

is confined to part only of the present Wales. In most of Radnorshire and Eastern Monmouthshire, in the whole border of the country further north, the people talk English as generally as in Pembrokeshire or as in Welsh Herefordshire. What difference, in short, he asks, is there between the man on one side of the hedge and the man on the other, which would make it expedient to violently sever them? They are one in sentiment, character, and needs. The differences which exist between some Welshmen and Englishmen are those gradually shaded off distinctions which exist between a partly and imperfectly assimilated fraction of a nation and the main body of the same people. They are not the deep and well marked lines which sever nations. It is foolish to pretend that they are such; wrong to try and make them such. Home Rule in Wales would be an historical and political absurdity equal to a Federal Republic in France and Brittany, or indeed worse, seeing that Brittany had a particular political existence of its own down to a hundred years ago. The differences which separate the Highlands from the Lowlands of Scotland are as well-defined, and the geographical boundaries more easy to trace than those between the English and Welsh inhabitants of the kingdom of England.

AND so with the threatened Church. Unlike Scotland and Ireland, in each of which there is or was a separate Church Establishment, Wales has no separate Establishment. In Wales the Church consists of four dioceses of the Province of Canterbury, and the neighbouring dioceses of the two countries are as inextricably involved as are the modern boundaries. The dioceses of St. Asaph and Llandaff extend into England; Chester, Lichfield, and Hereford extend into Wales. The Welsh Church is in fact, at present, part and parcel of the Church of England, and therefore when people talk of Disestablishing the Church in Wales they mean cutting off four dioceses from the Church of England. Still if the greater portion of the inhabitants of Wales wished for Disestablishment, it might be granted. But is that the case? The Welsh agitators for Disestablishment, though they have this very year taken a census of church-goers and chapel-goers, will not publish the figures; but from those collected by the opposition, which there is good reason to believe are near the truth, it would appear, according to the *North Wales Chronicle*, that in twenty-nine towns and villages, admirably characteristic of Wales as a whole, it was found that while close upon 30,000 went to church, not quite 45,000 went to chapel. Thus the proportions stand at two to three—two-fifths Churchmen, three-fifths Nonconformists; while, taking the separate religious bodies, the Establishment outnumbered the most numerous sect, the Calvinistic Methodists, in the proportion of three to two. This being the case, Mr. Gladstone's attempt to bribe the Welsh Nonconformists to support him by promising to Disestablish the so-called Welsh Church is a piece of mischievous meddling and a gross immorality.

THE impending publication of Mr. Donnelly's Great Cryptogram is said to be arousing much excitement among certain good folk—whose defective sense of proportion leads them, we suppose, to confound the irresponsible speculations of such thinkers as Mr. Donnelly with the results of sound scholarship; but we doubt if anybody at all familiar with the works of Shakespeare as well as of Bacon is likely to regard the cloud that threatens the former as much more worthy of serious attention than one of Wiggins' great storms. Whatever alarm may be felt by people on the lower plains—an alarm much of the same nature as that felt in some countries at an eclipse—Shakespearean scholars, by which we mean diligent readers of Shakespeare, placed at an altitude where they are able to see better, can have no concern about Shakespeare's fame; and we have yet to learn the name of one such, or of any literary man of eminence, that has embraced the Donnellian heresy. No one thoroughly familiar with Shakespeare—saturated with him, as all English-speaking people of any literary pretension should be—could possibly believe that from the pen that wrote the incoherent sentences of Bacon's Essays flowed also the limpid stream of orderly English of Shakespeare's Plays. Not one of Shakespeare's contemporaries could—or did—write such English as he; which means that they could not *think* such English. Powerful thinker as Bacon was, his muddled style shows it was not in him. Can it for a moment be believed that the man who could put forth sixty essays, mere inchoate sketches, hints, loose thoughts without order, where we are tossed to and fro from one subject to another wholly unrelated, like a cork in a fountain jet,—essays distinguished by verbal obscurities, archaic phraseology, and solecisms in grammar,—wrote also the pure, plain, perfectly-ordered root-English of Shakespeare—the English common to him, alone of all his contemporaries, and to the Bible and the Prayer Book? It is this peculiarity of language, rising sheer above the literary fashion of the time—as all writing to be enduring at any time must do—that distinguishes the works of Shakespeare from

the works of all contemporary writers, including Bacon; who certainly had not an equal literary faculty, unless, as the Donnelly theory would persuade us, he wrote as much like a dunce as he could, to avert suspicion!

In the *Critic* of October 29th, is a delicious bit of satire on the assumed Bacon cypher. It purports to be an account of certain accidental discoveries made in the course of an evening's conversation, by Mr. George Parsons Lathrop and Mr. Walter Learned, and written down promptly by the first-named gentleman to save time, and avoid the possible imputation that the discoveries were made by careful pre-arrangement. The subject of conversation was two articles in the October *North American Review*, which assume to disclose in Shakespeare's epitaph a secret assertion that Bacon wrote the plays: and Mr. Learned by a sudden inspiration suggested that interesting results might be obtained from any old epitaph by applying to it Bacon's *omnia per omnia* cypher as used by the *North American Reviewer*. They therefore took up an epitaph very common in New England graveyards:—

Stop Careless Youthe as You Pass by,
As You are now, So once was I.
As I am now So you Must Be,
Oh then Prepare to Follow Me.

And out of this by a ludicrous process of reasoning, burlesquing with infinite humour the conclusions reached by the *North American Review* writers, they evolve certain curious results, which they say force the conclusion that hereafter this epitaph will doubtless be esteemed the most marvellous stanza ever composed on earth. It is not possible for us here to trace the working out of the cypher, which is admirably done, at full length; but the result shows how any desired reading may be drawn out of any text, if the operator is at liberty to construct a cypher so flexible as to cover all emergencies. Here is an anagram discovered in the first line (using only *l* twice):

OUT, SHACSSPEARE! YOU STOLE B'S PLAYYS.

Although elsewhere the nearest they can get to Shakespeare's name is SABBAR and to Bacon's FRA BA,—which as they justly say comes near spelling both. But a fund of meaning is unlocked in the separate lines of the epitaph. The first, say the commentators with true Donnellian ingenuity, would seem to refer to a phrase in *All's Well that Ends Well* (II. 3), viz.: "the careless lapse and ignorance of youth." To "lapse" is in one sense the same as to "pass." This allusion is striking, interwoven as it is with this verse, apparently written by the claimant of the plays, and appealing to the youthful generations not to pass it by in ignorance. The second and third lines—enclosed or bracketed between the other two—seem to be addressed parenthetically to the shade of Shakespeare. "As you are now (*deprived of the credit of authorship*) so once was I. As I am now (*found out in my true character as author of the Plays*), So you Must Be (*found out in your character as an impostor*)." The last line, addressed to the world again, is: "Oh then Prepare to Follow Me." Follow whom? Why, naturally, Bacon; as we have hitherto followed Shakespeare. The "Stop Careless Youthe," they observe in conclusion, is an old epitaph. Can it date back to Bacon's time? And are we to conclude that Bacon—besides being the author of most of the literature belonging to the Elizabethan period (including his own Philosophical Works)—was also the ablest mortuary poet of his age, furnishing epitaphs for the people at large? We may likewise assume, in that case, that he composed both the *Careless Youthe*, and the *Good Friend for Jesus sake forbear*. But the latter, with its imperfect cypher contents, must have been a hurried bit of work. There is another hypothesis. Bacon may have written the *Good Friend* first, and sent it off hastily to the stone-cutter at Stratford. But, remember that the spelling was unnecessarily bad and the cypher contents meagre, he found leisure to compose the complete and perfect *Stop Careless Youthe*, which he also dispatched to the stone-cutter. The mechanic must have made a mistake and followed the wrong copy, when he chiselled the *Good Friend* lines above Shakespeare's grave. Bacon, not daring to excite inquiry by removing that epitaph, after it was in place, and substituting the improved one, concluded to sow this one far and wide, in numerous graveyards, as the only means left him of vindicating his claim. In the shipwreck of his fortunes, caused by his conviction as a corrupt judge, he may have felt like the sinking mariner who puts a history of himself into cork bottles which he sets adrift on the waves; and his best bottle labelled *Stop Careless Youthe* drifted to New England!

MR. GLADSTONE, replying to a correspondent, refuses to enter into a controversy regarding free education, giving as his reason that he is devoted to the settlement of one subject, on the progress of which all other subjects must depend. It may be feared he is in a perilous way: the man that gives place for only one idea is dangerously near madness.