



SIR FRANCIS BACON,

The Greatest Literary Hog the world has ever seen!
(See article elsewhere on the "Bacon Cipher.")

STUDIES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

(With apologies to the Editor of the Literature Department of the Educational Journal.)

"LITTLE JACK HORNER."

THIS poem is of such exceeding merit, that wherever the English tongue is spoken, it is known and admired. Perhaps there is no poetical work which has been so extensively memorized. Its authorship is uncertain, but the use of iambic tetrameters and trimeters arranged alternately as in Shelley's "*Cloud*" has led some to attribute this poem to that brilliant genius, but careful investigation proves that the poem is of a much earlier date. Indeed, it may more reasonably be supposed that the music of these rhymes, familiar to Shelley from childhood, may have wrought in him an unconscious imitation.

Perhaps the greatest charm of this poem consists in the graphic description of the hero himself, his environment, occupation, endeavor and success. Our sympathy is particularly attracted by the fact, that the hero, as an individual, was not different from the ordinary type of man—he was “*little*,”—I hold that this comprehensive term means that in moral and mental calibre he was not gifted beyond others, and that any success he achieved was not the necessary result of unusual intellectual endowment.

Nor were his circumstances exceptional. Indeed, we may suppose that his lot was cast in some obscure place where he never came in contact with the stimulating activity of city life, with its chances of attaining to riches, honor, or at least distinction - he "*sat in a corner*." It may be that he was hampered by poverty, lack of education, without friends or influence, and many, while contemplating the man and the cramped sphere in which he moved, would have said, "It is impossible that this man's life-story should ever become a theme for poets, or an inspiration to others. He is, and will continue to be, what circumstances have made him."

We now come to the third division of this remarkable poem—"eating his Christmas pie,"—although our hero's lot in life is humble, nay, by some, may be deemed hard and unlovely, yet he is not without compensations ; and just here he stands as a representative of common humanity, for there are none whose life is so bare, but that by him pleasure and

gratification in some degree is experienced, and here, once more, is shown the consummate genius of the poet in choosing as a type of happiness, that which is the dominant chord in the scale of man's affections—"eating his Christmas pie." Which of the poets—Shakespeare not excepted—has reached thus, with three simple words, the innermost feelings—as it were? Now note the noble directness and nervous Saxon of the following verse—"He stuck in his thumb." What a moral lesson is here! To conceive, to will, to do in this wise is not possible to all, we cannot all be Jack Horners, but we can be inspired to shake off the shackles of a hollow conventionality, and henceforth, where we have aimed at having a finger in every pie in the community, let us now stick our thumbs in also. Perchance by so doing, we may rise high in political, commercial or social status—we too may secure a plum. In the last verse of the poem, again the marvellous insight of the poet into human nature overwhelms us with astonishment,—He said, "*What a good boy am I!*" Here is voiced the universal mental attitude of that superior and important portion of the universe, sometimes designated, "lords of creation." It has been advanced by an eminent critic that this poem must be a modern production, as this manly conviction could only have been thus frankly expressed by a Toronto school-master; but this, we think, is wandering from the domain of true criticism into that of mere conjecture. *A. Birnie.*

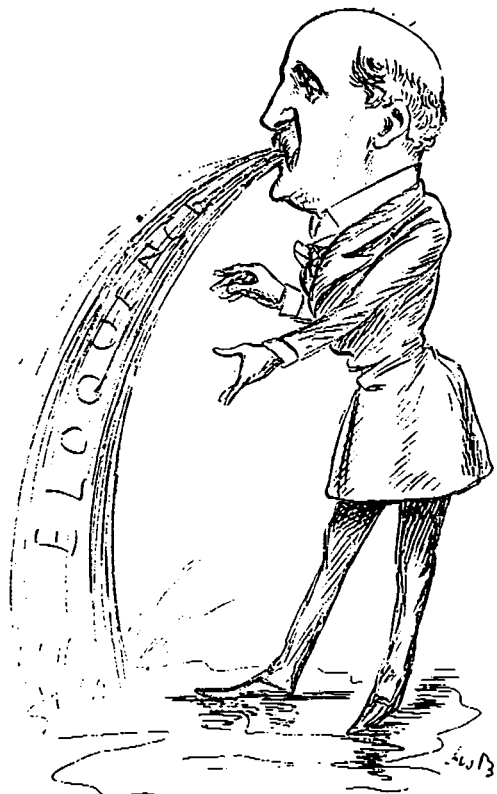
YOUNGLY. — "Well, of all nonsense, this talk of fellows always dropping on their knees when they propose is the greatest trash! I don't believe any man would make such a fool of himself!"

BEENTHAIR.—“Um—Did you ever propose to a girl?”

"No."

"Well, just you wait, old man, till you happen to have an experience of that kind and see how your knees feel! I bet they'll be so weak and shakey you'll be glad to fall on them--mine fairly rattled?"

GRIP'S MIDDLE-NAME PORTRAITS.



NO. 1. NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.