

424 North George Mason Drive  
Arlington 3, Virginia  
23 May 1951

Mr. Brighton P. Slutes  
H. H. Robertson Company  
2036 East 22d Street  
Cleveland 15, Ohio

Dear Mr. Slutes:

Receipt of your letter of 9 May 1951 is acknowledged.

Thank you for the background information in connection with the quotation "last night...". I had some correspondence with Miss Holmes two or three years ago and do not wish at this time to renew it.

I read what Clemens said about the Bacon-Shakespearean controversy a long time ago but it wouldn't hurt to review it. So the specific reference to the volume would be welcome.

When the newspapers carried the story re Alan Keen, I consulted with a friend on the staff of the Shakespeare Folger Library here and got from him a somewhat detailed account of Keen and his previous "finds". I am not sure that this one should be taken at the full value Keen places on it, but no doubt in a few more months there will be further information, provided Keen will permit authorities in the field to examine his new "find" closely enough to form a firm judgment. I don't think he has yet afforded them this opportunity.

With thanks for your letter, I am,

Sincerely yours,

William F. Friedman

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Mr. William F. Friedman  
 424 N. George Mason Drive  
 Arlington 3, Virginia

Dear Mr. Friedman:

Early in March I had a letter from Mr. William G. Bryan, the Editor of the American Cryptogram Association, and his letter stated that he wanted me to write to you about the Bacon-Shakespearean controversy.

At the time I received Mr. Bryan's letter I was about to leave on a month's holiday in Mexico, and on my return I became involved in my own neglected affairs.

You may be interested in my situation, so far as this Shakespearean thing is concerned. I am not a student of literature and have no great interest in the Shakespearean question. About five years ago I was introduced by correspondence to a lady who is a member of the Baconian Society and who resides in this country. She sent me some copies of the Baconian Quarterly, and these magazines contained articles written by her. I finally recalled that I had somewhere read the following quotation, "Last night I completed another play and now I must arrange for its delivery to Master Shakespeare."

Assuming that this lady may be able to tell me where I had read this statement, I wrote her and asked her. She, however, had not heard of the quotation and in considerable excitement asked me to make every effort to locate the source as she wanted to write an article about it for the Baconian Quarterly. This started me off on my search and I have been making sporadic efforts since that time.

I read the books in our Cleveland Library on the Baconian side of the controversy. Some place along the line I recalled having read Samuel Clemens' analysis of his thoughts in the matter, and I went back to my Mark Twain volumes and reread it. Pretty convincing, too. If you are interested in reading this yourself, in case you have not already done so, I shall be glad to look up the volume which contains the Shakespearean essay.

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Now, if your interest carries to the point of writing to the lady that I refer to, I give you her name and address: Miss Pauline Holmes, 50 Bates Road, Watertown, Mass.

One more thought. Among the people I appealed to in my dilemma is a Librarian in southern Ohio. During April just past, she sent me a clipping from a Cincinnati paper, sent by the United Press from London. This story tells about a chap named Alan Keen who has announced that he has located a volume published in 1550 under the title, "The Union of the Two Noble Houses, York and Lancaster". Mr. Keen found this volume completely covered with written notes in the margins and all other available clear space. These notations include rough drafts of dialogue appearing in the plays, Richard II, and Henry IV, and Henry V. The story quotes Mr. Keen as saying, "From the tudor style writing and other features, I knew these had been written during Shakespeare's lifetime. Who I thought could have roughed out the original dialogue, scarcely daring to think the name."

Mr. Keen feels that the finding of this old volume clearly establishes Shakespeare as the author of the plays attributed to him, and also clears up the mystery of what Mr. Keen calls Shakespeare's hidden seven years. He apparently means that for the seven years in Shakespeare's life he devoted to study and research which enabled him to turn out his writings.

I shall be happy, indeed, to receive any comments from you.

Very sincerely yours,



Brighton P. Slutes

bps/j