

department was in reality that of education, and when ingenious jokers began to discover Bacon's *bona-fide* signature in "The Light of Asia," Gray's "Elegy," a Tibetan grammar, and even on the cover of a bill of fare in a German restaurant. Indeed, Bacon was everywhere, and there was an uncomfortable feeling that he might be found writ plainly even in one's most private documents. Such anachronisms, it is true, could scarcely be offset by the fact that Bacon, according to his own statement, took all knowledge for his province. It seemed then as though the death-blow to this fallacy had been administered—but only for a moment. Lovers of the under dog—and it is surprising how cheaply one can become the under dog—received romantic hurt from such trifling refutation as that just cited, and waited resolutely for another prophet. He has now arrived in the person of Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Bart, B.A., LL.B., etc., and from the title of his book, "Bacon is Shakespeare," to the end the reader is left in doubt concerning neither his message nor his truculence.

The old ground is covered, to the effect that contemporary evidence exists of Bacon's powers, both as poet and dramatist, and of Shakespeare's total ignorance of such matters. Like the rest of his cult, the author attempts the twofold task of writing Bacon up and Shakespeare down. As the spokesman of his country, he proclaims:

England is now declining any longer to dishonor and defame the greatest genius of all time by continuing to identify him with the mean, drunken, ignorant, and absolutely unlettered rustic of Stratford, who never in his life wrote so much as his own name, and in all probability was totally unable to read one single line of print.

It would be unnecessary to reckon with such extravagance if it were not certain that this book will be read widely. For the author professes to hobnob with leading Shakespearean scholars and shows what might be taken for impressive learning; it is clear, too, that he has a large Baconian library. We may glance at his crucial test. The well-known tribute to Shakespeare in the first folio, assigned to Ben Jonson, contains, if rightly manipulated, 287 letters. This is a magic number; be patient yet a little. In "Love's Labour's Lost" the clown, we had supposed, was merely talking big when he said "honorificabilitudinitatibus," especially as the

word had been used a century or so before. Not so; Bacon is breathing his heart-secret, for the letters may be arranged into the bad Latin and bad hexameter:

Hi lu/di,F|Baco/nis na/ti tui/ti orbi,
These plays F. Bacon's offspring are preserved for the world.

More is coming. The initial letters of the words and the terminals, if put into numerals corresponding to their positions in the alphabet, foot up to 136, which is the number of the page in the first folio upon which the whole word occurs! The similar numerical equivalent of all the letters in the word amounts to 287! Of course, the real test of this evidence is the still more startling thought that such a discovery should have been made exactly 287 years after the first folio appeared.

The growth of Baconian literature will, we fear, never cease until legitimate scholars are willing to take the matter seriously. It does little good to show up the true meaning of any cipher, because any one who is committed to the cipher habit can easily find new combinations when old ones are refuted. What is needed is a careful comparison of Bacon's ideas and even of his style with Shakespeare's, for Elizabethan prose was in large measure poetic. For one thing, is it quite possible that one whose conception of friendship was strictly utilitarian and who insisted that the greatest men in the world never fell in love could have treated those qualities even in a fiction with what surely looks like instinctive idealism? Or the question might be fought out on the issue of humor alone. If there could be found in Bacon's known works even one really good joke, not quoted—for he attempts to be funny at times, and surely has quite as much occasion for humor as Montaigne—his claim to the plays would be greatly helped.

But, after all, to meet the Baconian problem seriously, Shakespearean criticism itself must assume a different form. Despite all that has been written on Shakespeare, ideas concerning him are still hit or miss, and largely because scholarly attention has been focussed on the formal, mechanical side. When one may read the statement in authoritative books that Marlowe, for instance, might, if he had lived, have been a formidable rival of Shakespeare, it is clear that criticism has not pro-

gressed very far. Even at the outset, there was in Shakespeare's poems and plays alike, a quality which Marlowe never possessed—an imagination which insinuates itself into the manifold bearings of individual moments. The richly varied Richard II placed beside Marlowe's monotonous Edward II furnishes a point of departure for Shakespearean criticism which might well be used. Such a study, if sanely pursued, would serve to identify Shakespeare to such a degree, we believe, that even a Baconian here and there might give heed.

THE REIGN OF THE ELEMENTAL.

When Mr. Bryce, in his revision of the "American Commonwealth," comes to the chapter on "The Position of Women," he will find himself compelled to ponder the change that the years have wrought in the "fondness for sentiment, especially moral and domestic sentiment, which is often observed as characterizing American taste in literature." These words may have been true once, and may yet be true again, but can any constant reader of our contemporary literature uphold them as descriptive of its present phase? Is it sentiment that is displayed in the most conspicuous places on the book-stalls? Is it the gentle ripple of domestic felicity that is emblazoned in red ink on the covers of our most successful magazines? There may have been a time when we were threatened with the feminization of our culture, but that time, happily for any man who has red blood in his veins, is past. We are done with delicate touching of the outer layers of life. What we are all for now is the vital, the genuine, the wholesome, the unafraid. We want—and get—stories and articles about big-hearted men, men who have a tang, men who are always standing with one fist in the air in their hatred of sham, their devotion to justice, their scorn of a lie. We have gloriously emerged from the twilight zone of polite phrases and courteous dealing, and stand with a new bravery, trustful of no one, suspicious of everything that isn't as open as we insist every sewer ought to be, and ready to meet, "man-fashion," everybody and everything.

It was time, indeed, that the change came. We were rapidly treading the way of all nations that had lost their virility. We had lost the splendid daring of our ozone-breathing forefathers.

We had lost the taste for the pathological, if we had ever advanced far enough to acquire it. It was the uncrowned poet-laureate of England that first roused us to what we were missing in the real world of masculine men and masculine deeds. From him we caught a liking for the untamed, the crude, the savage. He taught us where alone we might find the unspoiled, the undegenerate. This prepared us for a clearer call of the wild, a return to the time when man was only a little lower than the animals. To-day, it would be a brute indeed that could outdo us in robustness of temper, in freedom from squeamishness, in absorption in the elemental. The primary virtues of truth and frankness are preached in every advertisement. The brotherhood of man is assiduously fostered by magazine-editors. The federation of the world for the conservation of the primitive graces is near.

But while Kipling and Jack London must be credited with a large share in the movement of humanity towards freshness and pungency, mere letters could not have brought the revolution full. It required a more direct method, a still less restrained style, a yet further remove from the softness and convention and hesitation that had followed in the wake of good-breeding, falsely so-called, to lift us to the plane where our hatreds should outweigh our loves, our denunciations exceed our approvals, our enthusiasms overpeer our appreciations, and our outspokenness blunt our discrimination. It was Thomas F. Lawson who, in the words of an admirer, was "cheerfully willing to let literature 'go hang' for braver things," and marked out the path to the purely elemental. He was the first of the present generation to do anything "man-fashion." Before his lurid advent, people in their benightedness did what they had to do in mere gentleman-fashion or woman-fashion or child-fashion—absurd cowardly temporizings, all of them. But red-blooded human beings and all animals conduct their relations "man-fashion," and we are on the right track at last.

We have mastered a new vocabulary, in which plain-speaking and hard-hitting, without cant and without adulteration, "strike vibrantly and aggressively the note of the new Americanism," which is intensely human and intensely

graphic. No person has anything to conceal from any other person. Nobody any longer lowers his voice, because tumult and shouting are provocative of larger apparent results, and, besides, low voices have "gone out." We have lifted the lid and smashed the glass that were keeping us from complete self-revelation to every passer-by.

We would not underrate the positive good in this stripping off of the clothes of civilization, but we do protest that civilization is more than a glove to be removed and turned wrong-side out at will. There is a time for gloves and a time to go without gloves, but with clothes it is vastly different. Outside of the halls of art and the hospitals, clothes have too long been considered a decent and necessary part, not simply of the body but of the whole man, to be left off now. It is a return to the elemental with a vengeance when personality can throw off the delicate draperies that its own sensitiveness has woven for it, and, with a bravery utterly beyond the reach of the physical person, count it a compliment to have it said of it that it is naked and that it is not ashamed.

WINSLOW HOMER.

The late Winslow Homer, one of the strongest marine painters of all time, was already a popular figure fifty years ago. As an illustrator of the civil war he was counted with the best, and he followed up that success with a series of admirable genre studies of negro life. A self-trained man, he was emphatically one of ourselves; his pictures needed no recondite eulogy or interpretation. He saw American themes with American eyes. That he was not contented with this easy and honorable path may be judged by the fact that in his forties he abandoned illustration, settled on a remote crag in Maine, and gave himself to the study of the life of fishermen and the moods of the northern sea.

After more than fifteen years of his seclusion, men began to suspect that a great painter had arisen. The hand of this veteran constantly gained power, his invention instinctively attained classic form. The last twenty years of his life were distinguished by a series of paintings in which was grasped, as never before in the history of art, the sheer energy of the ocean, its thunderous unforgetting onslaught against the raw

edges of a continent. He treated with force and sympathy many aspects of fisher life. The weather-beaten head of a sailor shouting through night and storm, "All's well!" is representative of this side of his genius. But he is most himself in those pictures which, without conventional human interest, catch the ravening waves gnawing at the rocks, dragging the seaweed into the crevices, or exploding in clamorous geysers. It was the awful energy of such a scene that attracted him. For him the spin-drift was not merely a filmy and decorative incident, but an acrid volley that cut the exposed face. Waves were not for him mere undulating forms, but active and potentially destructive masses of water, with formidable impetus and weight; and although his sense of bulk and texture was fine and accurate, he chose to emphasize in his latest work less the specific forms of rock and wave than the shock of their collision. It is this dynamic sense that gives him a peculiar eminence among the artists of his time, and this dæmonic quality in the work must condone some lack of the finest color sense and occasional crudity of execution. His subjects did not comport with that small preciousness of workmanship which was so highly prized by his contemporaries, and he willingly sacrificed epidermal charm to dynamic effect.

Yet charm and dexterity he possessed in a high degree. Only it is little in sight in his later and standard work. For many years, he made water-color studies of all conceivable subjects. There is an extraordinary series of fish leaping under the sting of the hook, there are sketches that contain the cerulean sea and sky of Bermuda and Nassau, and entrap the very sunlight of those blessed isles. Here, unlike his oil paintings, which are a bit labored, all is spontaneity and gusto. These minor sketches are miracles of execution. In them are balanced combinations of apparently incompatible colors. Work, in the sense of repeated effort, is absent; the effect depends upon some incredible simplification, both of the vision and of the creative act. Here such lightning executants as Besnard and Brangwyn are challenged in their old field. In fact, for real analogues to this joyous side of Winslow Homer's activity one must go to the wonder-working painters of Japan.