need be sought. These now follow:

Keys are used to point out the portions to be used in this work. These keys are words employed in a natural and common way, but are marked by capitals, the parentheses, or by frequent and unnecessary iteration; yet all these [key words] are given in the other ciphers, also making the decipherer's part less difficult.[§]

Next sort carefully all the matter thus obtained and place it in boxes and drawers for timely use. There will, with a little observation, be discerned words which are repeatedly used in

[§] In his deciphered passages, Bacon gives examples of key words, including Friendship, Fortune, Honour, Strife, Fortitude, Truth and Art. See Gallup's *Bi-literal Cypher*. These examples are taken from part II, pages 170–71.

the same connection. These must be noted specially since they form our series of combining or joining words, which like the marks the builder putteth on the prepared blocks of stone showing the place of each in the finished building, point out with unmistakable distinctness its relation to all other parts....

As while writing these interior works, these keys and joining words did deter the advancement [i.e., made their writing more difficult], it shall work a contrary effect on this part of the design, and the part of our ready decipherer is made easy for his hand; but his sight shall accordingly need to be as the sight of the keen-eyed eagle, if he would hunt this out, losing nothing.⁵

The text then continues with further explanation of the operation of the cipher, giving the example of the words used to distinguish the story of Bacon's love for Marguerite. These words that act like a flag or marker include

. . . such familiar and common terms as the mind and every faculty or power, memory, reason, and so forth, also the heart with its affections—as we term the emotions or passions slightly understood—the spirit and soul. These accompanying a key-word show that this portion belongs to the part of my history I have mentioned in this way....

Of my devices nothing excels that of the employment of words in common use to direct our decipherer. Tables should contain all such, because no man's memory can long retain such a number of words.⁶

The text then gives further instructions for the use of the Word Cipher and explains that the instructions have been given in a number of different outer works so that if one set is not found, this will not impede the process of deciphering.

How does the Word Cipher work in practice? Dr. Owen provides an explanation of his work at the beginning of the second volume of *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story*. A number of other accounts have also been written by those who studied Owen's decipherings and learned to work the cipher themselves. The following account, written by P. J. Sherman, was published in *Baconiana*, volume IV, number 14, 1896. It is printed here in its entirety because of the insight it provides into the operation of the cipher and the assistance it would give to anyone seeking to personally experiment with it. The reader will note some material overlaps portions discussed by Gallup.

DR. OWEN'S CIPHER

The following are extracts from a long article lately published in the Detroit *Tribune*, and written by an eye-witness and experimenter upon Dr. Owen's Cipher System. Since the particulars here reprinted coincide with other reports contributed by several independent witnesses, and since the description is considered to be the most lucid and satisfactory which has yet appeared, we consider it only just to draw attention to it. An article on the subject specially written for this Magazine by another eye-witness and decipherer has, unfortunately, been delayed, and cannot reach us in time for publication in April. We hope to insert it in the June number [of *Baconiana*]:—

THE MYSTERY OF THE BACON CIPHER.—

DR. O. W. OWEN'S DISCOVERY INVESTIGATED.

“And now that the entrance to the secret has been found out,
The world will wonder how it could miss it so long.”—BACON

What is a cipher?

It is an internal story, told by external words, letters, marks or hieroglyphics.

“Sir Francis Bacon’s Cipher Story, as Discovered by Dr. Orville W. Owen,” is deciphered by words, and is one of the most remarkable literary productions of the world. So astounding, indeed, is it that it is not strange that those who have had neither desire nor opportunity to investigate the matter thoughtfully, should have condemned it offhand. Yet, secret modes of communication have been in use from earliest times, Ciphers are used by governments for sending secret dispatches, and in times of war especially, have proven of incalculable value. It is, in fact, if the reader will stop and consider, the most natural and yet the safest manner in which these histories could have been concealed, and thus transmitted to coming generations.

The Bacon cipher, as discovered by Dr. Owen, consists, I find, of a series of (1) guide words. Around these guide words are clustered (2) key words, and these key words again have (3) concordant words, both single and double. The (4) sentences containing the guides, key words, and concordants are (5) collected together, by (6) system, when it is found that the new story unrolls itself with hardly a hitch. Nothing needs to be added or taken therefrom. It is all necessary to the complete narrative.

However, the most satisfying knowledge is that obtained by working out the results one’s self, and, having conquered the cipher and made actual applications of it, I will endeavour to relate how it is done, in as concise and comprehensive a manner as possible. But first let us look a little into what this discovery signifies.

WHAT THE CIPHER REVEALS.

The cipher reveals the fact that all the works of William Shakespeare, Robert Greene, George Peel, Christopher Marlowe’s stage plays, the “Fairy Queen,” “Shepherd’s Calendar”; and all the works of

Edmund Spenser; the “Anatomy of Melancholy” of Burton; Bacon’s “History of Henry VII,” the “Natural History,” the “Interpretation of Nature,” the “Great Instauration,” the “Advancement of Learning,” the “De Augmentis,” “Essays,” and all his other works were actually written by Sir Francis Bacon only, he using the other names as masks to conceal his own identity.

HOW TO WORK THE CIPHER.

The first time I talked with Dr. Owen concerning the cipher he gave me a few rapid instructions regarding the “wheel,” and then placed in my hands the first published volume which was worked out by the cipher, telling me to read carefully the “Letter to the Decipherer,” after which I might come to the office and make application of the directions therein given, which suggestion I acted upon as before stated. Upon page 3 [of the first volume of *Sir Francis Bacon’s Cipher Story*] I found the following:—

“Take your knife and cut all our books asunder,
And set the leaves on a great firm wheel
Which rolls and rolls, and turning the
Fickle rolling wheel, throw your eyes
Upon FORTUNE, that goddess blind, that stands upon
A spherical stone, that turning and incessant rolls
In restless variation.
Mark her the prime mover:
She is our first guide.”

This advice has been literally acted upon. An immense wheel has been constructed, consisting of two reels, on which is rolled a great stretch of cloth, 1,000 feet long and over two feet wide. The arrangement is so simple that by turning the reel in one direction for a time the entire 1,000 feet of canvas come under the eye, and by

reversing the motion all passes back again in the other direction. Upon this stretch of cloth are pasted the printed pages of all the works of all the supposed authors above mentioned. A more simple or convenient arrangement for examining a great number of pages in a short time could not be devised.

THE KEY WORDS.

The “Letter to the Decipherer” now goes on to add to “the first great guide”—Fortune—four others, Nature, Honour, Reputation, and Pan, the god of nature. The next act of Dr. Owen after pasting all the works upon the wheel was to carefully scan them, every word, and with coloured pencils to mark these guide words every time they occurred, which of itself was no small task, the first four words being repeated 10,641 times by actual count.

Let it now be borne in mind that these five words are not keys to the hidden stories, but guides whereby to find the key words. And around every guide clusters these keys. They are repeated over and over, so plainly and definitely that the earnest seeker cannot fail to find them. The next thing done is to pencil around every sentence containing the guide word being used, thus enclosing the keys as well, and these sentences are now read from the wheel to an operator, who typewrites them upon sheets of paper. At the head of every page thus written is placed the key word, or words, of the sentences, thus avoiding all confusion when the papers come to be sorted.

I find to be absolutely true the instructions given in the “Letter to the Decipherer” on page 8 of the first volume:—

“And, sir, though far and wide the secret thread
Of these rules seem scattered,
This distribution ceases if you
To one place carry all the words of your cue.
Then may you see the great flood

Or confluence of materials carries along with it
The key of every story for the instruction
Of the decipherer.”

The sorting of the papers means placing in piles by themselves all pages containing the same key words, thus bringing to one place all the words of the cue, or all that relates to the story to be deciphered from these especial sentences or paragraphs:—

“And sifting it as faithful secretaries and clerks
In the courts of kings, set to work with diligence and
Judgment, and sort into different boxes, connaturals,
Concerning matter of state, and when he has
Attentively sorted it, from the beginning to the end,
And united and collected the dispersed and distributed
Matter, which is mingled up and down in combination,
It will be easy to make a translation of it.”

CONCORDANT WORDS.

Dr. Owen worked and delved for nearly eight years before he discovered how to decipher the hidden stories. But for me, under his instructions, the task was a comparatively easy one. It is also a fascinating, though complicated one, for I soon found that not by key words alone could the stories be deciphered, but that about the keys again cluster concordant words, designed to help the searcher on his way, and leading him on and on into almost illimitable mazes of connecting sentences, which, though collected from perhaps scores of places in half-a-dozen different works, “Scattered wider than the sky or earth,” still, by this rule, bringing out hidden histories and astounding revelations.

I will give an example of these concordant words. Let us suppose that the key words are “love” and “king.” We must not look for “love”

and “king” only, by which to be guided, but for all synonymous words. For “love’s” synonyms we find “devotion,” “adore,” “adoration,” etc. For “king” we follow such words relating to royalty as “majesty,” “highness,” “kingdom,” “court,” etc. As long as sentences containing a repetition of these words are found the student may safely continue to walk along the outlined path, gathering the story as he goes. If, however, a paragraph contains the keys, and yet refuses to “make sense,” turn it how you may—in fact, seems superfluous—it should be put aside for the time being, and by-and-bye a gap will be found into which it fits with astonishing exactness.

WHEN THERE ARE COMPLICATIONS.

Occasionally there comes a disconnection in the story. Something is missing; it does not read smoothly. In taking the matter from the wheel a passage has been overlooked, or in sorting the papers one has been placed in the wrong box.

Now comes a hunt. A whole day has been given to the finding of a single line or paragraph. But it is there somewhere, and simply must be found. Then is the time when, as Dr. Owen expresses it, “my hair stands up on end,” and the brain fairly reels with the immensity of complications which might arise from one small oversight.

Sometimes passages intrude themselves which do not contain the key being used, and which actually have no bearing on the story in progress. Simply leave these over, reserving them for future use. They belong to some other story, and will fall into place in good time. Nothing will be lost. Again a sentence reads in a vague or unnatural manner. In this case the decipherer is plainly instructed to transpose it, when the true meaning is revealed at once:—

“Therefore let your own discretion be your tutor,
And suit the action to the word, and the word to the action,
With this especial observance that you match

Conjugates, parallels and relatives by placing
Instances which are related, one to another,
By themselves; and all concordances
Which have a correspondence and analogy
With each other should be commingled with the
connaturals.”

The above is from *Hamlet, Novum Organum, Aphorisms*, and *Advancement of Learning*. For the first time it is brought together in the “Letter to the Decipherer,” on page 8. This is a good example of the way the sentences are scattered. On page 21 are also found these lines:—

“Some of the story
Has more feet than the verses would bear,
And you must exercise your own judgment;
And give it smoothness when it lamely halts.”

PROPER NAMES

Reference is made to compound words, and the question is asked: “What mean you, sir, by compound words?” And the answer is given:—

“No one can be so dull as to believe
That we would set the whole name of any man
Open among the subject matter.
That certainly would be childish in the highest degree.
On the contrary, though, the names are set
So frequent, you must understand the device,
(And our device, I think, will outstrip all praise)
Before you can discover how we overcome the difficulty
We use the simple and safe plan of consort.
The similarity of word with word
Contributes to save the whole from discovery.
However, we will show you how, for the speedy

And perfect attaining of names, to fit the words.
And if you know how one is obtained,
You know how all are coupled.
So please take our on-hers, and we'll strive
To let you under-stand the method that you must employ
In unravelling and unlocking the double words.”

I quote an example of a name hidden on page 142 of the 1623 edition of Shakespeare. It is a part of *Love's Labour Lost*, where the company of counterfeit actors play before the queen. Read the passage of wit between them and the spectators, see how one of the auditors compounded the name of one of the actors:—

“Therefore, as he is an asse, let him go;
And so adieu, sweet Jude. Nay, why dost thou stay?’
‘For the latter end of his name.’
‘For the asse to the Jude; give it him, Jud-as away.’”

PARALLEL SENTENCES.

Here may be given an illustration of parallel sentences taken from seemingly widely different sources, yet mingling like the fragrance of the very flowers described:—

“O’er-embellished with knaps and flowers of all kinds
Cut in pure gold, pomegranets, lavender, mint, savory,
Marjoram, marigold, gillivors, maidenheads, carnations,
Lilies (the flower-d-luce being one), columbines, pinks,
Honeysuckles, roses, sweet satirium, poppies, wild thyme,
Bean flowers, daisies, anemones, tulips, hyacinth-orientals,
Perrywinkles, bullices and virgin branches of the almond,
etc.”

This description of flowers and trees covers nearly all of page 39 of the “Letter to the Decipherer.” Anyone who will look upon page 292,

act IV, scene 4, *Winter's Tale*, and the "Essay on Gardens," by Bacon, will at once see where all the flowers mentioned were taken from. In other words, the parallels, concordances and similar matter.

FINDING THE COMMENCEMENT OF A HIDDEN STORY.

"How does the decipherer know where a story begins?"

This is as plain as anything can be. Having collected the material for the story, by means of the guides and keys, I find that somewhere among the passages the eye is startled with words like these: "Begin here," "We will commence here," "We will now commence," etc. Could anything be more definite? A good example of this is found in Shakespeare's *Life and Death of King John*, act I, scene 1:—

"My Dear Sir:

"Thus leaning on my elbow I begin the letter," etc.

The question of knowing what the next story will be, when one is completed, seems an important one, but I find that Bacon has inserted the title of the one to follow, very plainly, at or near the close of each story. At the close of the "Letter to the Decipherer," he tells in plain English, "The next letter is the author's 'Epistle Dedicatory.'" At the close of the "Epistle" I find:—

"The next letter that followeth is the 'Description
Of the Queen, the General Curse, and the Story of Our
Life,'

Which, the instant you begin, will bring forth secret
And original narratives woven into a continuous history."

PICKING OUT THE KEYS.

Following this naturally comes the question, "How find the keys for stories?" These, too, are at the close of each story, being one or more words of significance, strong enough to attract attention. As soon as the

passages containing the key or keys are collected, and the student begins work, it is almost startling to discover the numerous keys that cluster around the one or two that lead, and concordant words sometimes almost countless.

* * * * *

“We have enclosed our name without regard to safety, in the different texts,” says Bacon in his letter to the decipherer, “in such capital letters that, as the prophet saith, ‘He that runneth by may read.’ And if you have digested a sufficient number of our books no doubt the first point you found was our name.” This astonishing statement is literally true. Any one who will search the 1623 edition of Shakespeare, and the other works mentioned, will find Bacon’s name appearing frequently, and in capital letters, as in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*, “I have a gammon of BACON,” or in Peele’s “Old Wife’s Tale,” “My grandmother was a gammon of BACON.” And yet Bacon often warns the decipherer concerning the danger attendant upon its discovery. He says:—

“For my good lord, in this secret way
We enfold a dangerous chronicle, and by starts
Unclasp a secret book to your quick conceiving,
And read you matter deep and dangerous.”
“Swear never to publish that we conceal under the names
Of others our own, till we are dead.”

Notwithstanding the intricacy of the cipher, Bacon alludes to the ease with which it may be worked if the rules are strictly followed. “You will not fail, if to the work you give time enough,” he says, “for it is translated so easy it is almost mechanical.” This is my experience, for the key-words to the hidden stories are

“Interspersed in sufficient quantities to allow
The correspondence to be revealed so clearly

That any purblind eye may find them out.
They are so clear, so shining, so naked, and so evident,
That they will, in the full course of their glory,
Glimmer through a blind man's eye."

Bacon does not assert that every man can plunge into the labyrinth and find his way safely out again unscathed. He even tells the would-be decipherer:—

"Yet you may not be
Capable of detecting the ciphers. Many a man
Promises to himself more than he can perform,
And it is impossible to discover the subtlety of the work
Unless he that works loves it."

AS TO CHANCE.

"Does every story continue through all of the words used?" was the question I asked. The answer was, "Yes, and no." That is, if the facts of the story or history were not complete until the whole number of books had been written, portions of it were concealed in all. But the narration of some events came to an end prior to the publication of Bacon's later works. Consequently it would be useless to search for more after all had been given. For example, if a person is dead his history is ended, and the world cannot consistently expect any more from him.

Upon page 28 the decipherer says to Bacon concerning the deciphered stories:—

"But may they not say it is chance that doth this?"

The answer is:—

"We thought of that; and if any man conceive
That it is done without system or common
Center, let him proceed to form a history,

And neglect the guides. He cannot go through with it
To its completion, for if a man runs the wrong way,
The more active and swift he is, the further will
He go astray; for the lame man that takes the right road
Outstrips the runner that takes the wrong.”

And so the cipher stories are worked out:—

“As many arrows loosed several ways come to one mark;
As many winding ways meet in one town;
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea;
As many straight lines close in a dial’s center,
Then so may a thousand ciphers, once afoot,
And in one purpose be all well borne.”

* * * * *

The ridiculous idea that the cipher stories are emanations from Dr. Owen’s own brain is not abroad in the land as much as it was a year ago. Too many conclusive proofs abound, one of the most convincing being the fact that the fifth volume of the Cipher series, containing the continuation of “Sir Francis Bacon’s Life at the Court of France,” has been deciphered entirely by Dr. Owen’s assistants, he having had nothing whatever to do with it, and yet it continues as smoothly as could be desired.

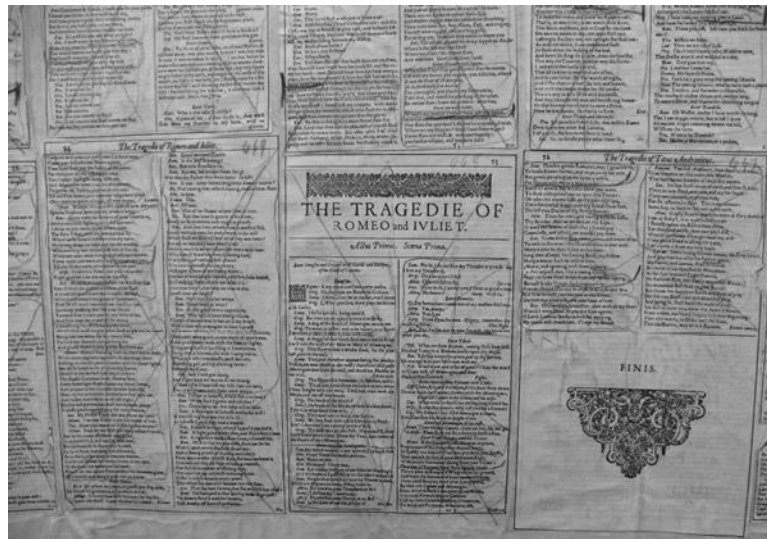
To me the continued patience and perseverance of Dr. Owen in this work is almost as wonderful as the discovery of the cipher.

“This work need not stop if I should stop,” said the doctor. “If I should die to-night, my assistants could go right on with the decipherings. If one of them should die, or for any other reason leave the work, I should have some one else learn it. Thus it would continue right on.”

The learning and applying of the Baconian cipher has thoroughly convinced me of its genuineness. The rules governing it are positive,

though flexible. The stories told are connected and concise, for the period in which they were written, and cannot be twisted into other than the designed conclusion. While no two decipherers might tell the story in exactly the same way, still there would be no conflict of facts. It is a true cipher.

P. J. SHERMAN.



Pages from the cipher wheel. These pages show notations in colored pencil made by Owen and his assistants as they worked on the cipher. (These pages include marks in red, yellow, purple, blue, magenta and black.) As passages and whole pages were examined for cipher text, they appear to have been marked to indicate progress and avoid duplication of effort.

Further Testimony on the Word Cipher

It is perhaps not surprising that Orville Owen's announcement of the word cipher was controversial. Its revelations literally rewrote the history of the Elizabethan era. Furthermore, Dr. Owen gave no detailed description of his methods in the first volume of his work. Many critics called him a fraud. A very few sought to weigh the evidence for

themselves. One who did was a Mr. J. B. Millett of Boston, who visited Dr. Owen's workshop in Detroit in February of 1893.

The following is excerpted from the account of his experiments with the cipher:

To test the accuracy of the method, the key-word relating to the "Story of the Spanish Armada" (afterwards published by Dr. Owen^{**}) was given to the writer [Mr. Millett], who was shown how to proceed. With pencil in hand he copied about one hundred lines from various parts of the wheel, following the key-words, and then put these disconnected sentences and parts of sentences together in such a way as to make an intelligible statement without adding a word. Having finished, he was about to read aloud the result, when Dr. Owen stopped him, and taking from a drawer a type-written manuscript (the existence of which the writer did not know), read it also aloud. The two copies corresponded almost exactly, and the differences proved to be slight errors in copying on the part of the writer. Other shorter tests were made, and the writer soon after left, reserving his opinion "until he had time to think it over," and had found opportunity to investigate independently as to whether some new law of rhetoric were not involved. The thing was, at all events, extremely puzzling; and, if a fraud, there were at least six persons living up to an ingenious and elaborate lie and committed to this attitude for some time to come....

Vol. 1 made it plain that one of two things was true: either Dr. Owen invented the matter contained in that book, and then proceeded to hunt for scattered sentences all through the Folio,

^{**} Millett's visit was after the first volume of Owen's work had been published in 1893. The cipher play *The Story of the Spanish Armada* commenced in volume II and concluded in volume III, which were both published the following year.

Bacon's acknowledged works, Spenser, Peele, Green, and Marlowe, laboriously fitting these sentences together so as to make continuous sense (which sense must also conform to the plot of the book he was inventing), or else he had invented a method which enabled him in some mechanical way to find these sentences and put them together. . . .

Notwithstanding the fact that Dr. Owen's results are in some degrees astounding and unconformable with history, there still remains no other escape from the above conclusions.

. . .

On the writer's third visit to Detroit (December, 1895), he was at once admitted to the workshop, and spent considerable hours there before Dr. Owen made his appearance. During that time he was permitted to see anything that he asked to see, all questions that he asked were answered freely, and explanations made. He satisfied himself from the testimony of the clerks, and the members of the publishing firm, as well as from the testimony of individuals in Detroit personally known to him (and familiar with Dr. Owen's movements) that for many months Dr. Owen had nothing whatever to do with the deciphering, which was going on in his office, but that this work was actually done by two and sometimes three of his assistants, one of whom had been with him from the beginning, and two others who had been taught later. From all this it follows that Dr. Owen's method is capable of being readily explained to others, and it does not require that they should be familiar, as Dr. Owen is, with Shakespeare's plays or Bacon's acknowledged works.

A part of the work upon which Dr. Owen's assistants were engaged at the time of the writer's last visit was the deciphering of the translation of the Iliad from the "wheel." The writer has

always been, from his university days, familiar with Homer, both in the original and translation, and it required but a few moments to find out that Dr. Owen's assistants were none of them in the least conversant with the Iliad. Upon examining a large pile containing about 2,000 sheets of large foolscap covered with extracts made from various works above mentioned, the writer became satisfied, much to his surprise, that these notes contained many passages from the Iliad, some obscure and not to be recognized by any one unfamiliar with the Iliad from beginning to end, unless that person had some guide like a key-word to go by. . . .

It will be remembered that the "Omnia per Omnia" cipher invented by Francis Bacon [the Bi-literal Cipher] was made up entirely of the use of two letters—"a" and "b." It was a very laborious task to write a long letter by this method, because five letters were used to indicate one letter of the alphabet.^{††} Dr. Owen's cipher, depending entirely upon keywords, or concordants and key-words growing out of them, is such a method, as can be readily conceived, Francis Bacon would naturally have invented as a sequel to the "Omnia per Omnia." It grows out of it.

The practicability of this method has been very thoroughly illustrated by the work of several amateurs in Detroit, who, in response to a prize offered by a Detroit newspaper, wrote a series of five stories in which was concealed a sixth, and this sixth story was to be found by the use of Dr. Owen's method. It was required of a successful competitor to write out the sixth

^{††} Another disadvantage of the Bi-literal Cipher is that when the type is reset using a single font in later printings, the cipher text is lost. With the Word Cipher, although the deciphering is made more difficult (since the seemingly random capitalization or italicizing that has been used to highlight key words may be "corrected" by later editors), the cipher text itself will not be lost.

story without any assistance, and a number were able to do so, thus demonstrating that without altering the sense, without changing the construction, or without hampering himself in any way apparent to the reader, the author of these five stories was able to conceal in them a sixth, readily deciphered after the method was known, but entirely different in construction and meaning. In this particular case the sixth, or hidden story, was a poem of some length.⁷

Ignatius Donnelly's Cipher

The third cipher that this book has drawn from is the one discovered by Ignatius Donnelly and described in his two volumes of *The Great Cryptogram* (1888). Francis Bacon left no instructions regarding this cipher (or at least none have been found so far), and we have only Donnelly's explanations of its operation.

He explains that it is a cipher of words and that the words are selected from the text according to certain complex arithmetic principles. Donnelly gives an example of the principle in the following paragraph, which is an outer text containing a cipher message:

For there can be no doubt whatever, that if it be examined closely, there is reason to believe that a cunningly adjusted and concealed cipher story, and one not of alphabetical signs, but of words, may be found hidden, not only in books, but letters of those ages, of which the very intricate key is lost. It may be revealed by some laborious student in the future, but for the present age all the great stories told therein, in cryptogram, are hopelessly buried.

The hidden message within this text is revealed by extracting every fifth word.

No; it is a cipher of words, not letters, which is revealed in The Great Cryptogram.

Donnelly's method is similar in that it extracts words from the text according to numerical calculations to reveal a hidden message. However, his arithmetical formulas are much more complex than simply taking every fifth word. He describes a complex process of deriving them from "root-numbers," which are then modified by other numbers to give a numeric sequence by which words may be picked out from the text.

Other researchers have not been able to duplicate Donnelly's work, perhaps because of the complexity of the system or because Donnelly did not fully explain it. For now, it remains one of the many mysteries surrounding Francis Bacon and his works.

Beyond the Cipher Story

There are other ciphers that people claim to have discovered in the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Some are derived from the initial letters of lines or phrases, some are interpretations of symbols in frontispieces and title pages, and some are substitution ciphers or anagrams. These ciphers, however, do not reveal a narrative but simply glyphs, hints at the hidden story of Francis Bacon.

All the other ciphers are not without their critics. Some seem unwilling to accept a story that differs from the orthodox view of history. Some think that those who pursue these ciphers are finding what they want to find, that the First Folio has become a kind of inkblot test into which people will read what they already believe to be there.

One thing seems clear, however—whatever shortcomings or errors there may have been in their methods, those who devoted years of their lives to the quest to uncover the ciphers were sincere in their desire to find the untold story of Francis Bacon. And isn't it the story that is really paramount?



He was free from malice... .

He was no revenger of injuries; which if he had minded, he had both opportunity and place high enough to have done it...

He was no defamer of any man to his prince....

I have been induced to think that if there were a beam of knowledge derived from God upon any man in these modern times, it were upon him.

William Rawley
Preface to *Sylva Sylvarum*

¹ *Advancement of Learning*, XVI:6. Project Gutenberg e-text, transcribed from the 1893 Cassell & Company edition.

² Bacon to James, n.d. [October 22, 1623], quoted in Jardine and Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune*, p. 493.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–3.

⁴ Gilbert Wats’s translation, 1640, of *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, reprinted in Gallup, *Bi-literal Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon*, p. 52. In this and other excerpts from Gallup’s work in this chapter, Elizabethan spellings and Gallup’s punctuation have been updated to match modern usage. Same-page footnotes are by the editors.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 118–19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁷ J. B. Millett, “Dr. Owen’s Cipher Method,” in *Baconiana*, vol. III, no. 9 (April 1895), pp. 94–95, 96–97.