

Crabb

Young

Francis

Bacon

Wherein is set forth a pleasant mixture of prose and Poetry, of fact and fancy concerning the birth on Jan 22nd, 1561 of the first son of the beautiful Queen Elizabeth, who was no virgin, and the noble Earl of Leicester, who was something less than a gentleman.

"Oh give me leave to pull the curtain by,
That clouds thy worth in such obscurity,
Young Francis, stay but awhile thy bleeding,
T'accept what I received at thy reading;
Here I present it in a solemn strain
And thus I pluck the curtain back again."

Adapted from Powell's
"Attorney's Academy"

Printed for Riley Crabb at BSRA Headquarters
1103 Bobolink Drive
Vista, California
January, 1962

CGB (VP)

Archives for the Unexplained
Arkivet för det oförklarade
Box 11027
SE-600 11 Norrköping

BSRF
2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Frontispiece, young Francis Bacon and Robert Cecil

Introduction, by the author	Page 1 - 8
Chapter One	Page 9 - 13
"The Prince of Wales"	
Chapter Two	Page 14 - 25
"The Royal Lovers"	
Chapter Three	Page 26 - 32
"Young Francis, Prince of Wales"	
Chapter Four	Page 33 - 42
"Curst be the time of thy nativity!"	
Illustration, Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley	
Chapter Five	Page 43 - 47
"The Hottest Bitch In Europe"	
Chapter Six	Page 48 - 54
"An Audience With the Queen"	
Chapter Seven	Page 55 - 68
"Stone Walls Do Not A Prison Make"	
Chapter Eight	Page 69 - 79
"I sell thee poison, thou hast sold me none."	

* * *

Dedicated to the memory of

FRED CHURCH

whose questions and suggestions
and generous gifts of books on
the Baconian Heresy were an al-
ways present inspiration for
this first volume on Fra.Bacon.

YOUNG FRANCIS BACON

At right is a copy of a photo of the Hilliard miniature portrait of Francis Bacon at the age of 18, drawn some time during the year 1578 while the young Prince of Wales was with the French court, either at Poitiers or in Paris. Francis was rushed out of England at the age of 16 by his mother, Queen Elizabeth, after she revealed publicly, in a fit of rage, that Francis was indeed her son by the Earl of Leicester.



ROBERT CECIL

At left is a copy of a portrait of that "lousy Italian Jew" Cecil, who tricked Elizabeth into revealing to him and to the Court, Francis Bacon's true parentage. This hunch-backed toad became Elizabeth's evil genius and successfully thwarted Francis' every effort to rise to place and power during his and Elizabeth's lifetime. According to the Cypher Story Cecil searched out and destroyed before Elizabeth every bit of evidence which might have supported Francis' claim to the throne.

INTRODUCTION

This little biographical sketch of some of the most important events, forces and persons in the early life of Sir Francis Bacon is not written for scholar or professors. This free-wheeling discursion into the most fascinating of historical mysteries is written for academic illiterates like you and me, people who know little about the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy and care less, but who do enjoy a good, blood and guts, factual story when they see one.

It seems to me it's time someone combined the known historical facts of Queen Elizabeth the First, the Earl of Leicester her lover and husband, and the poet-lawyer-philosopher-occultist who, if they had acknowledged his true parentage, would have been Francis First of England.

Actually there is quite a library of material on the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy ever since a mysterious jibe at the authorship of the Shakespeare plays was published by Blackwood's Edinburg Magazine in 1818. What I have look for in vain, to these many years, is a biography which combined the known facts about Elizabeth, Leicester and Bacon, with the Word Cypher and Bi-literal Cypher stories which Bacon carefully wove into everything he wrote. From the first edition of Shepheard's Calendar, printed in 1579 when Bacon was only eighteen, to his Natural History, published posthumously in 1635 by Bacon's last secretary and Chaplain, Dr. William Rawley, Bacon was busily committing to print many of the historical tidbits which his mother, Elizabeth, suppressed. As you read along with me I believe you'll agree that the Cypher stories very smoothly fit into such facts of her reign as Elizabeth allowed her propagandists to write.

You may have learned in school that Shepheard's Calendar was written by Edmund Spenser. It is true that the 1611 edition of the famous poem carries Spenser's name as the author. But how about that first edition we mentioned, printed in 1579? Spenser was only eleven years old at the time. That first and little known edition of Shepheard's Calendar was registered at Stationer's Hall, London under the name of T. Bright, one of the earliest of the dozen pen names used throughout his life by Bacon to cover his tremendous literary output. Other names listed in the Cypher Story as used by Sir Francis include, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Burton, George Peele, Robert Greene, William Shakespeare, and the Man in the Moon!

Those of you who are sure that Robert Burton wrote the famous "Anatomy of Melancholy" will be interested to know that the first edition of that work, one of the very earliest in the English language on popular psychology, was published in 1586, again with T. Bright as the author. Only later editions carry Robert Burton's name. He was actually one of Bacon's six secretaries, all of whom were taught a form of shorthand developed by Bacon and published in an interesting

little monograph in 1589. Its title, "The Art of Brachygraphy", and its author was, T. Bright!

So, for a period of 56 years, everything which came from the hand of this many-sided genius contained a triple story, the secrets of Bacon's life. In the beginning he signs himself as Prince of Wales in the hope that Elizabeth will eventually acknowledge his true parentage. Later his tale of woe is signed Francis Rex, the King Who Is To Be. At last the sinful old despot was murdered in her bed and the Scot, James, ascended the throne. With the heavy, selfish hand of his mother off his life Bacon went on to the heights of worldly glory and power as the Lord Chancellor of England. Then the Cypher Story is signed by one of the many titles heaped on him by James, Baron St. Albans or Lord Verulam. The quiet philosopher replaces the hopeful youth and man and he makes the prophecy: "I look out to the future, not of years, but of ages, knowing that my labours are for the benefit of a land very far off, and after great length of time is past."

The far off land Lord Bacon referred to in the Cypher Story is of course America. His hopeless, bleak future in England he read only too well; he also saw that coming race of free-thinkers across the waters. It was four Americans who, above all others in the 19th Century, fought the good fight to clear Bacon's name, Delia Bacon, Ignatius Donnelly, Dr. Orville W. Owen and Elizabeth Wells Gallup.

Until Bacon's public career was sacrificed on the altar of King James' necessity, the great philosopher-poet loved England. In writing and dramatizing the history of English kings Bacon had to be factual and some of those facts were that English kings were sometimes murdered or otherwise deposed. To Queen Elizabeth, ever hysterically fearful of her life and throne, such dramatizations were treasonous. The deposition of Richard II might give some of her more rebellious subjects an idea of deposing of her! This she always feared of her son, Francis Bacon, from the time he achieved manhood; though it was her second son, Robert Devereaux, who actually attempted it. Francis was ordered never to leave England, on pain of death. She kept him close by her, smothering him with her overweening selfishness; though she never succeeded in drawing him into her royal whirlpool of depravity as she did Robert.

Francis' mind was continually bursting with creative activity. He had to find someone to author the plays flowing from his fertile pen. The illiterate actor, Will Shaxburre, was willing to risk it, for half the profits of the plays, and the plays made money! Enough that Shaxburre eventually retired to Stratford-on-Avon a wealthy man. Phonetically Shaxburre sounded close enough to Shakespeare to suit Bacon's purpose. Will didn't finalize the spelling of his name until after it was attached to the plays. Then it was spelled Shakspeare in his will and three or four other legal documents which bear his written name -- written by law clerks for Shaxburre couldn't write. To buy his complicity Bacon also had to promise him a coat of arms. This the actor received in 1599, to the great amusement of Bacon and his friends in London.

We said there were two Cyphers in everything Bacon wrote. Mrs. Gallup claims that at least six have been discovered; but the two most important are the Word Cypher and the Bi-literal. In committing details of his private life to his published works Bacon assumed that the Bi-literal Cypher would be discovered first. To make sure of this he caused to be published in 1623 a detailed description of the Bi-literal Cypher he was using. Also, by 1623, as no one had apparently suspected the hidden material in his works, he began to fear that no one ever would! So, the Bi-literal is described in detail in the Latin version of "De Augmentis Scientiarum". Bacon thought that once the wondering cryptographer cracked this code the existence of the Word Cypher in the plays and other writings would also be discovered. But it didn't work out that way.

A Detroit doctor, Orville W. Owen, through genius, intuition, or both, discovered the Word Cypher. Perhaps Owen was a reincarnation of one of Bacon's numerous secretaries, and thus was only reviving memories of the previous work. This was in the 1880s, after Dr. Owen had been a student of Elizabethan literature for years.

The reading of the Word Cypher required that the pages of the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare be cut from the binding and pasted on a thousand-foot strip of canvas. This was then wound up on two drums, conveniently mounted on a frame and operated with hand cranks; so the cryptographer could wind the thing back and forth, picking up the thread of Sir Francis's story, looking for and guided by the key words given in Lord Verulam's Letter to the Decipherer:

London, 1623

My Dear Sir:

"Thus leaning on mine elbow I begin the letter
scattered wider than the sky and earth;
And yet the spacious breadth of this division,
As it spreads round in the widest circles,
Admits the mingling of the four great guides we use,
So that we have no need of any minute rule
To make the opening of our device
Appear as plainly to you as the sun.
But, sir, at the same time, there is no orifrex
For a point as subtle as Ariachne's broken woof
To enter, in its whole bulk or substance, unless you have
Found out the guides of all our shifts and changes.
And if you give way or hedge aside
From the direct forthright,
Like to an entered tide they all rush by
And leave you hindermost. . .

We have marked out a plan in this epistle
To communicate to you how our great cipher cues combine;
And we beseech you ask of us
What questions you may choose. . ."

Then in the "Letter to the Decipherer" Sir Francis writes down the questions the puzzled decipherer would ask, and answers them!

". . . The first question is, therefore,
What simple plain rule is there to teach me
The way to shift?"

"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 inconstant rolls
In restless variation. Make her the prime mover;
She is our first guide. . .
It is necessary, sir, to find three more."

"What are they, sir?"

"Fortune makes nature's natural the cutter off
Of nature's wit; and so have we.
For you, peradventure, work neither by nature nor fortune.
Are your natural wits too dull to reason?"

"You mock me, my lord."

"Indeed is nature too hard for you? Why then, we
will speak it.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.
Our second guide is the Latin word NATUS. . .
Follow fortune as a leader, and nature and her radicals
As a guide, and if you look sharply and attentively
It is certain you shall see that now and then
Fortune and nature are at fault; and then we make
HONOUR and REPUTATION
The two words to guide you toward the end.
So now the gates are ope, now prove FORTUNE,
NATURE, HONOUR and REPUTATION widens them.
And so we leave you to your wandering lot,
Wishing you good luck to your wandering footsteps."

Once these keys or guides were mastered it was a comparatively simple matter to train competent persons to read out the Word Cypher Story Sir Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Albans had enfolded in his voluminous writings. For this cypher one did not have to be a cryptographer As he wrote in the Cypher Story in Novum Organum, ". . . any reader of moderate sagacity and intelligence should see our manner of writing this history as it actually and really is. . . "

In the introduction to Volume II of Francis Bacon's Word Cypher Story, Dr. Owen gives an example of how the story builds up into an intelligent history with single lines from Bacon's widely scattered

volumes. Here are some of the lines, and their sources, which describe the invasion of that mighty Spanish fleet, the Armada:

To this gladsome day of merriment	(Faerie Queen)
Fair blows the gale	(Marlow)
From the South furrowed Neptune's seas	
Northeast as far as the frozen Rhine	(Greene)
The bright sun thereon his beams doth beat	(Peele)
As if he nought but peace and pleasure meant	(Faerie Queen)
A solid mass of gold	(Anatomy of Melancholy)
As a mirror glass the surface of the water	(Bacon)
Reflected in my sight as doth a crystal mirror in the sun.	(Peele)

And later the Word Cypher describes the terrible storm which came to England's aid as the Britons watched from the cliffs of Dover.

Since I was a man such sheets of fire such bursts of horrid thunder such groans of roaring wind and rain I never remember to have heard.	(King Lear)
Woe to the sailor that in cold and quaking tides and whistling winds the bitter broil and beating blow of billows high doth bide	(Peele)
The town is empty on the brow o' the sea stand ranks of people	(Othello)
From higher ground jutting out into the sea	(Bacon)
One man beckoned to the rest below bowing his head against the steepy mount	(Timon)
What from the cape can you discern at sea?	
Nothing at all it is a high wrought flood I cannot twixt the heaven and the maine descry a saile?	(Othello)
But hark; a saile! a saile! a saile!	(Othello)
Towards the sea turning my troubled eyes I saw	(Faerie Queen)
A pinnacle of five hundred tons	(Greene)
tossed in troublous seas whome raging winds threatening to make the prey of the rough rocks.	(Faerie Queen)

Thus you see how the ingenious Bacon, drawing on lines from the many books of his writings under other names, told his own story.

But cryptography is another thing and requires special talents. These the schoolteacher, Elizabeth Wells Gallup, had. She was one of Dr. Owen's early assistants in transcribing the Word Cypher. It was while engaged in this work that she fell under the spell of the Great Chancellor who, four hundred years earlier, had "looked to a far off land" for the recognition and honor denied him in England.

One of Bacon's works that came to Elizabeth's attention while compiling the Word Cypher was "De Augmentis". Here Bacon gave a very full explanation of the Bi-literal Cypher. In reading it over Mrs. Gallup began to suspect that this was more than a mere treatise on the subject. She felt that the Master was trying to direct the reader's attention to bi-literal cypher material in the Shakespeare plays and in other Elizabethan literature of the time!

"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," Mrs. Gallup writes. "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 rules 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 printings, 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."

Mrs. Gallup held the traditional viewpoint regarding Bacon and Shakespeare. You can imagine her astonishment in discovering the scandalous behavior of Elizabeth and Leicester in hiding the birth of their son, Francis; and how, because of Elizabeth's refusal to recognize him, the genius of English philosophy and letters had to hide much of his output under masks or names. Nevertheless, she pushed ahead with the cryptography and learned, among other things, that Bacon expected the Bi-literal Cypher to be discovered first.

She observes that the "remarkable similarity in the dramatic writings attributed to Greene, Peele, Marlowe and Shakespeare has attracted much attention, and the biographers of each have claimed that both style and subject-matter have been imitated, if not appropriated, by the others. The practical explanation lies in the fact that one hand wrote them all."

In the Shakespearean play, "Two Gentlemen of Verona", the Cypher story reveals this comment from Bacon: "I varied my stile to suit different men, since no two shew the same taste and imagination. . . . When I have assumed men's names th' next step is to create for each a stile naturall to the man that yet should let my owne bee seene, as a thrid of warpe in my entire fabricke."

Then Mrs. Gallup quotes at length from various Shakespearean authorities, showing their puzzlement in trying to separate the styles of "Greene", "Peele", "Marlowe", "Shakespeare", all of course from the facile pen of Francis Bacon. A quotation from the scholarly pen of George Brandes will illustrate this point.

"Though there are doubtless in the older plays portions unworthy of Shakespeare, and more like the handiwork of Greene, while others strongly suggest Marlowe, both in matter, style and versification, there are also passages in them which cannot be anyone else than Shakespeare. And while most of the alterations and additions which are found in the second and third parts of Henry VI bear the mark of unmistakable superiority, and are Shakespearian in spirit no less than in style and versification, there are at the same time others which are decidedly un-Shakespearian and can almost certainly be attributed to Marlowe.

He must, then, have collaborated with Shakespeare in the adaptation, unless we suppose this his original text was carelessly printed in the earlier quartos, and that it here reappears, in the Shakespearian Henry VI, corrected and completed in accordance with his manuscript."

The critic Brandes confirms what the Cypher story tells, that Bacon took his early plays, written to amuse himself and his friends at Gray's Inn and to make money, and ruthlessly altered them, adding whatever words and phrases needed to tell the Cypher story! Read on.

"Other additions also seem only to have restored the older form of the plays -- those, to wit, which really add nothing new, but only elaborate, sometimes more copiously than is necessary or tasteful, a thought already clearly indicated. But there is another class of additions and alterations which surprises us by being unmistakably in Marlowe's style. If these additions are really by Shakespeare, he must have been under the influence of Marlowe to a quite extraordinary degree. Swinburne has pointed out how entirely the verses which open the fourth act of the Second Part are Marlowesque in rhythm, imagination and choice of words; but characteristic as are these lines -- they are by no means the only additions which seem to point to Marlowe."

The Bi-literal Cypher Story is repetitive in that Lord Bacon repeats again and the basic facts of his life because he had no way of knowing which of his works would be the first to yield its secrets to the cryptographer's probing eye. Yet the story had some continuity over the years because it carried on from one published work to another, sometimes ending in mid-sentence at the end of one work, and taking up in the next that he caused to be printed. This in itself is one of the best proofs of Mrs. Gallup's labor of love; for the Cypher Story has continuity of thought and purpose in a list of volumes spanning forty-six years!

In Part I of the Third Edition of Mrs. Gallup's "Bi-literal Cypher of Francis Bacon", (Howard Publishing Co., Detroit, Michigan and Gay and Bird, London, 1901), here is the list of works from which the story was deciphered.


Shepherd's Calendar	1579	Anonymous
The Araygnement of Paris	1584	George Peele
The Mirrour of Modestie	1584	Robert Greene
Planetomachia	1585	Robert Greene
A Treatise of Melancholy	1586	T. Bright
Euphues-Morando	1587	Robert Greene
Perimedes-Pandosto	1588	Robert Greene
Spanish Masquerado	1589	Robert Greene

The 1579 edition of "Shepherd's Calendar" came out the year young Bacon returned from France and contains a dedication by E.K. The significance of E.K. is explained in the opening sentences of the Bi-literal Cypher Story in it: "E.K. wil bee found to be nothing less then th' letters signifying th' future sov'raigne or England's King. The present Queene, purely selfish in all that doth in a sorte make

proper, tho' tardie recognition of that true prerogative of roiale bloud, doth most boldly and co'sta'tly oppose with h'r arguments the puny effort of our cause which hath most disproved ability to uphold our true and rightful (but at the present time very little seene or onely partlie ghest) clayme to roiall pow'r. In event o' death of her MA.-- who bore in honourable wedlocke Robert, now known as Walter Devereaux, as well as him who now speaketh to the yet unknown aidant discypherer that will open the dores of the sepulcher to break in sunder the bonds and cerements of a marvailous historie, -- we the eldest born, should, by the Divine right of a lawe of God made binding on man, inherit scepter and thron'."

Mrs. Gallup conjectures that there is a good possibility Francis made use of the biliteral cypher in even earlier works from his hand, while in France; but the 1579 edition of "Shepheard's Calendar", from which the above was taken, was as far back as she could go. Whether any attempt has been made to further her pioneering effort in the sixty years since then I do not know. Her work and that of Dr. Owen were sufficient to give an amateur historian plenty to go on, as you'll see in the following pages.

The one, great unanswered question in the Baconian Heresy is the hand-written manuscripts of the plays of Shakespeare. Discovery and identification of these should settle the question once and for all. The Bi-literal Cypher Story seemed to indicate that these had been deposited within the monuments of some of Bacon's secretaries, perhaps in the walls of his old homestead at Gorhambury, and in Canonbury Tower in London. I suspect the manuscripts are in the safe-keeping of certain members of the Rosicrucian brotherhood, of whom Bacon himself was a leading Light back in the 16th Century, and still is today in some higher realm. Those manuscripts will be "discovered", when the time is ripe for his name to be cleared, and for his fame to be spread across the Western world.


Riley Crabb, Director, BSRA
Vista, Calif., July, 1961

YOUNG FRANCIS BACON

Chapter One

"The Prince of Wales"

"If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and
which will not. . . " Macbeth

It was a cold, blustery day late in January. The raw wind banged against the leaded glass, rattling a loose pane here and there, looking in vain for an entrance. There was a hurrying and a scurrying at Windsor Palace. Inside the Queen's private apartments, an ante-room and a royal bedchamber, a maid carried a basin and linens to the royal bed, for a royal birth.

But strangely the city was quiet round about. No royal trumpeter stood ready to peal forth the glad tidings. No sexton's hand was poised bell rope close by, to ring out the joyous news. The city, for London, was quiet.

Because Elizabeth, in the eighth month of her pregnancy, still refused to proclaim herself a woman wedded. Cleverly gowned she moved all unsuspected among her ladies, courtiers, foreign princes and ambassadors of the Court. The Lords of the Privy Council were ignorant of the fact; all, that is, but Robert Dudley.

And Lady Anne, wife of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Seal, herself heavy with child, she knew; and here in the privacy of the Queen's bedchamber she stoutly had protested against such strange, inscrutable behavior.

"A male heir is held in greatest honor, and princes of our blood royal might hold rank among kings of highest station," urged Lady Anne. "I pray you, most beloved and honored Queen, do not cast any cloud of suspicion upon your fair name, for questions may be asked concerning your grossness, if the tongues have not ere this rudely wagged."

Wrath unbound burst like a storm. Elizabeth railed until spent.

"Thou canst, dear lady, assure me of a son?" she sneered. "It is, meseems, beyond your power of divining to say, 'Lo 'tis a boy'."

"I am assured because I know the marks that midwives say show clearly before birth and certify the sex," sweet Anne replied. "All women keep in some secret place lore of such a nature. Cannot I speak of our hopes, Dear Sovereign, myself having born a child of the best sex? And I am in your Majesty's own condition even now!"

But fruitless were Lady Anne's entreaties and prayers. To move the vain and strong mind of the mother-to-be was quite impossible. Urged again and again by Lady Anne to declare her condition and sequester herself in preparation for a royal heir so enraged the Queen that the laws which govern labor compelled the hasty summons to midwife and royal physician.

To many women, no gift could be so great as this -- a child of the preferred sex; to a sovereign so great as Elizabeth it was not! Little princes are of all infants peculiarly favored. She who bore Francis Tudor, even in the hour of his unwelcomed coming, January 22, 1561, outraged every instinct of a natural woman.

"Kill, kill!" shrieked this maddened Queen in the pangs and perils of her travail. "Kill!"

Her physician, Huic, sought to quiet her, thinking she wanted riddance of suffering.

In great fear Lady Anne said, "God give a safe delivery, my dearly beloved sovereign; it is now near the end. This exceeding great suffering doth well for you. Certain I am, your Grace, 'twill soon be time for joy. Surely rejoicing doth become us all."

But even in her suffering the Queen fell into fiercest anger, alarming every one, and when her wild rath subsided laments succeeded invective. Though curses did come from her lips nothing stayed the hour of birth that Heaven had foreknown. As the little Prince of Wales was held before her eyes Elizabeth made a hasty motion as though she would push from her presence some brat no one owned.

Lady Anne knew not which way to turn, nor in what manner one clear ray of reason might reach Elizabeth's clouded mind. Hoping to ease the good lady's distress, Huic spoke.

"May your Grace now be ruled therein by love greater though newer than that due the Earl, your noble husband," he said. "Happy the sire of a son like the prince, twice blessed is the mother from whom that prince his life deriveth."

"Stay, truly thy voice is but in indifferent accord with ours," replied Elizabeth in cold tones.

Her implacable will chilled Lady Anne to the very soul. Desperately she turned her thoughts to rescuing from death such an evil-fortuned prince. Even as the Queen's scorn, wrath and railing penetrated most deeply that gentle breast, the noble lady blanched not a whit. Taking

Taking the little prince without a moment's delay, little maid Lucy following, Anne bore him to Lord Robert and obtained from him a promise, duly confirmed by oath, that her right to the boy should not be questioned in his lifetime.

From the indifferent Queen she exacted also an oath: "The rights so given shall remain forever unquestioned, my own be forever hidden; suspicion of marriage avoided, especially until future events shall justify proclamation."

Only thus did Lady Anne Bacon entertain a hope of preserving the life of the little prince, embarrassing both to the ambitions of the Queen and to his father, Robert Dudley. Little then did the noble lady reckon the consolation of the sweet little prince when, days later, her second son by Sir Nicholas would come still-born into the world.

But she must hurry. Even now the Queen would have her ladies admitted to accustomed access to her in the privy chamber. Lucy scurried in with a little pink box, ample for the Prince of Wales and his linen wrap. Graven figures on the lid admitted air. There on Lady Anne took leave of Her Majesty, who overtly showed a most untimely motion to make sport.

"Fortunate amongst my women, I prophesy that you bear double joy to my Lord Keeper," jibed the Queen.

"Madam," replied Lady Anne, "Then must one perchance find another to bear half the lying-in pangs."

Straightaway Elizabeth, turning a disdainful shoulder, put the lady to no more pain. She and Lucy like sly conspirators left by devious ways and hurried their precious burden home to Sir Nicholas' place, York House on the Strand.

Three days later Lady Anne took him to St. Martin's-in-the-Field, where the births of all royal children are registered, to have him baptized; but when the registrar asked the infant's name she stood abashed.

"Humph!" Impatient, the good man wrote, "It was brought from the home of Sir Nicholas Bacon." And he entered the whispered name, Mr. Franciscus Bacon.

York House gave little Francis private chamber. None but Lady Anne and maid Lucy knew of his simple life within Sir Nicholas Bacon's house. She guarded him until a boy still-born as was said, made natural place for the royal child.

Thus was Francis Bacon born in the midst of the pulling and hauling of the business of state; and he was to remain inextricably bound up in it all his life; for as he grew on into manhood, by her indomitable will Elizabeth made him, too, a tool of the state, submerged in the coils of her diplomacy, at once the most exasperating and the most

most successful in Europe -- if indeed, length of reign is a measure of success?

Not the least interesting of the many colorful characters with which Elizabeth surrounded herself was the Astrologer, Dr. John Dee. In later years he was to have a profound influence on the occult side of Francis Bacon's development. Elizabeth had known Dr. Dee long before she ascended the throne, and it was he whom she asked to set an auspicious day for her coronation, one which would portend a long and happy reign. Dee set the date for January 14, 1559. The proof, if any is admissible, was in Elizabeth's record stay on the throne, 42 years!

At the time of Francis Bacon's birth Dr. Dee was one of the foremost mathematicians in Europe. He had already made a name for himself lecturing in mathematics at the University of Rheims in France and had turned down a professorship in math at the University of Oxford. Apparently he thought that busying himself "about one thing and another at the fancy of the Queen" more interesting and less routine than a dry professorship. Elizabeth kept her son Francis "busy with one thing and another" at her Court so she could keep an eye on him. Francis eventually came to be known as the Father of Modern Science. It is no coincidence that one of the foremost scientists of the day, Dr. John Dee, was moving in and out of court circles at the time Francis was growing up.

In Elizabeth's time mathematics was invested with an air of mystery quite different from that of the present day, and many a mathematician was of a religious or mystic turn. Dr. Dee was no exception. In 1561 he was putting the finishing touches on, among other works, his "Monas Hieroglyphica". That was an alchemical work dealing in the theory of the Divine Spark in man, the "primal Monad", and differentiating between the mortal and the immortal Adam. To get this and other of his works published Dee asked for and received the Queen's permission to cross the channel to Antwerp in 1562. There was a great and active press there. Dee may have also been spurred to leave England by the re-enactment of the Statute against Sorcery, revived again from the days of King Henry VIII, and Dee wasn't to return until 1564.

Meanwhile, little Francis enjoyed the sunniest period of his sorrow-laden but fruitful life. The household of Elizabeth's Lord Keeper was a happy one, full of love and laughter. History says that Francis was the last of the eight children of Sir Nicholas Bacon, six by his first wife, and Anthony, two years old when Lady Anne spirited the little, day-old Prince of Wales to her London home in a box. Anthony was a good companion to his younger "brother" all through their eventful lives.

In later years the sweet lady told Francis how he played among the daisies and the forget-me-nots on the green slopes and leafy woods of Gorhambury, the small Bacon estate outside London. Such were Sir Nicholas' engineering abilities that Gorhambury was famous for having running water in every room, in those days. Little Francis also played with the mace and seals; those mighty symbols of Sir Nicholas' office in the Queen's government.

Elizabeth kept a sharp eye on him, this little son of hers, and quickly showed Lady Anne that her promises, like her policies of state, were kept only so long as it suited her purpose. Lady Anne taught Francis wise sayings out of her own wide learning, and pretty compliments also, which he could pay to his real mother when she came on her surprise visits. The wayward and unpredictable monarch admonished Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne to give him a royal upbringing; as though she entertained some remote possibility of making public acknowledgement of Francis' palace birth. That wasn't to come until he was sixteen; and then it was forced from her in violent rage by the wily young Cecil, who was to become Elizabeth's evil genius.

* * *

The feelings of the English people at this time are neatly summed up by Waldman in his little masterpiece, "Elizabeth and Leicester": "Dismay, grief, anger, fear, every emotion of which a shocked and cheated people were capable, swirled around her throne. Though it was not against her, sheltered by the almost sacred reverence accorded Tudor majesty, that the fury chiefly raged, but against Robert. The world knew little of him yet, but that little was quite enough. His lineage obscure, his house founded upon corruption and twice dishonored within

If any attempts to poison Amy were made at that time or later they were unsuccessful. Amy Robsart Dudley was alive in March, 1560 when the new ambassador, De Quadra, wrote to his king that "Robert is assuming every day a more masterful part in affairs." And well he might for he ran no risk of shipwreck of his fortunes; being always under the favoring aspect of the Queen's good will he stood unmoved amidst the scorn and envy of the shrewdest courtiers.

The blazing romance between Elizabeth and her Master of Horse, Robert Dudley, was a matter of public knowledge -- and scandal, too, because Mrs. Dudley, though conveniently remote from court, was still very much alive at Cumnor Hall near Abingdon. There was speculation that Robert would divorce Amy; but in November, 1559 long before Elizabeth was pregnant with her first child by Robert Dudley, Feria could report in all seriousness to the king of Spain: "I have heard from a person who is accustomed to giving me veracious news that Lord Robert has sent to poison his wife. Certainly all that the Queen will do with us in the matter of her marriage is only keeping the country engaged with words until this wicked deed is consummated."

Less than a year before, the Spanish ambassador, Feria, had reported to his king, Philip: "Lord Robert certainly spent New Year's Eve with Elizabeth in her private apartments."

In her long reign, insofar as they revealed the contradictory character of the immoral monarch.

The eight months of Elizabeth's pregnancy were as eventful as any

"The Royal Lovers"

CHAPTER TWO

"Someone did cry, 'Ay me! Ay me!'
'This, by his voice, should be my lord,' said she,
And from the great chamber to the landing ran; . . ."
Bacon

living memory, himself a traitor but recently restored, a parasite upon the royal bounty, an adventurer with everything to take and nothing to give -- the very last sort of man in every respect with whom Elizabeth's subjects would have chosen to have her name coupled."

True to her contrary nature the Queen flaunted her lover in the face of the Court. She had his quarters changed from the ground floor of the palace to the floor below hers. She heaped honors upon him, jewels, lands, privileges in trade which were a rich source of income, and cash to maintain him in the style befitting the consort of a queen. Eventually he was to become an Earl of the realm, the Earl of Leicester; but before that he had to pass the Trial by Ordeal. Lord Robert had to prove himself ready to sacrifice himself and all he possessed on the altar of the needs of the State, and of the Queen. England was the Queen, and the Queen was England for forty-two long years.

As their son, Francis Bacon, tells it in his Cypher Story, there had been a marriage ceremony of sorts between Elizabeth and Robert. This occurred while both were imprisoned in the Tower of London in April or May, 1554. The prison chaplain who performed the rite did so at Robert's dagger point, and all three knew that Robert was married to Amy Robsart.

Now, with Elizabeth on the throne and hot for a husband there was still Amy. Ashmole, in his "Antiquities of Berkshire", seems to be swayed by the "almost sacred reverence for Tudor majesty" in throwing the blame for Amy's murder on Robert's driving ambition for Elizabeth's hand and the throne. The Cypher tells a different story?

But in the Antiquities we read: "Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester . . . being a great favorite to Queen Elizabeth. . . it was commonly reported that had he been a bachelor or widower the Queen would have made him her husband; to this end, to free himself of all obstacles, he commands. . . (his man) Sir Richard Varney that he should first attempt to poison her, and if that did not take effect, then by any other way whatsoever to dispatch her. This it seems was proved by the report of Dr. Walter Bayly, sometime fellow of New College, then living in Oxford, and professor of physic in that university; whom, because he would not consent to take away her life by poison, the Earl endeavored to displace him the court. . . "

Ashmole, writing from a later time, is only a historian; but the new Spanish ambassador, de Quadra, in a November, 1559 dispatch to Philip, wrote: "that Lord Robert has sent to poison his wife."

And so the stalemate between the three continued on into the early months of 1560. Amy pining away for her husband at Cumnor Hall, and Robert and Elizabeth continuing their scandalous behavior in London.

There were affairs of state to be reckoned with also. French forces crossed over into Scotland and threatened the stability of Elizabeth's realm. In March she sent a force across the border to ally with the Scotch protestant rebels and throw the invaders out. When King Phillip

of Spain threatened to use this as an excuse for invading the British Isles, Elizabeth mollified him by offering to marry his cousin, the Archduke, and quieted the scandal at court by having Robert convey the proposal to de Quadra! By June the allied forces had taken the Scotch capital.

Also, by June, unbeknownst to her subjects Elizabeth was with child by Lord Robert! He should have foreseen the consequences of this; but resting in the loving care of Her Majesty, he thought no danger could ensue to him.

As Bacon tells it in his Cypher Story, the instant Her Grace awakened unto the truth of her condition the idea of her evil shame determined her; before the world was aware she decided to force Robert to "consent to rob the sweet young Amy of her mortal life."

Elizabeth had Lord Robert summoned and led him to her private chamber. There she reminded him that she had ever been constant in advancing him. From a prisoner in the Tower she had made him first Lord Lieutenant and Master of her horse, and by degrees to the most glorious state in the whole kingdom!

"Now," said she, "My Lord, I claim your hand, the gift my due by promise for which your honor and your faith is pawned. And I demand of you that you shall run a certain course; and in justice to me, with ostentation of all sorrow give forth that your wife is sick and cannot live; and get one of your gentlemen to send this young Amy to her death."

"Madam, what do you mean?" Robert exclaimed. "Must I perform murder upon my wife? Good Queen, this is but foolery."

"Who am I, sir, that you teach me? You will be the schoolmaster and undertake the teaching of me, and think I will endure it? You knave; you come of nothing and by Apollo to nothing you shall now return. I will make you beg at the gates like the vilest beggar in the land."

Dudley went down on his knees before her.

"Bend not your sturdy knees to me," she exclaimed in disgust. "Arise! Away, away, away! Tarry not, I know you love the woman and will not publish it that she is dead till I appear unto the world a trull! Now I see she is your treasure; she must have a husband while this child within my womb must punished be; but by the dishonor that I feel, I will kill you both."

"Now by the world, dear love," Robert pleaded, "heaven and fortune bar me happy hours, day yield me not thy light, nor night thy rest; if with dear heart's love, immaculate devotion and holy thoughts I tender not to thee, my beauteous princely Queen, the advancement of our child."

Elizabeth's harsh voice grew harsher still.

"Villain, tell me what state, what dignity, what honor canst thou demise to any child of mine? Thou art marked with a blot and damned

in the book of heaven. I swear I'll not trust him that mocks me once. I have an eye on you. If you love me hold not off nor keep peace between effect and hit. Yet do I fear your nature is too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way."

"Madam," Robert protested, "I cannot heave my heart into my mouth!" Reading no sign of pity in that marble face he knew so well, he turned away. "I understand thy meaning," he said slowly, "And by her death I will divorce me and set myself at liberty."

Triumph twitched the corners of her lips.

"If you will obey me," she said, "I will give you thanks in part for your deserts, and with deeds requite your gentleness."

"I truly shall obey you," Robert's eyes searched hers for meaning, "And for your part, will you celebrate our happy nuptial?"

"Yes, yes, I say." The woman's eyes flashed.

In set tones he vowed, "Then on the instant this vile deed shall with skill be done; and Madam, how like you this proceeding?"

"Stop!" It was the imperial gesture of the Queen again. "I tell thee make straight her grave, but do not trouble me with it. Just take heed that slanders do not live in the tongues of men against me. Now get you gone and tell my fool Pace I would speak with him."

The Court was rife with rumors about the Queen and Dudley during this summer of 1560, rumors which each courtier added to in his own way. Robert every day assumed a more masterful air about his affairs, hinting that another year would see him in a "very different position". Some said he would divorce his wife, others that he would have her poisoned. Elizabeth told the Duke of Norfolk she'd be "married ere six months are up."

And foreign ambassadors at the Tudor court, pressing the suits of various and sundry claimants for Elizabeth's hand, gave up and prepared to return home.

The affairs of England went exceeding well at the time. Her Secretary of State, Cecil, brought the Treaty of Edinburgh to a successful conclusion in that Scotch city, July 14th; and he hurried back to London with the token of the first successful peace ever concluded between the two warring nations, Scotland and England. Rightfully, he expected all the honors that a grateful sovereign could bestow. Instead, Elizabeth loosed a torrent of abuse and blame which sent him dazed and bewildered from her presence.

It was the crisis between Dudley and the Queen. Her Majesty was three months pregnant in August, and Amy Robsart Dudley was still alive! On August 13th, Annie Dowe, of Brentwood, was haled into court and sent to jail. Her crime? Gossiping about that "the Queen was with child by

Lord Robert."

The Court moved from Hampton to Windsor the last week in August, There it was that Lady Dudley conjoined the triangle by an audience with the Queen. As the whispered word spread, all the Court both men and women in their best array did come, as to a theater to feast and sport. The unwelcome arrival of the lovely lady did portend the overthrow of the Queen's favorite, or so they hoped, as the black-clad Amy with steps full slow did wend unto the throne. There the mighty Queen Elizabeth in royal robes, her head uprearing, proud and high looked round with stern disdain.

Amy, abashed to behold so many gazers that did stare upon her, held her hand upon her gentle heart as she walked amongst them all and stood before the Queen. She gave a comely courtesy.

"Welcome, mistress, may God bless thee and thine forever. Advance more near. What great despight does fortune to thee bear, that thou thus lowly abase thy beauty bright?"

"My Queen, God bless thee with long life, with honor and heart's ease. I am present here to desire my gentle husband home to recomfort me with his sweet company. In honor it doth behoove thee that rule this land and wear the crown of England, to dry the tears, the never ending woes of piteous wives and not to spend the dowry of a lawful bed."

"Mistress," frowned the Queen, "Art thou a simple, silly fool, or art thou crazy? How dare thou mutter and find fault with me? Am I unfit for state and majesty? Art thou not renowned in thy country home for thy scolding tongue? I know thou art!"

Elizabeth turned her baleful gaze on Amy's husband, standing nearby. Courtiers shrank away from him, like falling grain before the scythe. Dudley flushed, bowed, but stood his ground.

"Upon my life, make much of her, my gentle sir," Bess sneered at him. "By my faith, she is thine. Yet there's small choice in rotten apples. I pray thee, Dudley, doth she not swear to thee, 'By my troth' and 'In good earnest' and 'So God mend me' and by all the pretty oaths that are not dangerous?"

Before he could make reply Mrs. Dudley interposed.

"Madam," she said, "If he in public justifies thy scorn and tells thee to avoid heart burning, contentious uproars and wars; or that my bad tongue hath driven him from my side, turn your displeasures on my head and let destruction light on me."

"Come, man, thy consort pleads that thou art false to her," scorn curled Elizabeth's tongue, "And that thou by thy rest here in our court hath disgraced her good name."

At length he said to Amy, "Woman, what meaneth this? How fortuneth

this foul uncomely plight? Dishonor hunts thy foot and follows thee through every covert shade, discovering thy shame and nakedness. Thou wrongest the fair Queen with thy undisciplined, misshaped and wretched thoughts. Doubtest thou her honor, whose truth maintains the crown?"

"My Lord," said Amy in reply, and neither rustle of silk nor clank of sword disturbed the sweet clarity of her tones; the room was hushed. "If want of love hath left thy soul, do not this dishonor to my love. This baneful torment of my published shame for my little fault, is monstrous in thee. Thou art mine, who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious, loyal and neutral in a moment?"

She turned to Elizabeth, the righteous passion in her eyes full equal to the selfish rage in Her Majesty. Frightening were the words from those sweet lips. They spelled a curse.

"Malicious mistress of inconstancy, could not all hell afford thee such another devil? For well I wote, thou Empress of hell, he never wags but in thy company! Oh, revenge, come down to this world's light and welcome me, confer with me of murder and death and ease the gnawing vulture of my mind by working wreckful vengeance on my foes. So thou destroy these devils here and do shameful execution on her that him from my arms lulls to sleep. Damned be thy name that hath obscured my joy; thou hast confirmed my doubts; from thee my heavy haps had their beginnings. Restore him to me or I will from thy court and make discourse of thy adulterous deeds."

Making as if to go, Amy came aware again of the goggle-eyed multitude around her; she tendered them a worthy salute.

"All hail to this royal company that sit to hear this strange dispute." Amy's voice rang clear in the silence. "It joys me that such men of great esteem, such company of cutting knaves, do wait upon the damned English Queen that hath no virtue to maintain her crown. What fair dames be thou that wait attendant on thy accursed Queen?"

"To whom speakest thou?" At last Elizabeth found her tongue.

"To thee, base woman." Amy turned back to Bess, "Thou mighty rival of my love, the fatal author of my ill, unworthy of the English crown!"

"What then? Am I threatened against my throne? Depart my court, thou stale of impudence," Elizabeth swore at her, "Unless thou wouldst be parted from thy limbs."

Amy retorted scornfully, and wrecklessly, on the one point sure to arouse Bess to maniacal fury. "These words betray thou art base born and by descent sprung not from the royal line."

"God's wounds!" The Queen swore. "This comes too near. Thou shalt not from our court till we torment thee for this injury; thou shalt know we may not be abused like a forlorn and desperate castaway. Wert thou our sister, thou dare not say it."

Rage reddened the pale cheeks of the Queen. The very stars on her gown danced in anger. From the ranks of courtiers came prudent counsel from one wise in the ways of the Tudor wench.

"Fly! Fly," he cried, "Thou surely wilt be killed!"

"Thanks, my good Lord," replied Amy calmly, her eyes never leaving Elizabeth. "I fear her not, nor tremble a whit. I am not alone when all the world is here to look on me; and I believe that she will leave the killing out; but if she will not spare me, then what all is done, write an epitaph. I died for love."

The state of hellish cruelty within the soul of the proud and warrior Queen did overwhelm her artificial calm. Swearing a rude and savage oath, she stood, grasped her staff, strode forward and struck Amy full upon the forehead. Down she went, and out. Trembling with uncontrolled fury the Queen yelled.

"By that same sphere wherein thy soul shall rest, if Jove deny not passage to thy ghost, it now behooves me straight to make all well and kill thee quick!"

A dagger was at Elizabeth's side, worn against the ever-present fear of assassination. This she grasped and tried to draw forth, in vain.

"I think the devil be within my sheath," she swore, "I think I am bewitched and conjured fast by magic of this traitor here. I cannot lift my fist although a thousand hells added their force unto my arms!"

One of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting was shocked into action. It was Lady Anne Bacon. As she described the horrifying scene years later to young Francis, even then a silent witness in his royal mother's womb, her "woman's heart was set on fire with grief" as she saw sweet Amy felled "past sense and shame upon her back."

With her eyes full of tears, her heart heavy with sighs, Lady Anne pleaded with the enraged Queen to overlook love's foolish rage and spare the gentle lady's life.

"Madam, I beseech thee, stop! Oh thy hands conjure too, that thou the hearts of all thy subjects do not alienate from thee."

She threw herself between Amy's senseless body and the Queen.

"She hath dishonored us," shouted Elizabeth. "And by our noble mother and our God and for the honor of our crown, I swear 'tis meet this wretched rash intruding fool should be forever shent."

"Be not cruel or unnatural," pleaded Lady Anne, "Speak daggers to her, but use none. Let not the soul of Nero enter thy firm bosom. Let the stricken dear go weep; and give the world assurance of thy faith. What follows if they say that by this bloody deed, this murder of the wife, the Queen gets leave to feed and batten on her love."

"Peace, thou fool!" Elizabeth snarled at her, still struggling with her stiletto. "Anger hath a privilege worse than murder! 'Tis such beastly, violent outrage to do on me, and I swear she shall not escape my hand!"

But Lady Anne had courage, too; she stood fast.

"This is but a peevish wife that flies to him she loves," she pleaded, and thinking to divert Elizabeth, "Why art thou angry, Madam?"

"Did she not twit me with no father owning? The very thought that she did laugh at me and made me her pastime doth urge on my revenge." Thrusting the weapon from her in disgust she shook a long finger at Lady Bacon. "Have mind upon thy health; tempt me no further; I shall forget myself."

With this Her Majesty mounted the throne; still raging within her flashing eyes blazed out across the court.

"I am not a feather for each wind that blows; let her look for no less than death. She called our mother whore." And to Lady Anne, kneeling beside the dazed Amy. "Leave this weeping for the dead; thou art frightened with false fire; she is not dead. The smallest drop of blood doth fright thee all. Give her a drink of wine."

Lady Anne made for the nearest pantry and returned with a bottle of neat claret wine. With Robert's help she brought Amy to a sitting position and held the bottle to her lips. Amy thrust it away.

"I drink no other drink but tears," said Amy, thrusting the wine away, "brewed with my sorrow, meshed on my cheeks."

"Bah!" spat Elizabeth, "Her words be hypocrites, but we'll teach her to drink ere she depart. Faint hearted woman, arise and look on me."

Not a whit dismayed at the Queen's command, Amy rose, her freshly bleeding wound a rueful sight. Despite herself Elizabeth was moved.

"Come, thou fool, we grant thou can outscold us; set thee down. Here is a napkin, rub thy brows," she held out one of her own linens for Anne to give to her, "but remember thou, that she that playeth with a lion hath set a baleful period on her life."

With this sentence of death pronounced on her rival, the sinful despot beckoned to Lord Robert.

"Here is thy husband, he will direct thee hence. My Lord, absent thee from felicity awhile, but repair hither; we would have speech with thee."

Thus did brave, sweet Amy speed the ugly fate already sealed against her. Thus were the hopes and ambitions of Elizabeth's highest minister shattered. William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, after concluding the peace

treaty with the Scotch at Edinburgh had returned to London in high favor with the people, and with his Monarch, so he hoped -- and rightfully so. Any expectations of his that the crisis between Elizabeth and Robert would move into calmer waters, waters which his diplomatic hand could control, were dashed by Mrs. Dudley's showdown with Elizabeth. In "one of the strangest interviews recorded in history," according to Waldman, Cecil took his fears for England's future to the Spanish Ambassador, de Quadra. It was the first week in September, 1560.

As de Quadra wrote to King Phillip's half-sister in the Netherlands, later, Cecil "told me the Queen was conducting herself in such a fashion that for his part he thought it best to retire. . . He begged me for the love of God to warn the Queen of her irregular conduct and to persuade her not to abandon her business as she did. . . He said they were scheming to put Lord Robert's wife to death, and that now she was publicly reported to be ill, but Amy was not so, on the contrary she was quite well and taking good care not to be poisoned. . . "

If Cecil wasn't personally at Court when Elizabeth tried to murder Amy, he must have been fully informed of it by many of those present. According to the Cypher Story, when Robert Dudley returned from conducting his wife from the royal Presence it was only to suffer another storm of protest and abuse from the jealous Monarch. She received him in the comparative privacy of her ante-chamber.

"My lord, I pray thee is this thy slender care to help our child? Thou art too base to be entitled to fatherhood. There is no trusting thee."

From belittling him and the connubial fidelity he had displayed she turned to her own enormous and insatiable vanity.

"Who art thou that dares annoy so great a Queen? For behold, a dainty minion for the nonce with her beauty hath subdued thy thoughts, hath pleased the liking fancy of thy heart as if no more were left as fair as she. Tell me, is not my state as glorious as Juno's pomp, when tired with heaven's despoil she sped along the silver path unto her Jove?"

Then follows line after line of self-praise and vainglory until, tiring of it, she says, "Shall I be Helen in froward fates as I am Helen in my matchless hue? Hence with thy begging scold! Hence, caitiff, clogged with years. On pain of death revisit not the Court! Thou art unmeet to look upon a Queen, much less to be the father of a king!"

Being of the stuff of which loyal courtiers are made, Dudley rose to the Queen's challenge and vowed himself willing to give life, or wife, for the Crown.

"Madam," he protested, "not Iris in her pride and bravery adorns her arch with such variety, nor in frosty night doth the milk white way appear so fair and beautiful in sight as thou, sweet Queen of flowers. But, let me not shape a long defense of thee wherein consists the full of my offense. I did command her death, I erred that she is yet unburied.

But if it shall please thee to suspend thy indignation against me, I will rid the house of her."

"Sir, five days do we allot thee to remove her," was the royal command, "Inform thy wife she must away to horse; tell her I advise her to begone. Away."

"Within five day's space she'll be dead."

With a haughty smile of triumph at his reply she waved him from her presence.

The date of William Cecil's panic-stricken interview with de Quadra is not given by the wily Spanish ambassador, though he speaks of arriving at Windsor on Friday, Sept. 6, 1560. In the dispatch or letter describing the Cecil interview de Quadra also speaks of having an audience with the Queen and a day later, on Saturday the 7th, of meeting her on her return from the hunt.

Elizabeth did well in everything, including the use of the crossbow in slaughtering stags. This is one of the ways she satisfied her lust to kill, and she was lusty in everything she did! The deer had little chance in those times. Game-beaters herded the beasts toward a narrow defile through which the deer would come, one by one. The Queen waited in a nearby shooting stand, loaded crossbow ready. Why this organized target practice should have ever been dignified by the term "hunt" we'll never know, but it did enable Elizabeth to slaughter ten or fifteen animals in an afternoon of shooting. On this particular day in September, 1560 she probably saw her hated rival, Amy Robsart Dudley, in every deer she killed. Afterward she had an audience with de Quadra.

Among other things he quotes the Queen as saying "that Lord Robert's wife was dead, or nearly so, and begged me to say nothing about it."

As a matter of historical record, brave Amy's murder was^{not} accomplished until Sunday, September 8th. She was found with a broken neck on the floor of the great hall at Cumnor Hall, above her a broken balcony railing.

Lord Robert's man, Blount, carefully planted the possibility of suicide at the coroner's inquest; but in the deathless rhythms of Shakespearean meters Bacon describes it thus:

"In the end his damned knaves
The last service do for him.
They take advantage of an idle hour
And the two chief props of the castle's high stairway
Rive in twain.
Then to deceive this fair young saint,
They adorn and deck with garlands trim
The posts and pillars, that she may enter in.
And as she passed, the sweet smell did she praise.
Then whilst that night she in her slumber lay,

Someone did cry, 'Ayme, Ayme!'
'This, by his voice, should be my lord,' said she,
And from the great chamber to the landing ran;
And thinking the pillars steadfast and firmly stayed,
Did lean upon the rail and there awhile
As on a pillory looking through she stood;
But it, not capable to sustain a rush
Or the impressure of her palm, went down.
On the slippery standing
She tremblingly a moment stood and cried to heaven;
Then from human help exiled, with earnest moan
She on the sudden headlong dropped
Down, down, down to the hard court beneath,
And her neck asunder broke."

When the news of the murder broke upon the expectant country, Dudley's man, Blount, was on his way from Windsor to Cumnor Hall, not to assure that the deed had been thoroughly done, but to sound out public opinion in the neighborhood about the crime. As Waldman put it, "whatever the technical truth might turn out to be, no tribunal lower than the whole body of the English people was competent to pronounce sentence; especially if the end of the cause should find Majesty herself standing alongside her lover in the dock."

The Cypher Story contains no hint of what passed between Lord Robert and Queen Elizabeth when the news of Amy's death reached London. All that is known is that the Queen ordered him "to retire to his house at Kew and stay there under arrest until further notice."

This didn't prevent Dudley from corresponding with Blount over the progress of the investigation into the "tragedy" at Cumnor Hall. In this packet of five letters between the two seems to be the only written account of the proceedings. The official transcripts of the hearings on Amy Robsart's death and the verdict of the coroner's jury have long since disappeared. Robert and the Queen saw to that!

Waldman points out that the five letters are an "unsatisfactory group of exhibits in that they also serve as the only direct testimony to Robert's innocence and might therefore have been compiled for that purpose."

Might have been! They were! The history of the Elizabethan period is still beclouded with the truly magnificent propaganda put out by the Queen and her gang of accomplices in despotism.

Pirto, Amy's maid, suggested to Blount that her mistress' fall was "by very chance, and neither done by man nor by herself." Or at least that is the way Blount wrote it to Dudley. And, fortunately for the unholy lovers, that was the decision of the coroner's jury. Again, according to Blount, they found "no presumption of evil."

Strangely enough, after compiling a truly formidable pile of evidence pointing to Amy's murder, Waldman himself comes up with the limp verdict

of suicide! Nor anywhere in his little gem of biography does he give any indication of having heard of or of having read any of the Cypher Story.

Public clamor and public suspicion continued to point at Robert long, long after the law was satisfied. Apparently Elizabeth, the real instigator of the murder, was above reproach. Elizabeth's ministers in the Church of England preached against the rumored marriage in their pulpits. From across the Channel came direful messages to her Council. Elizabeth's ambassadors pleaded that everything be done to hinder a union between her and Lord Robert. While he continued to act more and more like the king-that-is-to-be. He took upon himself more of the intimate affairs of state, and kept his warm personal relationship with Elizabeth.

The Spanish ambassador predicted to his king: "She is in a fair way to lie down one evening the Queen and wake next morning plain Madam Elizabeth, she and her paramour with her."

And so it was. With the birth of their first child only a month away, Elizabeth and Robert were married in a secret ceremony in the London residence of the Earl of Pembroke at Christmastime. And none too soon, the little Prince of Wales was born scarcely a month later on January 22, 1561 at Windsor.

* * *

CHAPTER THREE

"Young Francis, Prince of Wales"

"To spend too much time in them is sloth;
to use them too much for ornament is
affectation; to make judgement wholly by
their rules is the humor of the scholar;
they perfect nature and are themselves
affected by experience. . . ."

From Bacon's Essay "Of Studies"

Mercifully for the little princeling the beastialities of his true parents were kept from him in his early years. In Lady Anne and Sir Nicholas Bacon, Francis had a father and mother as loving and thoughtful as any 16th Century boy could wish.

Elizabeth had a way of making use of the few virtuous men and women who served her, and of rewarding them little. This was certainly true of her stingy relationship with her Lord Keeper of the Seals, Sir Nicholas Bacon. He was one of the foremost lawyers in the kingdom and a renowned wit as well. When he and Lady Anne and their new "son" removed to Bacon's modest estate at Gorhambury, the Queen, with secret husband Robert and a motley array of courtiers, hangers on and servants, would ride out from London for a visit, presumably on state business, but actually to see the little Prince of Wales.

One piece of state business which Elizabeth asked her Council to expedite at this time was the elevation to Earldom of Robert, and to restore to his elder brother, Ambrose Dudley, the title of Earl of Warwick. This was half the Queen's promise to Robert Dudley for murdering his wife, to elevate him; the other half was to publicly acknowledge their marriage. The formal papers were processed in routine fashion, until they were presented to Elizabeth for her signature.

"The Dudley's have been traitors for three generations!" she swore, and jerking the ever-ready stiletto from her side she slashed the paper to ribbons.

Robert was to become Earl of Leicester three years later but never would she acknowledge him her husband and master. In fact she was so blinded by the conceit common to all dictators that she expected to rule England forever! -- and absolutely refused to make any preparation whatsoever for her succession. Eventually it even became treasonous to talk about it.

Robert was used, as was any other subject who suited her purpose, to preserve the kingdom. Even as the fruit of their union lay in his crib at Gorhambury, Elizabeth chose Robert, and her obvious need for a husband, to help thwart a threatening religious war with Catholic Spain.

First she sent Sir Henry Sidney to the Spanish ambassador, de Quadra, with the startling proposition that if the King of Spain would endorse Robert Dudley as her proper husband, she would deny Protestantism and embrace Catholicism. She would then have Dudley as King-Consort lead a delegation to the Council of Trent. De Quadra's joy at this proposal would have known no bounds, had he been sure this offer came from Elizabeth herself; but he knew that Sir Henry was Robert's brother-in-law; so he hedged, waiting direct word from Elizabeth. This he received from Her Majesty two days later; but the wily Spaniard asked her to commit herself in writing, something tangible he could send to his lord and master, Phillip.

That decisive step never came. What de Quadra finally realized was that the proposal would put the King of Spain in the position of endorsing her marriage to the most unpopular of her nobles, Robert Dudley, the man who only months before had clouded his name with suspicion of the murder of his wife, Amy Robsart!

Elizabeth and her Secretary of State, Cecil, saw to it that word of the negotiations leaked out, much to de Quadra's annoyance. The final effect on the Catholic faction among Elizabeth's nobles was to make them remarkably cool toward the King of Spain for even thinking of endorsing the hated Dudley. While on the other hand Cecil's Protestant faction publicly thanked Elizabeth for resisting this Romish attempt to gather England back into the Church.

Sir Nicholas Bacon and Lady Anne were members of that Protestant faction. This meant that little Francis was brought up in a household free of the influence of the corrupt priesthood of the Papacy. Lady Anne was unusually well educated even for that day. It was not uncommon for the children of royalty to start learning their alphabet at the age of two. Usually, of course, this started at home with one of the parents or the family chaplain. In little Francis Lady Anne had a child who was unusually "sweet to the eye and heart" and with the "grace and dignity of the courtier". We can be sure she began to inform his mind in those first years because mind he had, enough to charm every one of the nobles at court, until they learned to fear it.

Francis was at the very center of the government of England all his life, with the exception of those two years in France; there he was at the center of power also. In his earliest years it seems that Elizabeth did have some notion of preparing him for the succession. She watched over him closely, riding down to Gorhambury on the slightest pretext to see her "Little Lord Keeper". The arrival of her splendid retinue, all on horseback, would bring him from the daisies and forget-me-nots of Lady Anne's gardens to pay his wee compliments to the Queen.

She in turn would ask for evidence of his learning and the little

Prince would lisp some wise saying in all seriousness to the great glee of the courtiers. Charming though Gorhambury was it was scarcely adequate for living in the high style required of the Keeper of the Seals of Queen Elizabeth. This was just another example of her niggardliness with those who weren't servile enough to crawl in the gutters of her corruption. It was during one of these sudden visits that she chided Francis' supposed father, Sir Nicholas Bacon.

"My Lord Keeper, your house is not great enough for your person!"

"Madam," Sir Nicholas bowed, "I fear you have made my person too great for my house."

In later years young Francis confided these sweet memories to the Cypher Story, saying, "It liveth, as do dreemes of yesternight, when now wee close our eies -- the statlie moveme'ts, grace of speech, quick smile and sodaine anger, that oft, as April cloudes come acro the sunne yet as sodainely are withdrawn, fill'd us with succeeding dismay, or brim'd our cup immediately with joy.

"It doth as ofte recur that th' Queene, our roial mother, sometimes said in Sir Nicholas' eare on going to her coach: 'Have him wel instructed in knowledge that future station sha'l make necessary.' Naturally quick of hearing, it reaching our eares was caught o' the wing, and long turned and pondered upon, but we found no meaning, for all our witte, no whisp'red woorde having passed the lippes of noble Sir Nicholas on the matter. It was therefore long ere we knew our birth roial, and the fond love of both foster parents was restraunte and staye to our young spirit when the wild and fierie tempest sodainelie brast upo' us. This dread force would otherwise have ruined, wasted and borne us adrift like a despoiled harvest."

Like all other English school children of the nobility we can suppose the Prince of Wales had his hornbook with its alphabet and Lord's Prayer in Latin. These must have been mastered with ease under Lady Anne's tutelage and his hungry mind moved on to French and Italian. In every portrait of the school teacher of the times there is usually a book in one hand and a birch rod in the other. As far as education is concerned England has always been the land of flagellation. The harshness of School masters, bordering on sadism, has become legendary. The one glaring exception at that time to this "spare the rod and spoil the child" dictum was Roger Ascham, the beloved teacher who had polished Elizabeth's mind to its diamond brilliance. He was also instructor to Phillip Sidney, among others, and Elizabeth saw to it that Francis came under the influence of the benevolent pedagogue. Ascham was guilty of the radical notion that a child would learn more and learn it better from praise for his good work rather than from beatings. But learning came so easy to Master Francis Bacon, his great mind was so hungry for learning from the very beginning, that it is doubtful the rod was ever needed in his case. And of course for children of noble blood education was much, much more than just grammar, logic and rhetoric. This tedium was relieved by lessons in music and dancing, riding, fencing and court etiquette. We can be sure that in the love-filled, cultured household of Queen Elizabeth's

Keeper of the Seals, Sir Nicholas Bacon, England's King-to-be enjoyed a healthier all-around development than he would have had under the direct eye of his psychotic mother, Elizabeth.

At the age of 13 in 1573, along with his inseparable half-brother Anthony, the Prince of Wales was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge. There young Francis spent three long, cold cheerless years under the hard eye of Whitgift. This taskmaster, later to become Archbishop of Canterbury under King James, would have none of Ascham's nonsense about education. The headmasters were more interested in administering discipline than in teaching the humanities, so low had scholastic ideals fallen under the domination of the Roman Catholic Church.

The worst example of this kind of pedagogic rascality was the notorious Dr. Kaye, who passed on in July, 1573, only three months after Francis came to Trinity; but his contentions with the students impressed themselves so indelibly on young Francis' mind that he enshrined him forever as the hot-headed French physician, Caius, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor", foreign mannerisms, Latin-spelled name and all. The National Dictionary of Biography says that Dr. Caius had difficulty maintaining his authority among his students at Gonville Hall because he was suspected of wanting to restore Catholic doctrine. The students heartily disliked him and he "retaliated vigorously on the malcontents. He not only involved them in law-suits which emptied their slender purses, but visited them with personal castigations, and even incarcerated them in stocks. Expulsions were frequent, and not less than twenty of the fellows, according to the statement of one of their number, having suffered this extreme penalty."

Under this harshness it is no wonder that the students, when finally free of the school day which began at seven and ended at five, would break out in the wildest dissipation. The best-kept records of college life in those days seems to be of the amounts of beer and ale consumed by the would-be scholars. We doubt much if Francis entered into such goings-on with enthusiasm. The bias of his personality didn't seem to need such releases. In all his early years, and late ones, there is no barest hint of scandal. Time was too precious to this budding genius whose ultimate goal was to reform the Western world! He chafed under the outmoded teaching methods of Whitgift. The Reformation had supposedly freed England from the control of Rome, but the dogma of an antiquated and thoroughly corrupt clerical system still lay heavy on the educators.

The philosophy taught, of course, was that of Aristotle, as twisted by the clergy to fit their preconceived notions of how the universe was created and man appeared in it. Their misguided efforts to impose this caricature of truth on young Francis stirred nothing but righteous rebellion in his heart and created such a complex of distaste of Cambridge and Aristotle that he never did master that Greek philosopher's ideas; this in spite of the fact that in later years Francis Bacon showed an encyclopedic grasp of all knowledge available in the Western world.

Stifled by the spiritless scholastic system, and sickened by the cheerless environment, Francis and Anthony left Trinity College after

less than three years of study and that, as Francis wrote later, would have to be unlearned.

The miserly Elizabeth was never one to reward integrity with anything but words, which cost nothing. Sir Nicholas Bacon was in that pitifully small group of courtiers in her court, Sir Henry Sidney was another, honest men who held service to the Crown above personal gain, and they gained little.

Thus Sir Nicholas Bacon was never a man of means in Elizabeth's government. This meant that when Francis and Anthony quit Trinity College they had to go to work -- well, not quite, their father sent them to study law at Gray's Inn, London, in 1576. Outside of the church or the military this was about the only profession open to sons of noblemen in the 16th Century.

So, at sixteen, Francis Bacon began to prepare himself for that legal career which, at fifty-five, culminated in his appointment to the highest legal office in the land, Lord Chancellor. But it wasn't his mother who conferred this honor upon him; for she lived ever in deathly fear that his tremendous capabilities would put him on the throne in place of her.

The researches of William T. Smedley and George V. Tudhope have thrown more light on the education of the Prince of Wales after he quit Trinity. These two Baconian researchers believe that the book "Academie Francois", or Francis' Academy, printed first in Paris in 1578 and in London in English as the "French Academie" in 1585, was Francis Bacon's first published work. It is a prime example of his continuing need to conceal himself as the author and yet put his life and teachings before the world.

Francis may well have started his writing of the "Academy of Francis" through making notes of the discussions which took place under Sir Nicholas Bacon's watchful eye there at Gorhambury. But certain it was that Francis caused it to be published while he was at Blois with the French Court in February, 1578.

As Francis writes in the introduction to the first French edition of the famous work, "I gathered in a Platonical garden with certain companions, discoursing together of the institution in good manners, and of the means how all estates and conditions may live well and happily. And though a thousand thoughts came then into my mind to hinder my purpose, as the small authority which youth may or ought to have in counsel amongst ancient men; the greatness of the matter subject, propounded to be handled by years of so small experience; the forgetfulness of the best foundations of their discourse, which for want of a rich and happy memory might be in me. . . "

Here we have Francis, at the age of eighteen, apologizing for his comparative youth at the time he and his young companions are discoursing in philosophy at a Platonical school established for his benefit by his foster father, perhaps at the Queen's suggestion.

Sir Nicholas Bacon evidently shared Francis' distaste for dry scholasticism in the Universities of his day, not to mention the "over great license and excessive liberty granted to them", and, as Smedley says of the first chapter of Francis' Academy, "He (Sir Nicholas) took unto his house four young gentlemen, with the consent of their parents who were distinguished noblemen."

There, in preparation for their further studies, the foremost lawyer of the kingdom shared with them his worldly wisdom, for their information and for their protection in the corrupt life of the court they were even then entering. Then he "brought into his house a tutor of great learning and well reported of his good life and conversation, to whom he committed their instruction."

Francis doesn't name this tutor but it could very well have been Mr. Duncombe, mentioned in the first volume of Spedding's "Life and Letters of Francis Bacon". "After teaching them the Latin tongue and some smattering of Greek he propounded for their chief studies the moral philosophy of ancient sages and wise men, together with the understanding and searching out of histories which are the light of life."

This study was closely supervised by Bacon's foster father and by the fathers of the other three who made up this fortunate company. The original intention was to have the philosophical discussions in Latin and Greek, not unusual in that day; but after observing the boys limping along in the alien tongues the fathers wisely decided that they continue their disputations in their mother tongue, English. And here, no doubt, was born Francis Bacon's mighty resolve to make English the foremost language of the world, suitable alike for scholar, scientist and layman. Here also he learned the value of Cyphers for concealing important matter from prying eyes! In "Academy Francois" he used Cicero's technique of concealing the source of important sayings by attaching unimportant names to the printed matter.

Sir Nicholas was concerned that the boys have most pleasant surroundings for their weighty discussions. The green arbors of the gardens of Gorhambury served very well for the three weeks of concentrated discourse which went on, two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon, every day except Sunday.

Francis writes that the arguments over the mighty ideas of the ancients waxed so hot that the discussion period sometimes doubled its length. The boys were apparently allowed some freedom in choosing their daily subjects and spent long evening hours reading and taking notes for the next day's class.

"And thus all four of us followed the same order daily, until every one of us had intreated according to appointment, both by the precepts of doctrine, as also by the examples of the lives of the ancient Sages and famous men, of all things necessary for the institution of manners and happy life of all estates and callings."

Then Francis goes on to say that he would like to honor his companions in the Academy by naming them, but thinks better of it and gives

them the fictitious titles of "Aser which signifieth Felicity; which is as much to say as Truth; the third Aram which noteth to us Highness; and to agree with them as well in names as education and behaviour, I will name myself Achitob, which is all one with Brother of Goodness."

Smedley points out that Achitob yields the suggestive anagram, Bacohit (or Bacon hid). The reasons why this genius of English philosophy was forced to hide much of his writing under various masks will soon become clear. When "Academy Francois" was registered at Stationer's Hall, London in 1585 the author was given as T. Bright, only the first of the many names or masks which he used. Six years earlier young Francis used the pen name T. Bright when he had his poem, "Shepherd's Calendar" printed in 1579. His book on popular psychology, "The Anatomy of Melancholy", was ready for the printer in 1586; this was registered at Stationer's Hall under the pen name T. Bright. And in 1589 Bacon published his book on Shorthand under the same name, T. Bright.

* * *

CHAPTER FOUR

"Curst be the time of thy nativity!"

"A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
And as with age his body uglier grows,
So his mind cankers. . . "
Prospero describes Caliban in "The Tempest".

Elizabeth kept an eye on her young Prince of Wales, as she did on all things going on in her kingdom. It had one compensation for Francis, he was close to the seat of government at all times and could watch the fascinating plays for power and fame which continually swirled around the mighty monarch. Not in all of his first sixteen years did Francis receive one hint as to his true parentage, though the tale of a son to Elizabeth and Leicester was still making its way about the kingdom. It came to the ears of young Robert Cecil, son of Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State, Lord Burleigh. This youthful paragon of evil determined to have the truth of it from the lips of the Queen, herself!

There is no indication in the Cypher Story that Cecil had prior knowledge for sure that Francis Bacon was the Prince of Wales, but when the revelation came Francis was at court and heard the Queen's outraged confession of her motherhood. Cecil tricked her into it to revenge Elizabeth's slighting references to his hunchbacked deformities, so well described by Francis in the Word Cypher.

"His head, by its own weight and heaviness,
Turning his neck over on one side,
And upon it he had a mole, a sanguine star
That was a mark of wonder.
His limbs were so abortive, defective and loose jointed
That he staggers in his feeble step.
Taking note of his abhorred aspect and beastly,
Prodigious face, women were as afraid of him
As of the devil. . .
If they by chance be left alone with him
They shortly weep and howl."

"I saw him once break into a mad passionate speech," writes Francis
"And entreat the queen to dismiss them from the court!"

But she condoled his mishap and smiling to Cecil said, "They are a company of fools. Let them laugh and be merry. They would rather lose a friend than a jest. God in heaven, man, you no cause to complain. They would make me the subject of calumny, for want of change."

Then Elizabeth calls to her one of her fair company, the daughter of Lord Scales.

"This good gentleman is not ashamed to confess that he takes infinite delight in singing, dancing, music, woman's company and such like pleasures, therefore, he wouldst have thee dance. And fair goddess, fall not deep in love with him."

"Does the lamb love the wolf?" saith the lady. "Give me good excuse, madam, for I am sick and capable of fears. If he were but grim I would not care. I then would be content, for then I should love him. But as all may witness, he is fair."

Tickled with this good answer the Queen said, "He is a happy man; take his arm and go along with him; enjoy the brightness of this clear light and those nimble feet."

Francis observed to himself "a blow with a word strikes more deeply than a blow with a sword" and knew that Cecil was more galled with his royal mistress's wit than he was with his merry companion. He went with the poor maid, and buried in silence, stood like a blasted tree amongst them.

Those beautiful girls in consternation like bashful, solitary, timorous birds, avoided Cecil. They broke away from him as if he were a mad dog.

Cecil, who from the hour of his birth was weak, sickly and deformed, stood like a hapless wretch, misshaped and sullen knave, plunged in melancholy while his companions were busily discoursing behind his back. All deformed persons are exceeding bold, first in their own defence as being exposed to scorn, but in process of time by a general habit; also it stirreth in them industry, and 'specially the kind to watch and observe the weakness of others, that they may have somewhat to repay. And this foul devil, Cecil, was as hard-hearted, unnatural a monster as the devil and his ministers need have.

Cunningly he devised a way to be revenged upon the soft, silly maid and at the same time himself to be honored and highly magnified. This monster of a man tricked his fair companion into jibes at the worth and honor of the Queen. At which he thundered out in a big voice for all to hear.

"All this condemns you to the death to so much dishonour the fair Queen!"

The complexion of the maid changed from pale to red, from red to pale. As falcon to the lure flew the Queen to Cecil to ask what he had

heard about it.

"Madam, this innocent and pure model, moved for love of thee, told me thou art an arrant whore and that thou bore a son to noble Leicester. I pray thou give her chastisement. Either thou must, or have thy honor soiled with the attainder of her slanderous lips."

Holy St. Michael what a change was here! As a painted tyrant the Queen stood and like a neutral to her will and matter did nothing. But as you often see against some storm a silence in the heavens, the wrack stands still, the bold winds speechless and the orb below as hushed as death, anon the dreadful thunder doth rend the region. So, upon mine honor, you should have heard the great Queen roar against the fair daughter of Lord Scales.

"By Holy God thou liest, dishonorable, vicious wench!
We were married to Leicester by a friar
A tried holy man -- and if our dear love
Were but the child of state, it should be told.
The world should know our love.
Our master and our king of men.
Small glory dost thou win
To frame this public, foul reproach.
Behold the open shame which
Unto us this day is wrought
By such as hate the honor of our name.
And shalt thou do him shame?
By God, we will cut and mince
The throat that doth call us a common whore!
Like to a Turkish mute
Thou shalt have a tongueless mouth."

Shreiking, Mistress Scales turned and fled and chasing after her in rage and malice bounded Elizabeth, her sunny locks jouncing down over her temple like a golden fleece. In hot pursuit of the terrified girl the Queen actually ran out of her gown but unheeding sped along in her shift, the courteriers scattering before them like frightened quail. The girl slipped and fell, lying motionless on the floor. To shame her further Elizabeth grasped the girl's skirt and flipped it up, exposing all, then grasped her hair in both hands and banged her head on the floor, screaming and swearing.

"I'll unhair thy head; thou shalt
Be whipt with wire and stewed in brine,
Smarting in lingering pickle.
I'll spurn thine eyes like balls before me
I will teach thee to slander me --
Thou hast lived too long."

Suiting her action to her murderous rage Elizabeth rose from astride the girl to grasp for a dagger in the belt of a nearby courtier. The girl essayed to rise and flee again but Elizabeth was on her and down they went on the slippery floor, the Queen striking at the snowwhite

breasts, the girl pleading for mercy as she twisted and turned from the fury. Elizabeth heeded her not but because of the slippery floor which would not let her stand tossed the dagger aside and stamped at the girl's breasts. The poor creature swooned from pain and shock and lay there like a weary lamb.

Sixteen-year old Francis Bacon was present at this pagan scene, which took place some time in September, 1576. With the rest of the court he stood there in painful silence, tears in his eyes to see such wrong.

"I swear mine ears ne'er heard such yells, nor mine eyes such fury and confusion, horrible. Thou shouldst have seen the poor maid's blood paint the ground, bleeding from the lips."

Resolution overcoming the training of the young courtier he braved the hateful mask of death and moved to the Queen's side, touched her arm.

"Fair Queen, I kiss your highness' hand. See, see, oh see what thou hast done! Pause in God's name! Be not as barbarous as a Roman or a Greek. Good madam, patience. May not I remove the maiden?"

The wrath of the enraged Queen an earthquake fell on young Bacon's head and all his glories in that woman he forever lost. She turned on him with thunder in her voice.

"How now, thou cold blooded slave,
Wilt thou forsake thy mother
And chase her honor up and down?
Curst be the time of thy nativity!
I would the milk the nurse gave thee
When thou suckst her breast
Had been a little ratsbane.
I am thy mother. Wilt thou stoop now
And this good girl take away from me?"

Amazed, humiliated, aghast, astounded, the youth stood there, speechless. Again the Queen assailed him with the bitter truth.

"Slave! I am thy mother.
Thou mightest be an emperor, but that I will not
Bewray whose son thou art;
Nor though with honorable parts
Thou art adorned, will I make thee great
For fear thyself should prove
My competitor and govern England and me."

With shock piled on shock, the youth's legs gave way beneath him and he sank to the floor.

"Fool! Unnatural, ingrateful boy!" snarled the Queen. "Does it curd thy blood to hear me say I am thy mother?"

No word of this was lost on the young Italian Jew, Cecil, standing close by, wrapped in the silence of his angry soul. As Elizabeth stooped over Francis to say "Thou art my son", the fury of his heart in his deformed face portrayed, but he shut up his choler in secret thoughts and began those deep engendered plans that kindled into flame at Lord Essex's death years later and blocked forever Francis' path to the throne. Robert Cecil moved closer to the Queen.

"I am very sorry this mishap has occurred."

The Queen composed herself somewhat, "The matter is at an end."

"I will take dishonor upon me and so your honor is saved."

"Sir," she replied to the hunchbacked toad, "That can I not do with my honor and you less with yours."

Her blunt reply confused the devilish schemer but for a moment. "A princess of such great policy, profound judgement and reputation should not give abroad to the world such a fame, for you will be thought the lady into the dispute for the preservation of your honor, but if the charge is cast upon me of raising up this broil, the lady will impute it to my rage and no one will go higher."

"I tell thee, let me hear no more!" commanded Elizabeth. "She hath dishonored me; and if she hath forgot the honor and virtue of her sovereign, I will banish her company and give her as a pray to the law and shame. Look thou," she turned her baleful glare on Mistress Scales, still naked and bleeding on the floor, but now conscious, "these soul offenders that defile nobility and my honor shall be punished."

"But fair Queen," objected Cecil boldly again, "if you will use your sceptre not to control but to kill, the world will question your wisdom."

"Trouble me no more," said the Queen.

"I do repute you every one my foes.

I'll pardon her, but wench,

Take heed! Take heed!

Such as thou dies miserably.

We have an ill-devining soul,

And either our eyesight fails us, or we, methinks,

See thee now as low

As one indeed in the bottom of the tomb.

Thou mumbling fool,

Utter thy gravity o'er a gossip's bowl,

For here we need it not.

Great God, all our care hath been

To have this secret hid!

And now to have a wretched, puling fool,

A whining mammet in her fortunes tender,

Tell it in company of the whole court!

Thou shalt not house with me.

Dry thine eyes and go, get thee hence!

I will pardon thee, but, my lady wisdom,
We hope thou wilt hold thy tongue
And let good prudence
Smatter thy gossip. Go; speak not,
Nor answer us not; or by this hand
We will yet teach thy tongue
Proper wisdom. And thou, my son,
Thou foolish child, a pack of blessings
Light upon thy back.
Speak thou not of this
That thou has heard, but go.
Speak not; begone! I desire thee
To know no more."

But then this evil monster heaped another curse upon poor Francis' head, "Look, let thy lips rot off e'er thou speak of this. Get you gone!"

Stupefied, the Prince of Wales rose, turned and with eyes blinded by tears took his uncertain steps from the court. Once free of the palace he hurried city-ward, to York House his home. He had but one thought in mind, Utterly disregarding the Queen's stern command to keep a silent tongue he sought out his supposed mother, Lady Anne Bacon, and the noble gentleman he thought his father.

Agonizing were the thoughts that coursed through the boy's heart as he ran to that Gothic mansion on the Strand. "I'll tell mother of the cruelty of our sovereign Queen. Her delicate tenderness will find it-self abused by the false woman that governs this warlike isle. It is preposterous to lose my mother with the pretense of this Queen, this subtle lock and key of villainous secrets. Her story is outrageous. How was I concealed? So kind a father as mine would not hide what I have heard. Neither he nor mother so rich, so well allied, fortunate and happy, concocted with the Queen this dreadful invention to delude and dishonor me."

He burst headlong into the hall to find Lady Anne ready to leave.

"Madam, I would speak to you on matter of great moment to both of us!" he exclaimed. "Therefore I pray you return."

"Son," said she, "I go but to ride, and shortly shall be back. Will it not be time then to tell me?"

"Not so, madam; your honor and mine is questioned. I cannot wait. I have vowed to understand the reference of the Queen and clear your reputation and my honor at once!"

"Hold, rash intermeddling boy!" She glanced at the servants present. "Follow me to my withdrawing room."

In silence they passed into her ladyship's study.

"Now, what have you to say to me? Let me truly hear what scandal

hath this flame kindled."

The fair young prince dropped on his knee before her and hung his head in embarrassment.

"Pardon me, madam. Today the Queen told me she is my mother and not you."

"What? What's the matter with this distempered Queen?" exclaimed Lady Anne in angry astonishment. "Did she say I am not thy mother?"

"Aye, madam."

"Fie, sir, fie! Thou liest! Hast thou not misunderstood her words?" But even as she spoke the tell-tale tears of anger and humiliation flooded her eyes.

"Indeed, madam, I fear not," replied Francis stoutly.

"Thou knowest better," she said as she summoned heart and mind to silence Francis' blazing curiosity and shame. "Make thy peace for moving me to rage. Her son? Ah, false, deceitful, double-eyed woman, she respects not her word, betraying unto him that which upon her sacred honor she with deep oaths had sworn to keep."

Lady Anne's eyes were not upon Francis now but upon that winter day, sixteen years earlier, when the new little Prince of Wales was hidden in the box as she bore him home to this very house on the Strand.

"When she did give him me she swore never to reveal it!"

Francis was insistent. What were the events of sixteen years ago to this all important moment.

"I crave your pardon, madam,
I am come to know the secret of my childhood.
Were you both my mothers?
You do not speak?
Is't so? Is my honored name of no note?
O, the blest gods! O, the shame on't!
I must die; I cannot bear such dishonor.
I can look no man in the face again."

The good Lady Anne turned pale at his denunciations, searching in vain for words to right a wrong beyond any possibility of righting as the young Prince pressed her for the truth.

"Do you confess I am not your son?
What do you know? Here on my knee
I charge you as heaven shall work in me
For your avail, tell me truly
Whether, good madam, you are my mother.
Comfort me. Cut not off my good name."

Am I possessed with an adulterous blot?
Is my blood mingled with the crime of lust?
You see me here so full of grief,
Why will you not answer?
Are you deaf and dumb?"

"I know not how to make ye suddenly an answer in such a point of weight so near mine honor," the Lady protested, but the young Prince gave her no respite.

"Play me not false. Keep fair league with me. You are a lady; let me not live disdained, dishonored. I cannot tamely bear it. If it be that you are not my mother, I had rather have you tell me than let my eat my heart out in bitter grieving."

How youthfully brave but how utterly hopeless was the case and cause of Francis Bacon at sixteen. Mercifully, the future was hidden to him. Lady Anne decided to match him in directness.

"You will not relish the truth."

"Then the Queen did not lie?" The shock, the shame, the horror of Elizabeth's maniacal fury in the court swept back over him, only to be released in one long tirade against her and his own bitter fortune.

"Oh, unnatural mother,
Thy flesh being strumpeted, I do digest poison.
I would go to hell could I but
In the world beneath forget this loss of reputation!
And yet, Oh thou great God!
I do desire Thee, even from a heart
As full of sorrow as the sea of sands,
That thou by the figures of some hidden art
Transform me from this flesh,
That I may live to look on all their deaths!
Oh let her die with every joint a wound!
Oh unhappy son, dishonored in thy stock
Let all the sighs I breathe for this disgrace
Hang on my hedges like eternal mists,
As mourning garments for their mastered death!
Open earth, and take thy miserable son
Into the bowels of thy cursed womb!
Once in a surfeit thou didst spew him forth;
Now for fell hunger suck him in again,
And be his body poison to thy veins.
False boding woman, thou tyrant of the land
Bolstering thy hateful head upon the throne
That God unworthily hath blessed thee with,
Oh God! Lay it as low as hell.
Set thy angry soul upon her wings,
And let her fly into the shade of death.
Clothe the sun's sphere with a triple fire.
Sooner than his clear eye

Should suffer stain or be offended
With sight of this detested, hateful, withered hag!"

Lady Anne finally raised her hand in protest.

"Stay, have done! End thy frantic curse, lest to thy harm thou move God's impatience." As he moved to curse Elizabeth again she placed her hand over his lips. "Fool! Fool! Thou whettest a knife to kill thyself."

Francis swung his head away from her restraining hand and buried his face in his arms on the chair beside her.

"Ah, who shall hinder me to wail and weep, to chide my fortune and torment myself? I'll join with black despair against my soul and to myself be an enemy."

"I must tell you you do not understand yourself, boy. What means this scene of rude impatience? You have breathed against yourself a curse. You may not live your natural age because you taint thus the honor of your mother with your charm. But I hope curses never pass beyond the lips of those that breathe them."

"I will not think but they ascend the sky," he argued, "and there awake God's gentle sleeping peace."

"Fool! Like the fool of Israel, graceless Absalom, you will be used who by Jove's just doom his life closed 'twixt heaven and earth."

What prophetic words those were the Lady Anne uttered; the Prince of Wales would be used by Jove in a long, long life full of all bitterness before it ended "'twixt heaven and earth." And this proud boy, this genius of all that was best in England, saw himself as he truly was, a bastard without name, fortune or honor, the unacknowledged son of the ruler of the land. He raised himself slowly to his feet.

"Well, madam, at my death let heaven forever weep, making huge flood upon the land I leave to ravish them and their fairest fruits. And for my vanquished honor I will be the hellish instrument of heaven to chase all mists away."

The faintest of smiles passed Lady Anne's lips at this youthful cry of drowning England in tears and she said, "Fie, take it not so to heart. You need not fear dishonor. Your father is a noble gentleman who was properly married by law to the Queen, before you, child, were prisoner to her womb. I'll give you access to the midwife and the doctor who freed and enfranchised you."

Sunshine burst through Francis' gloom, though the hesitancy of disbelief was yet in his voice. "Pray God you prove it so. Most honored madam, who is my father?"

"A mighty prince of most renowned race, high in the court of England

and to gain his grace greatest ones do sue. Of greatest ones he greatest is in deed and word -- the noble Earl of Leicester."

"Where was I born?"

"In Windsor Castle. I was made privy to the marriage of your mother, and when you were born I secretly conveyed you out of the nuptial room in a round, painted box, carried you to my house and brought you up as my own."

"Why was I concealed?"

"The very force of circumstances made it impossible for Queen Elizabeth to own you as her son. She could not do it without betraying the secret of a very terrible crime which, led on by the great but licentious Syemour, she committed when a girl."

* * *

QUEEN ELIZABETH

A magnificent propagandist, Bess devoted much of her adult life to cultivating the public image of a Virgin Queen! But she had her first love affair at eleven and many after that. She bore at least three children, two of them to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The two were secretly married at the London home of the Earl of Pembroke only a month before the birth of their first son, Francis Bacon. The second son, Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex, was born several years later. Elizabeth was so fearful of losing her throne to Francis that she kept him under close surveillance, and out of public favor, for as long as she lived.



Elizabeth



Dudley

ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER

He was the Queen's royal consort. From love of Robert, Queen Bess raised him from a nobody with a tainted name to one of the foremost peers of the realm, a position which he occupied all his adult life. Though the need of fresh amours caused the two to wander down separate love paths in later years, they were devoted until the end. In the Cypher Story Francis says he earned his father's hatred early and thus had no support from him toward the throne or toward a public career. Whatever Francis Bacon eventually became -- as England's Lord Chancellor -- he owed to his own efforts and not to his selfish and profligate parents!

CHAPTER FIVE

"The hottest Bitch in Europe!"

"O pity, Venus, the dearth of love
That I stand in need of!"

Lady Anne took Francis back to the time in 1544 when she and Elizabeth were in their teens and staying with the last of Henry's wives, Frances Parr, widowed in 1542, and now married to Thomas Seymour, lusty Admiral of the British Fleet.

The night and morning carryings on of the handsome Admiral and the flaming redhead of the Tudors was the scandal of the household. Seymour's lusty passions were more than matched by the hot-blooded Tudor wench, driven by the madness of congenital syphilis which brooked no opposition.

"I tried to prevent the loose encounters of this lascivious man with her grace," Lady Anne told the young prince, "but when I did hint to her most mannerly how unstayed it was for the adulterous admiral to ascend nightly to her chamber and lodge with her she did strike me."

"Will you, then, wench, lesson me?" Elizabeth said. "Knowest you not his looks are my soul's food? He is full of virtue, bounty, worth and be seeming qualities, and I would be his wife. But, alas! alas! he is husband of my stepmother, whose unviolated wisdom, sober virtues and modesty plead for life."

Then in the Cypher Story follows this passionate avowal of love from the future Queen's lips:

"Alack! Alack! I have pined for food
So long a time that by longing
All my thoughts are visibly characterized
And Engraved.
O love! love!
Would that I, like a doting mallard
That claps on her sea wing
And after her love flies,
Could pursue thee
Between the heavens and the earth,
Till in our mad flight, out of breath,

Leaving the vasty height, down, down
Through the perfumed air we would sink
Into the wide open sea!
O pity, Venus, the dearth of love
That I stand in need of!"

According to Lady Anne Bacon it was only a few weeks after this that the Tudor wench came to her to plead for assistance in running away with the Lord Admiral because she, Elizabeth, was pregnant!

Trembling with fear the Princess said, "The law of England doth work summary vengeance on the joint partakers of this youthful offence, to have my wrists and shanks fettered and carried headlong to the magistrate a prisoner, to have sentence of death passed, to have my head severed from my body. . ."

"Mighty Princess," replied Anne, "I know your condition. Any searching eye may discover that you go great with child and must soon become a mother."

And then Elizabeth went off into another long and bitter diatribe at her condition and the frustrations of her life there in the house of the Lord Admiral, Thomas Seymour, and his wife, Katherine Parr. After spouting out her rages, her fears, her anxieties, she finally says to Anne, "What must I do to live?"

Anne coolly counseled her to pretend sickness and "stay in bed that your condition you may more easily conceal, deny yourself to all."

And consummate actress that she was, Elizabeth brought it off. In bed she lay until at last:

"The swelling infant, ripe,
Made pale her cheeks,
Chasing the royal blood forth
Her native residence, and
From the fortress built by nature
With fury sprung self-born,
And yet unborn.
For like a cunning instrument cased up
And bound with shame,
This sweet soul in speechless death
Liest in the bed as in a grave."

Anne was no midwife, only a girl, and not up to opening the natural shroud in which the baby was encased, so, "unhallowed, unmuzzled, it passed in silence to the fountain of all causes."

In the dead of night she took the tiny body, stole quietly from the building out through the garden to the nearby woods. There was a fishpond. It would have to do for a grave as she had neither time, the strength nor the tools to dig in that half-frozen winter soil. The pond, too, was covered with ice. Hysterical, shuddering with fear, she

ventured out toward an open spot, only to plunge into the icy water herself. Despairing of her life she floundered there until firm footing gave her the purchase to climb out and stagger back to the ungrateful, impatient Elizabeth.

"Where did you conceal the body, in the earth I hope."

"I plunged it into the water, your highness."

"Was it thrown into the water without any weight?"

"Aye, your highness."

"O, God! Others will know my shame. Some man will by chance find it and I will be in his power. Stupid, away in haste, and put it in the earth."

In despair Anne visited the pool again but of course could not see or find the infant body in the dark. Too honest to lie to the princess she told the truth when she returned half-frozen from the wintry night.

"O woe! O fortunes spight," wailed Elizabeth, "King Edward will hear I am a common stale."

Anne consoled her as best she could, helped to change Elizabeth's night gown and bed clothes, still bloody from the parturition. Even then the morning cock was crowing. Exhausted, they fell into that fitful sleep which boded ill for the day ahead.

Anne awoke to look into the eyes of the young King Edward. The sun was well up and shining into the room. Edward was grave and austere.

"Mistress, what body did you bear forth from the castle and, 'twixt eleven and twelve last night throw into the spring adjoining?"

Not knowing what Edward had heard or seen, Anne denied all.

"Fair lady, have you made such a sinner of your memory as to credit your own lie? What is between you two? Give up the truth."

"As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true."

With an expression of disgust, Edward called a porter waiting outside the door, "Hast thou brought hither the little child?"

Slowly advancing, the porter put the corpse into the hands of King Edward and he turned to Anne. "Ha, maid, the grave doth deliver up its dead. Behold, both of you!" And he cursed them roundly for as "more deep damned than Prince Lucifer. There is not so ugly a fiend in hell as thou shalt be, if thou has slain this child. . . ." But what Edward wanted was the name of Elizabeth's lover.

"I do suspect thee very grievously," he said to Anne. "Methinks

the sentence of damnation sounds; but this deadly blot in thee I'll pardon if thou wilt deliver the unholy man that hath my wanton sister in shameful, cunning lust enchained."

Anne loyally defended the princess Elizabeth, who lay as one asleep at the other end of the room, but Edward continued to curse and revile her for the lustful creature that she was.

"But our sister
Is to this law of nature corrupted
By indulgence; and when great minds
Through lust or benumbed wills
Refuse the moral laws
Of nature and of nation,
And persist in doing wrong
As it is known she before hath done,
When for some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Our great father, Henry the Eighth,
For her abominations with a tawny Moor
Turned her off and required her to live in oblivion.
For was she not even then given to all fleshly lust,
And so poured forth in sensual delight
That all regard of shame
And meet respect of honor she had put to flight?
And not love, but lust, was inclined,
A bawd of eleven years."

The young king then turned his rage upon Elizabeth's unnamed lover who "hath made the court his mart and turned it into a loathly stew; he shall expound his beastly mind in hell!"

Feigning sleep no longer Elizabeth rose from her bed to throw herself to the floor and twine her milk white arms around Edward's feet.

"O spare me! kill me not! Make me not the laughing stock of the kingdom. I am the daughter of a king and queen!"

"She that bore thee was no queen," sneered Edward, "and thou recoil from thy great father's stock when thou wallow in all fleshly mire and hast suffered this man to deflower thy virtue."

He pardoned her, threatening to put her away in a cloister; but as for the Lord Admiral, "I will advance the partaker of thy hateful, wicked love as high up as a scaffold."

Like the tigress she was, Elizabeth sprang to her feet flaming. She yelled at him.

"What, shall I call thee brother? No, a foe! a monster of nature! Shame upon thy stock that darest presume to gratify thy wrath by execution of me! Thou weigh this well. What! Wilt thou, that bear the balance and the sword with boisterous hand dishonor me? Thou shalt heat my blood no more. I tell thee I will not stoop my greatness nor my

power, whatso'er betide me, to speak thee fair that offer dishonor to my mother. Go, get thee gone! Have thy desire, and thou my nearest male of kincry fie upon my grave."

Her rage had now risen to the point of defiance.

"With whom am I accused? If I be condemned upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else, I tell thee it is a rigor and not law. This brat is none of mine; it is the issue of some rotten callet."

"Look, reprobate!" snarled Edward, as he pointed at her night gown, "behold thy shirt stained with blood!" And then he added his final note of triumph, known before he had entered the girls' apartment. "I know the name of thy worthless concubine. He hath confessed and I am resolved to have his head. Look, here he comes. He did betray thee."

Aghast, Elizabeth cried for mercy as her bearded paramour, Sir Thomas Seymour came in, unannounced. As Lady Anne described it to young Francis Bacon, Seymour walked like one confounded. She never saw such shame as he sued the young King to let him breathe, to go as a private man to a foreign land, as far away as Athens! But Edward was unyielding.

"I'll not pardon thee. Consenting to it would bark mine honor and leave my trunk naked. The discovery of the dishonor of my sister and the corrupt man saved would make all men abhor us. Hope thou not. It is impossible. Darest thou not die? Thou shalt have thy trial; away with him."

Without so much as a fare-you-well Edward departed Elizabeth's quarters and left the hapless three to their deep despair. Seymour did lose his head and Elizabeth her honor. She was banished from the court for two years, and to separate the two Anne was married off to Sir Nicholas Bacon. So, from 1551 to 1553, Anne and Elizabeth were under a cloud in the English court; young King Edward had turned his face from them. Then, as Anne described it to Francis that momentous day of the revelation of his birth, there in York House, "death, that sweet king-killer, by divine will cut off King Edward's life."

Poor young Francis, just turned sixteen in 1576, would not be relieved of his real mother's malignant presence for twenty-six long and heart-breaking years. For death "the sweet king-killer" wasn't to remove her from England's throne until the crushing fingers of one of Robert Cecil's ruffians closed around her scrawny neck one dark and stormy night in March, 1603. In her monumental ego Elizabeth thought she would rule England forever! But her evil genius, Cecil, no longer had any use for her and, according to the Cypher Story, ordered one of his men to strangle the old bag of bones. The feeling of relief which swept over England after this kind deed was felt as far away as Rome and was equally welcomed there, but for other reasons.

* * *

CHAPTER SIX

"An audience with the Queen."

"Damn you! I rather have lost my life
Than have such base dishonor blur my name;
And if I live, I will rule you, knave,
I will be revenged, and England's ground
Shall not yield you shelter from my wrath."

The next day was one of thoughtful musings for the young Prince of Wales. He was in the library of spacious York House, in the dear, precious world of his wonderful books. It was mid-afternoon and that wandering wasp, Robert Cecil, crept in, bared his head, and lowtling low unloosed his slimey tongue.

"Ha, my lord, now are you equal in rank with the best. All my services are at your command. Will it please your lordship to visit my poor house?"

"Sir, I have e'er now been better known to you, when, as a little child I have beaten you like a dog, and I advise you not to call me bastard or play the flowting jack with me!"

"I must confess, sir," continued Robert unabashed, "I could not trut my ears when the queen called you her son. It would have been better for her not to have published your birth, because the birth of a bastard is not an honor. How perfectly this mystery has remained undiscovered, appearing now in such a tragical manner."

Francis held his temper as best he could, in the face of the jeers from that twisted body and wolfish face.

"My good Prince of Wales," Robert mocked him, "I pray you tell me what is your parentage? Upon mine honor it is not yet known who your father is. There are two opinions about it -- one that you are the bastard son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, lord keeper; the other, that you are son and heir to Leicester. I incline to the latter opinion chiefly from a villainous trick of your eyes and a foolish hanging of your nether lip, that does warrant me in thinking you are son to the queen and Leicester. What is your name, Francis Bacon, or Francis Dudley?"

"Though my birth may be mean, Robert, I hope my fortune will be great. But I care not. In any case the honor and glory of being son of the Queen of England is enough; for by my mother's side at least I

fetch my life from men of royal siege. I shall promulgate what I am, for such nativity is a favor of the gods."

At which Robert Cecil managed a twisted bow, his crooked face in a horrible leer. Stung to the quick the Prince of Wales made a bitter riposte.

"While you come from an Italian Jew -- yea, from the base rank of all dishonesty -- and are ashamed to acknowledge the plainness of your ancestor's house."

And there they stood, the two who were to be mortal enemies for the rest of their days. Francis Bacon, proud scion of England's royal family, an almost perfect balance of heart, mind and body, and ruled overall by a spiritual grace second to none in England. And Robert Cecil, end result of generations of greed and depravity in that sink-hole of despotism, Rome, come to light from some fathomless hell in the bowels of the earth. Francis warned him.

"Let me tell you then once more I will beat your boundless tongue into silence and to pieces I will break you if you say I am a bastard. I fear you not. I have not got the strength to tamely stoop to you, whose heart is filled with arrogance, spleen and pride; and I tell you, you obscure, lousy Jew, I am dangerous! And by the great God of heaven I would rather let my head stoop to the block than stand your open envy and jealousy. I know you hate me, you dwarfish pigmy. I tell you I will break your neck if you mock me; and for I would be loathe to kill you, I pray you leave me."

But this deformed, perfidious slave to all that is vile in human nature was not to be put off with words, he was too much a master of them himself.

"By heaven, Francis, I mock you not. This is but in way of truth, sir. Come bear your fortune humbly, like the bastard you are, and come away to your mother. I was bid to come for you. 'Tis three o'clock and your noble mother bid me fetch you within a quarter of an hour. Therefore, follow me to the Queen."

"O, pity God! What further woe conspires against me?"

Visions of the Queen's cruel rage of the day before flashed through young Francis' tortured brain. Her wrathful shrieks sounded in his ears. Again, the glitter of the stiletto blinded him as Elizabeth sought for the heart of the wretched girl of the court. The Queen's relentless and implacable cruelty against her foes was legendary. New fears sucked the strength from his knees and he sank silently into the nearest chair. But there was no respite from the mad pace of events which had caught him up yesterday and tore him rudely from the Arcadian dream world of the sixteen-year old son of the Lord Keeper. Cecil's lip curled even higher at this display of terror.

"What do you fear? I muse your majesty doth not doff your lion's

hide and hang a calf's skin on those limbs which uphold so much honor. You fool, to brag and stamp and swear and frown in vain spite, and faint in unworthy fear if her Gracious Majesty doth merely call you for attending. But your Highness shall do well if you come at once. When kings and queens command, I confess I like not to disobey.

So, great sir, let us go. But tell me first
Are you not Phaeton Merop's son?
And do you not aspire
To guide the heavenly car,
And with your daring folly burn the world?
Will you reach the stars because they shine on you?
Or is it, please your grace, not your fault
That you resign the supreme seat,
The throne majestic, the sceptered office
Of your ancestors, your state of fortune,
Your due of birth and the lineal glory
Of your royal house? You must have patience
And embrace the load. Courage and comfort
And yet all shall go well. Are all things ready
For the royal time? When is the day
Of your royal coronation? Speak."

Then Cecil, that blasted tree, bared his fangs in a shrill cackle that passed for laughter. While Francis jumped to his feet so inflamed with this last mockery that tears of rage filled his eyes and stopped his tongue. The hate-filled Cecil, oblivious to all this, cackled on.

"Why dost thou not speak? Well, since you're tongue-tied and so loath to speak, why, noble lord, proclaim your thoughts in dumb significance to your slave."

Stung at last to action by this last jibe Francis did indeed proclaim his thoughts to the vile wretch and struck him to the floor, and in his fury, struck him again and again. Too shrewd to fight back, Cecil lay there and took it, senseless-appearing. So successful was this stratagem that Francis grew frightened that Robert really was injured and that he, being much the bigger of the two, would be called the bully. He got up, went to the library door and locked it.

"Arise, Robert, and give me thy hand. I am sorry I beat thee. Come, shall I raise thee up?"

Then Francis realized that the little monster was watching him warily through half-closed lids. He spurned the outstretched hand, groaned, and roused himself up, bitter over his disgrace, his wretched, deformed body. Gnashing his teeth he snarled back at Francis.

"Damn you! I rather have lost my life
Than have such base dishonor blur my name;
And if I live, I rule you, knave,
I will be revenged, and England's ground
Shall not yield you shelter from my wrath.

"You presumptuous fool; you dare be easier friends with me than fight with me. I know you are subtle, false and treacherous, and had

There they stood, those two; the one the apotheosis of evil from the foulest astral hell of Europe, the other one of the greatest souls to bless England with their presence. Francis had recovered himself now and looked calmly into the snarling face of the form before him.

Throne. I do know her spirit. . . "

Not suffer you to sit in England's royal

And for this blood of mine, I will

And for this stroke upon my crest,

To purge her fear I'll be your death.

Will be fearful of her life, and then

Abroad such prophecies that Elizabeth

Pitchy day for you. I will buzz

You! But beware! For I will sort a

O that I were a man to fight with

I will destroy you, for you are mine enemy.

Against you that do offend me.

Lay plots and inductions dangerous

Upon me in deadly hate of you, will

I that have the sight of wretful heaven

To answer it.

Will let hell make crooked my mind

My body so

I that since the heavens shaped

And play the dog.

That I should snarl and bite

And so I was; which plainly signified

O, Jesu bless us! He is born with teeth;

Wondered and the women cried

When that I was born the midwife

I who have often heard my mother say

I that have neither pity, love nor fear;

I that came into the world with my legs forward;

And descant on mine own deformity;

Unless to see my shadow in the sun

I that have no delight to pass away the time,

That dogs bark at me as I halt by them.

And that so lamely and unfashionable

Into this breathing world scarce half made up,

Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time,

Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,

I that am curtailed of this fair proportion,

To strut before a wanton, ambling nymph --

And want love's majesty

That I that am rudely stamped

And be revenged on you. You shall find

But I'll requite this dishonor

I'll not trouble you with words, not I;

you been killed when first you did breathe 'twould have been better for the world, and this I prophesie: that many a thousand which now mistrust no parcell of my fear shall rue the hour that ever you were born. The owl shrieked at your birth, an evil sign. And as you have said, teeth had you when you were born, to signify you came to bite the world. But think you I will thrill and shake at your crying, you crow? Now go hide your carbanado'd face, and let not one single word or despiht reach her majesty or I will give you repetition of like kind. Mistake me not. If you will curse, you rogue, be wise and curse the Hebrew stock that in spight put stuff to some she-beggar and compounded your grandfather. Hence, begone! but while you live keep a good tongue in your head. Repress the bastard in your conversation."

At this Robert Cecil reeled and crept forth from the room like a thievish dog. But Francis was to find to his bitter regret in later years what it was to anger this hound of hell; for Cecil became a man of tremendous influence in Elizabeth's government; and he did carry out his threat to do everything in his power to keep Francis off the throne of England. He succeeded and Francis failed.

While Cecil lived, no public honor, position or fortune ever came to Francis Bacon. As he wrote in the Cypher Story, "It never crossed my mind that my mother, the Queen, would join with such a degenerate being to foil her own child, otherwise Robert could have been circumvented."

When he left the room young Cecil swallowed his dishonor and let it be known that his bruised face had come from a fall from his horse. He never forgave Francis, but he covered his venomous rage with consummate skill. This false face, coupled with Francis' feelings of utter contempt for him, completely blinded young Bacon for years to the spider's web of frustrations and malice which Cecil wove about him. Robert successfully convinced the fearful Elizabeth that Francis would have the throne in spite of all and saw to it that she "with her own hand from the book of honor quite raced out my proud title and freely bars my title to the throne."

The noise of Francis' altercation with Robert came to the ears of his second mother, Lady Anne, and she came into the library just after Robert left and Francis layed himself down on a couch. To escape conversation with her he feigned sleep.

"This is a strange repose, to be asleep with eyes wide open," she said rather tartly. "Dost snore? There's meaning in your snores so fast asleep while winking. This slumberry agitation is curious. Go too, Francis! You're playing. What have you been doing?"

"Nothing."

"Tush, tush! I will not over-woe your honor, but if you dare not trust or tell me, out of my exceeding love for you I will send for him you sent away and have him back return and talk with him."

"I have just had a trial of strength with the dwarf."

"What did you wreak your wrath on such a carle as he for?"

"I scourged him for saying I was the bastard son of the queen."

"You have proved yourself to be truly the fool!" She stamped her foot in exasperation. "Could you not see the machinations and evil designs of this treacherous, deceptive, jealous villain?"

She seated herself beside him on the couch.

"Francis. It was to smoke your secret out. He will return to the Queen and tell her that he suspects you are looking up your origin. I know Elizabeth well. Whatever regard she has for you, she loves majesty more, and if it appears to her that you have made inquiries touching your birth, she will have little mercy on the flesh of those from whom you obtained this secret. And knowing that I know all of this history, she will have suspicion of me, and I am not ready yet to die. I am fearful of her wicked arts."

But Francis was more concerned with his own problem and full of the sudden despairs of youth.

"O, that I might quiet my dishonor! I do not care about the crown, but when a man's own name is his misfortune it is bitter. I am discarded by my father, defiled by my mother and dishonored by the world, a pinched thing."

"Come," Lady Anne soothed him, "you shall be no more grieved. If I can fashion it I will place you where you can hear the midwife and I confer, so you will have the satisfaction of knowing all about your birth, and that without any furtherdelay than this evening. She is a gentlewoman of no mean house, nor is she endued with any common or vulgar gifts. Nor was she too mean to be a companion to the queen. Her husband is deceased and was no less a person than the Lord Mayor of London."

"I will be most grateful to your Ladyship." Francis brightened up at this good news.

Lady Anne jerked back as though stung by a slap on the face.

"Ladyship! Ladyship!" she exclaimed. "I am punished! I have shot my arrow o'er the house and hurt myself." The smart of sudden tears burning her eyes, she turned away.

"Good madam, pardon me." Touched in his gentler nature, Francis was all apologies. "I do confess you must needs be my good mother still."

At his touch she turned bravely back.

"O, my good son, I have fostered thee as mine own, from the hour of thy nativity without regard to thy paternity. Thou suckd'st my breast and I have made thee a good parent. Thou hast no need to be

ashamed of thy foster father or of her that devoted her life to thee. Thou mayst indeed be Elizabeth's son, but dear, no mother could be more gentle and tender of thee than I have been; for I, having lost my little son by wicked fortune's spite, improved the blessed fortune sent by heaven and preserved thee on my bosom, sat by thy cradle, did teach thy prattling tongue to speak, and in rapture fell when thou first did call me mother. From the hour that thou, a dainty, little, unfathered babe, of sweet and lovely face and spotless spirit lay in my arms, I have faithfully over thee kept both watch and ward. Have I then deserved this so ingrateful rub from thee?"

Even as she spoke the tears cascaded down her cheeks, splashing on Francis' hand, to his great distress.

"I confess I have wounded you," he apologized. "Yet by my honor above all the sons you have bore, I most truly love you. I swear I desire no more honored birth nor no other name than Francis Bacon; and I will in time make you say the little one that you did raise is like to be the prime glory of your house. Cheer up and let me wipe the tears from those lamenting eyes, and turn not away from your loving son -- yes, for I am yet your son."

He found his kerchief and dabbed at the wet cheeks. Lady Anne impulsively threw her arms around him.

"Do you love me, Francis?"

"O heaven! O earth! Bear witness that I do!"

"Then will I, sweet child, be merry. And may I live to see you ascend to fame's mortal house and banquet in bright honor's burnished hall; for look you, Francis, you are my favorite child, the darling of my heart; and if your love be such as these your protestations do point forth, we two, as friends, one fortune shall divide, and I will enable you to get the throne; for I will prove Elizabeth wed your great father. But remember with whom we have to deal. Hide it close till golden time convenes. Stand upon your guard, prate not unnecessarily. I'll make you King of England."

But even as she spoke these bold, proud words the light went out of her face when she considered the magnitude of the task.

"Speak thou thus with a sad brow?" asked Francis.

"I am more serious than is my custom," she admitted. "Wicked is Elizabeth's mind, and though she hath proclaimed it death to utter aught concerning her marriage and the succession, yet will I do my best to clear up the mystery of your birth."

* * *

CHAPTER SEVEN

"Stone walls do not a prison make."

"Then gentle maiden, look on me languishing in love,
And by your gentle art, change its barren cypress slips
Into Roses of the spring."

Lady Anne first told Francis of how Elizabeth and Robert Dudley had met and fallen in love while both were imprisoned in the Tower of London during the reign of Elizabeth's older sister, Mary, in April and May, 1554.

At that time Dudley had been married for something over three years to Amy Robsart. Robert was imprisoned in the Tower along with his father and brothers for having tried to help set up the Dudley's as the new ruling family of England. Robert's father, Earl of Northumberland, was probably the most greedy and ambitious of the upstart nobles who gathered around Henry VIII. Northumberland managed to swing things his way when Henry's sickly son was occupying the throne but he couldn't control Catholic Mary, next in succession for the throne. When young Edward died at fourteen Northumberland sent his son Robert, barely twenty, to do a man's work, capture Mary and put her in custody.

But Elizabeth's older sister, Mary, with the help of other disgruntled nobles of the realm, succeeded in evading Robert and mounted the throne herself. Then came vengeance on all the Dudley family. Off with their heads!

Mary was suspicious of her half-sister, Elizabeth, and with good reason. The Protestants rallied around Elizabeth because she was not Catholic, and Mary had her incarcerated in the Tower for a short while in the spring of 1554. At that time Robert Dudley had been there a year, and in that time he had seen his father and two of his older brothers walk by his jail cell window on the way to the block. Some education he received in politics then as he watched their heads roll away from the headsman's axe!

Now there is good reason to believe that Robert Dudley and Elizabeth Tudor had met in earlier years, probably several times and as early as the age of eight, during King Henry's many progresses around the country, and at some one or another of the many gatherings of nobility in London and at their Manors. This is comparatively unimportant to the fires of love that blazed up between them while both were imprisoned, only a few

doors apart on the same floor of the Tower. There is even a wide ledge leading along the outside wall through which their cell windows opened to the court. It is possible that young Dudley might have been able to slip along that ledge for a rendezvous with Elizabeth; or that she might have done the same to him, impetuous, love-crazed creature that she was.

Such behavior would have been an act of desperation on their part. Stolen moments like those are sweetest. Robert was under sentence of death. Elizabeth expected little or no mercy from her Catholic half-sister, Mary.

Bacon's Cypher Story does say they managed an exchange of notes through the child of one of the Tower wardens. The tot offered Elizabeth bouquets of flowers during her well-guarded walks outside. The messages were in the bouquets, but this was after Robert connived a meeting in her cell. For one day during those precious two months, to the Tower of London "came unto the prisoners a learned friar and his clerk. . . to open wide the gate of wickedness and base government."

Robert Dudley saw in this "well-seeming saint" the key that would open the door to Elizabeth's cell and, perchance, bind her to him forever. So he told a proper tale of love

And did not spare to tell him
He hath wronged a woman's heart,
But that being a man of honor,
He would by marrying her
Save her from being held up
As a contaminated stale,

"Father, come sit down by me," said Dudley, "You gentle Monks are shepherds of the people. Here in this prison is a maid that loves me and that doth deserve as full, as fortunate a bed as ever honorable lady in the land; and I swear in love of her I propose to marry her. I have determined by fair means or foul, to have this one fair woman for mine own. So I sue you, good father, to declare this office to her, and in love and pity, quickly to perform the marriage."

"You justly deserve God's wrath," replied Friar Cornelius, "if you have seduced a silly maid. He hath reserved apart the priests, to bestow his, God's love. Man is overcome, tormented, and led headlong by his appetites and inordinate inclinations to sin and hell-fire."

The good friar clasped his hands and piously raised his eyes to heaven and droned on.

"Egged on by natural concupisence man wrings his soul for the present and to come. Men wish and hope for immortality, desire to be happy and yet by all means avoid the necessary passage to bring their fruitful virtue to him, that was bound in chains." He turned and placed a fatherly hand on young Dudley's shoulder. "I will perform these sacred rites according to my office, as marriage is honorable, and an immortal crown belongs to virginity."

"Thanks, father," replied Dudley, covering well his joy and his impatience. "You have on my honor no need to do with any scruple. I will be, as it were, a brother of your order and thus visit her. Therefore use haste I prithee and supply me with the habit, and instruct me how I may formally in person bear me like a true friar."

Cornelius gestured toward his companion, Friar Patrick.

"If you desire to come into the fair maid's company," he said to Dudley, "put on my good companion's habit, to whom the keys of every prison door by special grace of our good Queen Mary be committed."

Robert looked longingly at the hooded garment, uniform of the Churchly office of friar. It would do.

"As we pass along I'll tell you how his office to discharge. In the ambush of His name you may behold her whom you love. Without question, Friar Patrick will do this for you."

Within his own mind Cornelius doubted much that this young nobleman, whoever he was, had any intention of marrying the lady, whoever she was. He realized this hot blooded youth was as full of "excuses and lies as a hare hath tricks and shifts to deceive. . . and when he is assured of her birth, fortune, beauty, and that she will continue her honor, goodname and credit, then I may satisfy him and will take pity on them both and turn the key."

While Friar Cornelius was thus taking thought of Robert's character and motives, Friar Patrick spoke up.

"The inclination to goodness is imprinted deeply in the nature of man, insomuch that if it issue not toward men, it will take unto other living creatures. Neither is there only a habit of goodness directed by right reason, but there is in some men even in nature a disposition toward it; and I believe our Lord hath grace in him, for mark his face; he blushes."

"I warrant you more wanton grace than goodness," shrewdly observed Cornelius, "but yet if it be so, let us be keen, and rather cut a little than fall and bruise ourselves to death. It were a ticklish thing for us to holpen to free him."

"Now, by the honor of my ancestors, I do applaud your spirit, most noble father," said Robert, "yet alas I'll but let you know the gentlewoman whom I would serve (and whom I believe to be most straight in virtue) is worthy of an emperor's love. Let us withdraw together and touching that point you may soon have satisfaction."

"I'll wait upon your honor," replied Cornelius agreeably.

Friar Patrick seemed not too hasty to remove his hooded cloak, until the young nobleman pulled a gorgeous ring from his finger and fired up the priest's enthusiasm for the project with this offering to

his covetousness. Without delay the eager Dudley transformed himself into a pious minion of the Church, so effectively that the two, Friar Cornelius and "Friar" Dudley passed the gaoler without a second glance!

Head down and creeping close behind Cornelius in solemn walk, Robert followed the shepherd of Rome down the cold, gloomy corridor to the wicket of Elizabeth's suite. When the keeper peeked out through the chink he received a pious benediction from Friar Cornelius, so expertly mimicked by the shadowed face under the second cowl that the keeper

"Ne'er imagined but that both characters were real
And so without examination suffered them to enter
In the cells where Eliza was imprisoned."

"Where is the provost?" asked Cornelius.

"Here, if it like your honor," replied the keeper.

"The young princess doth intend Holy confession," lied Cornelius,
"And I beseech you give us leave to look upon the lady."

They were in what appeared to be a sort of ante-room to the main cell in which Elizabeth was locked up.

"Sir, I will bring her in here before your good honor."

"We will go thither." Cornelius raised a restraining, imperious hand. "Our holy exercises will not admit of confederates. Go presently and tell her we are here. Away! Be gone!"

Jangling a great bunch of rusty keys on his arm the constable led them to an inner door and freely opened for them, with the counterfeit priest, Dudley, faithfully plodding behind Friar Cornelius. But here was another iron door, fast locked. For this the constable could find no key in his collection; so he raised his voice in a shout through the little grate. Faintly heard in reply was the sweetest voice in all the world to Robert Dudley.

"A man's voice, gentle Isabella," said Elizabeth to one of her maids, "Turn you the key and know his business."

In but a moment the trio heard the key in the lock and the iron door swung back to reveal a comely girl. Wide-eyed she looked at the visitors. Few came to see this half-sister of Queen Mary, whose very presence in the kingdom was an ever-present threat to the throne.

"Kind sir, what is your name and what's the matter?"

"Good morrow, your ladyship," said Friar Cornelius boldly, as he stepped from behind the constable. "Tell her highness the Holy Legate of the Pope, the anointed deputies of heaven are here to purge her sins, and in a word to show her by auricular confession, the way to heaven and how the true God is truly worshipped; therefore, let us in."

"If it please you, enter," she curtsied slightly, "I dare not deny passage to the high priest of Rome."

As they moved into the inner apartment the Friar gave a peremptory command.

"Gaoler, and you gentlewomen, withdraw yourself and leave us here alone."

At this the glorious redhead came forth with orders of her own, backed up by her ever-present fear of assassination.

"Hold, stir not; have I, sir priest, no rights even in mine own chamber?"

Robert stared at her, drunk with love as the flaming presence of the princess' beauty flowed through his hungry frame like wine; but Elizabeth saw him not. The obsessive fear of murder flooded her being at this moment, crowding out all else.

"Do you intend to make me a new Henry Sixth?" she shouted at Cornelius. "By my troth I fear my sister Mary; her malice to me is both causeless and endless. I see through this disguise."

As her baleful glance took in Robert he would have sunk through the stone floor if he could. He tried to signal her but that only added to the fires of her rage and fear.

"Let her hang me since I needs must die. Is there no respect of place, persons or time in you? Have you come to hear my confession and then put me to death? I am not ignorant that it is laid upon me that I alone oppose the Pope, and his friends do count my foes in England. Yet I assure thee, father, it is not so."

"Daughter," Cornelius raised a reassuring hand, "why art thou and this company so tragic? All the forces of the triple world are insufficient to free thee for all thy solemn prayers." Then he urged his mission for young Dudley. "Thou art a prisoner in a cage of gold. God and the fates have so decreed, and I say thy company must be gone; and before mine companion here," he nodded toward Robert, "thou prostrate on the ground must kneel, and listen well to what he unto thee doth say."

But the abysmal, ever-present fear of assassination over-rode all else in Elizabeth, except her pride of rank and royalty.

"I will die before I debase mine honor so!" she exclaimed. Color flooded her alabaster cheeks. Her golden curls, shaking, made a radiant halo about her face. "Since I and my companions have God on our side, we mean not with vain ceremonies to rehearse our sins." She turned to her maids, "Gentlewomen, prepare yourselves," and back to the men of the Church as scorn curled her pretty lips, "In this flint bosom of Julius Caesar's ill-erected Tower shall you now behold I am condemned and doomed and needs must die. Therefore, since correction lieth in those hands

which made the fault, strip your swords stark naked and this poor body mangle."

Elizabeth paled again and the faces of her maids were waxen, her bosom heaved with forced breathing, only accenting her many charms to love-smitten Robert. He started forward; Bess drew back.

"You mistake!" He exclaimed. "What I have to speak alone concerns your ear, dear love. Believe me I bring no hideous matter to you but to deliver the continuance of my love, and to comfort you. But I am resolved not to proceed till your company are gone. Turn them away. Close your hands and lips with mine, and presently the rites of marriage shall be solemnized."

To the distraught Elizabeth this was still some trick from the wily representatives of Rome, overrunning the kingdom.

"You strain and breed a kind of question in my heart," she said. "Return whence ye came. Ye love me not but say so in bitterness of a common executioner, whose heart the accustomed sight of blood makes hard. Are you mad, or what are you? Have you no manners, wit, or honesty? But to gabble like a tinker at this time?"

"I would not be your executioner; I would not injure you, my words are as full of peace as matter," replied Robert mournfully. "If you undo what you have done, kill him whom you have won by your sweet face, eyes, actions, gestures."

These sweet words penetrated her defenses and she looked at him directly, piercingly, for the first time.

"What are you that my length, breadth, height, depth and the rest of my dimensions have so measured and taken by the astrolabe of phantasy?" Puzzled, she turned to Friar Cornelius, "What would you? Proceeds this jest of thy consent, sir priest?"

The cleric turned to Robert, "Be plain, good son, rest honest in thy drift; riddling confession hath but riddling shift."

"Madam, I am the man that was so fortunate as to be cast in prison in a common cause with you. My name's more odious to your sister, Queen Mary, than is yours. I am a Dudley."

Young Robert spoke to young Bess in all earnestness, and with these words he flung back the cowl that hitherto had covered his head. Thus was revealed to the future queen her future consort and father of her two sons. Handsome he was in his dark, lithe way. Nevertheless, mention of that name, Dudley, bereft of all titles, privilege and power by act of Parliament, gave her pause, and he went on.

"That title you should know, for as I think, you do remember me, sweet lady, in your brother's time, when I was in a better place."

Too well did Bess remember the fiercely ambitious father of this brash young man, the Earl of Northumberland, who tried to usurp the throne of England for his own numerous clan. And who for trying had lost his head to the ax here in this very same tower not twelve month previous.

"I am bold to speak unto your grace who am too base to kiss your royal feet; for I am poor nor have I land nor rent."

And soon you'll have no head, thought she, for he too was under a cloud which might take his life ere she left the Tower -- if she left it with her head intact! -- but charmed by his boldness, his good looks and his manner she made good reply.

"These words do make me rich, most noble sir; but all this while what say you to these dames that shine like to the crystal lamps of heaven?"

She turned to Isabella, Anne and the other maids who shared her prison. Robert was nothing loathe to compliment these ladies even as his eyes and the love shafts from his heart were directed at Elizabeth.

"Such sweet lines and love lays I'll indite
As you may wish for, and my liege delights
Shall be to tell these beauties,
Who stand upon the stage of fame
And vaunt their trophies in the courts of love,
That peace from heaven shall harbor
In these leaves, that gorgeous
Beautify, this matchless flower."

With these few lines, well spoken for her maids, Dudley turned his fiery ardor on the passionate wench before him, whose beauty truly deserved every ardent word, poetry born of desperation from a young lover whose every hour was numbered.

"Ceres' carnation in consort with those,
Shall stoop and wonder at Diana's rose,
That in her tresses doth the looks infold
Of such as gaze upon her golden hair.
Luna doth boast upon her lovely cheeks,
Her bashful white mix'd with the morning red;
And her sparkling eyes
Do lighten forth sweet love's alluring fire,
And in her shape fast folded up are all
Merits, praise and virtue of the mind and heart.
And she, that bash'd the Sun-God with her eyes,
Fair Semele the choice of Venus' maids,
Nor the lovely trull that Mercury entrapped
Within the curious pleasure of his tongue,
Were not so beauteous as Elizabeth. . .
And when I saw thine eyes,
So Beauteous fair that in this great wide world

Golden Phoebus the like ne'er before beheld,
 All through the harness of my heart
 Did leap the fire whose blush doth thaw
 The consecrated snow that lies on Dian's lap.
 Ah Goddess visible on earth,
 From forth your bosom quickening fire doth shine,
 With great creating nature.
 For if we marry to the wildest stock
 A gentler sien, and make conceive
 A bark of baser kind, by bud of nobler race,
 Nature makes that measn so over, that
 Our rustic garden by this art of nature
 Is made better.
 Then gentle maiden, look on me languishing in love,
 And by your art, change its barren cypress slips
 Into roses of the spring.
 Be not offended, nature's miracle,
 That I a man of obscure fame
 But noble birth, have so aspired to happiness;
 O bless me here with your sweet hand,
 And upon this arm of white and spotless hue,
 The fairest prisoner of the gods,
 I'll place a manacle of love."

The maids stood open mouthed at this tempestuous outpouring from the young nobleman, reckless as only he can be who knows his end is near. Would it touch the heart of this young princess? Who might also never leave the Tower alive? The power of his own protestations brought Robert closer to Elizabeth. The thought of failure was not in him; but in her was thought of that other one, Amy Robsart, Robert's sweet wife.

"My lord, touch me not," said she, and raised an imperious hand. "Stand further off. I will content your pains by something that's brief, and bid good morrow to you. Send to your wife, smile upon her; such tricks as these do strip you of all honor; I prithee let your wife attend on you; make love's quick pants within her arms, and give renewed fire to your extincted love. Be you well assured you shall acquire no honor by splitting the heart of your wife. I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth than it should draw you from your virtuous lady."

"Must I leave you?" replied Robert, unabashed. "Then I have but an hour to live. I do confess it is a shame to be so fond, but it is not in my virtue to amend it; and methinks I could not die so contented anywhere as in your company. I am a soldier. So let me die and let some hangman put on my shroud and lay me where no priest shovels dust in my grave obscure."

This wail of despair brought a smile to Bess' lips, a smile of victory for him, had he but known it. Never had there been such offer of selfless devotion in her short life. Here for the first time Elizabeth was the royal Queen, here her first courtier -- and mayhap her last! Here in this handsome young nobleman might also be her first and last opportunity to have a husband! The wild despair in her heart brought a

twist to her face that crushed Robert.

"O what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of her lip.
Sweet, do not scorn me, do not, love
I have made bold to sue my suit
But I will trouble you no more.
O weary soul break forth from out my breast,
And join with the soul I honor most.
Farewell, dear heart, I will begone."

He turned from her but those long, slender white fingers clutched his arm.

"Nay, good sir, though thou began so rudely, since thou can'st talk of love so well, thy company which erst was irksome to me I will endure. Thou art a subject fit to serve a queen."

Prophetic words these, from young Bess, for serve her he would for thirty years, but as she continued on she clearly set the conditions for that service!

"Such love I tender thee. Since we have stepped so far in, I will continue, and we will be married, Mr. Dudley. But remember, I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an ape, more giddy in my desire than a monkey. I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain; and I will do this when you are disposed to be merry. I will laugh like a Hyena, and that when thou art inclined to sleep; yet by honor, truth, and everything, I love thee so that maugre all my pride, nor wit, nor reason can my passion hide."

Friar Cornelius, half-willing partner to this dangerous journey through London's Tower, was now completely unwilling to be dragged into this fantastic enterprise which, if it ever got to the ears of Queen Mary, would put his head on the block along with the fiery lovers before him.

"Hold, daughter," the Friar raised a protesting hand, "join not your hand and his in one." He looked reprovingly at Robert, whose proud, dark face swerved not from the impassioned glance of Elizabeth. "My lord, you are no husband for her. Daughter, his wife is not dead, his vows are forfeit to her. He is not a widower. He hath tricks in him which honorable gentlemen have not. He'll utter anything upon his many protestations, to marry one to whom he hath made overtures. He won me to friend him. Will you be put in mind of his black spots?"

With the young princess heeding him not, Cornelius turned to Robert.

"Speak to me, son. Thou hast affected fine strains of honor to the graces of the gods; think you it honorable for a nobleman to wrong a woman? Watering her new plants of love with dews of flattery seducing her? Ch you have won a happy victory. I blush to say it. In justice find the girl or I will tell the Lord Warden all."

To the ardent Dudley, aflame with the touch of Elizabeth, the Friar's words were as idle wind blowing by. Had not the Friar's fellow cleric, Patrick, Robert's ring in his pocket? Who was this greedy, scheming priest to accuse him of duplicity? Besides, Robert, already under sentence of death, had nothing to lose but his head. This self-chosen course he would play to the end, with Elizabeth's connivance.

"Father," Dudley's voice was deceptively quiet, "for what offense, for what default of ours are you incensed so against our state of gentle love?"

"Fie, sir, you do offend first the law of God and then our country's right."

"Nay, I have taken you napping," exulted Robert. "In this disguise you did bring me to this bridal chamber and thrice made assurance here I was father of your order. Obey me then, or I will be as stern as you and will give you as a prey to those that bring you to the stake."

But the hardy Friar made show of tough a metal as Dudley.

"Happy is the man that from the tumults of the world is freed; and if my time is come, I yield to Him the King of christian men." He sneered at Robert, "At the brightness of your hardy looks ye may make Venus' leman bash, but I will lay my head upon the block or by a hired knife come to my death, before marriage between the Lady Elizabeth and you by me shall be solemnized. Strike me dead with your own sword, you bright defiler of Hymen's purest bed."

He turned his scorn on Elizabeth.

"Shame on you, daughter, on peril of a curse. Let go the hand of that arch-heretic, or by the lawful power that I have thou shalt stand curst and excommunicate."

If he thought to overawe Elizabeth with the hollow words of a debauched, discredited priesthood, he was mistaken!

"Good father," she replied angrily, "Lawful let it be that I have room with Rome to curse awhile!"

"What canst thou say but will perplex thee more if thou stand excommunicate and curst?" he exhorted her. "Let go his hand or the church, our mother, shall breathe her curse, a mother's curse, on her revolting child. Thou mayest hold a serpent by the tongue, a cased lion by the paw, a fasting tiger safer by the tooth than keep that hand which thou dost hold."

Unyielding she stood, "I may disjoin my hand but not my faith."

"So makest thou faith an enemy to faith," cried Cornelius, "and like a civil war set'st oath to oath, thy tongue against thy tongue."

But he knew not the metal of the young firebrands with whom he had

deal, the urgency of youth made desperate by the axe at their necks. Their time was short and so was Robert's temper, with the yapping of this Friar who had no more claim to virtue than they!

"You'd shake the rotten carcass of old death out of his rags with thy tongue! I was never so bethumped with words since first I called my father Dad. You crafty priest, you champion of the church, this lady loves me well!" He jerked his dagger from its sheath and waved it back and forth under Cornelius' nose.

"This lady loves me well, and you shall not go forth to make a stale and slave of me. I have won her consent and she shall unto me be wedded, and by you! Else farewell to all your hopes of life."

Cornelius sought to duck the threat of the naked blade by shifting sideways, his eye on the door leading to freedom, but Dudley ducked with him, his dagger in one hand, dragging Elizabeth in a death-like grip with the other.

"You have conspired with me, and pawned your honor for my truth," Robert jabbed the words at him. "If it should prove that you are inhuman, I'll play so rough course with you that you will think me as far in the devil's book as yourself! You are my prisoner and there is no flying hence. I tell you to pass me is dangerous."

Dudley successfully punctured the Friar's bravado with his threatening blade; for the cleric spoke agreeably enough at last, shrugging his shoulders in resignation.

"From love in course of nature to refrain
Is a lesson, too, too hard for living clay!
And by my troth
If I Lord Pandarus o' Phrygia must play,
And bring a Troylus to this Cressida
Or die, I yield. When will you
That this unlucky match be celebrated?"

What a mournful prophecy was in those last words, unlucky match indeed, for the two children born eventually of this impetuous union, Francis Bacon and Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex. Dudley's reply to the Friar's question was an imperious "Now!" seconded by the young princess; but Cornelius continued to "give the bastinado with his tongue."

"It is both impious and unnatural, a heinous sin, to marry you. Traitor, if Rome have law or power I will remunerate you, and with these limbs of yours make a fire on a pile of wood; and will hang this lady in the prison here and lay the blame on her own despair, that she fore-did herself. And by the immortal God that holds the souls of men within his fists, this night some fiend or ghost shall haunt your weary steps, until they do transport you to quick hell."

"Dishonor her honorable name no more!" Dudley's blade was at his throat. "Proceed to marry us or else I'll send your soul to live and

burn in everlasting fire. You are as far from help as limbo is from bliss, and by all the devils in hell I will do a deed of death."

"Give me leave to speak!" protested Cornelius.

"No, I will not. We hold our time too precious to be spent with such a babbler. Be assured you shall not sigh, nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign, until you have enriched me with the hand of her gentle ladyship."

"Son, believe, oh believe it," the Friar trembling reassured him, "Most dangerously have you prevailed with me. Since I cannot fly, I will consent that the rites of marriage shall be yours. I will but join you together as they join wainscot, and one of you shall prove a shrunk panel and like green timber warp. Draw near and join your hands and lips; I will give you a wife and a husband in name."

Which of the two, Elizabeth Tudor or Robert Dudley, proved a "shrunk panel" in the years to follow this illegal union? Or did the blight fall more heavily on their offspring, Bacon and Essex? That the reader will have to judge for himself. The bigamous coupling so desperately joined there in the Tower in May, 1554 was to endure until Dudley, as the Earl of Leicester, married Lettice Knollys in 1578. This was two years after Elizabeth, forced to publicly acknowledge Francis Bacon's true parentage by Cecil's wiles, closed everything down again. In spite of all this the two loved each other to the grave, as much as they could love anyone beside themselves! -- In that inconstant age, well named Elizabethan?

How did the young Prince of Wales react to this wild, improbable tale when told to him by his foster mother, Lady Anne Bacon? She who had heard it from Elizabeth herself? He jumped to his feet there in the Bacon library, his anguished strides carrying him back and forth before her.

"Madam, it seems then by this league and marriage I am what the rabble call a bastard. My honor, credit and my name and all that made me happy are in ruins. What shall I say? How am I mocked? O curse that blind priest that by this marriage so dishonored me. Shame on him. Would he were wasted, marrow-bones and all for this misdeed. Farewell my fortunes. Would I were a devil so I might, reaping eternal glory in that priest's restless pains, have his company in hell."

"My son, sit down." Lady Anne tried to quiet him.

"O cry amen to my keen curses, for without my wrong there is no tongue hath power to curse them right."

"There's no law nor warrant for your curse."

"What! You promised to tell me that I from her grace was lineally extracted, and that my parents did in a true flame of liking chastely wed. I have been mocked and so I'll utter what my sorrows give me leave."

"You utter madness, boy, and not sorrow."

"I care not," he still defied her. "I was not born in wedlock. Fain would I have reason taken from me when I think I am no better than a wild mock."

"You are a king."

"A king?"

"Yes, a king," she said again and motioned him to come sit beside her once again.

"I have a secret to reveal wherein your secrecy must with your force be equal -- it concerns your honor and your parents. Your foolish sire blemished his gracious name by consenting to the death of the sweetest young creature in the world, Amy Robsart. A rare piece of beauty, nor one so tender, never did I see than was she the day of their nuptial celebration. Her death was laid both to the Queen and to your father, Robert Dudley. When the bruises that the body bore were shown, all the country in a general voice cried hate upon them."

"Pray you, how was she killed?"

Then the good lady related to young Francis the circumstances leading up to the murder of Amy September, 1560 while he was being carried in his mother's womb.

"Then the Queen took this man of evil," she concluded the story, "And was married to him like a beggar under a bush, not in church but in secret. My gentle lord, your foster father, performed the marriage service."

Rumor has it that the second wedding of Elizabeth to Robert Dudley was performed in the London home of Lord Pembroke around Christmas time, 1560 a month before Francis was born -- though he gives no date for this in the Cypher Story.

"Did you the Queen's wedding attend?" asked Francis.

"I, and I alone of all the attendant train of Eliza's fair ladies, in company of my Lord Puckering, saw her nuptial. But

Come, my boy, fair Phoebe with her silver hue
The dark canopus of grim night illuminates,
As she in the fair heavens above doth march."

"Pardon me, madam,
The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
And flecked darkness like the drunkard reels
From forth day's pathway and Titan's burning wheels."

Not to be outdone by her brilliant son, Lady Anne matched his meter with this charming finale.

"Then ere the sun advance his burning eye,
The day to cheer and night's dew to dry,
Let's go to our rest."

A cloud crossed young Francis' brow as they rose from the window seat in the library. Lady Anne reached for the guttering candle nearby.

"I am satisfied the honor of my kin is poor, and they are Machiavellian counterfeits. On my life, thou of all the honorable crew art blest."

"Tomorrow, by one that I'll procure, I'll yield you honor to your heart's content," she assured him, "therefore, now not more, away to bed. Good night, dear son, I'll tell you more anon."

* * *

CHAPTER EIGHT

"I Sell Thee Poison, Thou Hast Sold Me None."

"And if a man did need a poison now
Whose sale is present death,
Here lives a catiff wretch would sell it him."

"How can I go forward when my heart is here?" Francis looked fondly and lovingly about this his favorite room of all in that mansion, his books on philosophy, science and law, his notes on everything under the sun, his poetry. "Yet, madam, I will go. The clock has struck four. The hour is past when sleep divine hath power to hold my soul senseless of life and breath. . ."

"Hark, boy! What noise is that I hear?" In the middle of the room she stopped, her hand upraised for silence.

Francis shook his head, "None, madam."

"Prithee, listen well; I hear a bustling; mark how they are rushing to the doors."

"Sooth, madam, I hear nothing." But the urgency in Lady Anne's tone gave him pause. She went to the library door and unlocked it.

"Who's there?" She asked. There was no reply so she opened the door. This gave forth on the large central hall of York House. Approaching was a young man in livery which bespoke the court. Behind him were two men-at-arms, and behind them were the household's sleepy butler, hastily dressed, a footman and a maid.

"What is it?" asked Lady Anne, knowing only too well in her sinking heart.

"Look, madam," exclaimed Francis, "here comes the page of the Queen!"

"Pardon me, sir," she said to the page, "was't thou that so unkindly knocked?"

"I, madam," he replied sternly, and to young Bacon, "My worthy youth, thou art my prisoner."

"Dost thou speak seriously?"

"On my soul, 'tis true, sir."

"For what?" asked Francis incredulously.

"Did not her majesty send to thee, and didst thou not spurn her messenger like a cur from out thy way?"

"And did he," charged Francis, "the low, crooked and base spaniel, blaze forth to the queen all the fray?"

"Not that I have heard."

"Upon my knee, sir, say I am not well," pleaded Francis. His real mother was the last person in the world he wanted to see then. "Tell the Queen I am sick and must stay at home."

"Shall I say you are not well?" asked the page angrily. "I will not. It is false."

"Many do keep their chambers that are not sick."

"I dare not without cause, as you know. Tell her you are sick yourself!"

Now Francis tried defiance. "I will not go. I'll never be such a gosling as to obey."

The page was more defiant. "If I cannot persuade you to show a noble grace and depart without a brawl, you will march twixt my knaves." He turned to the two men-at-arms and they moved forward a pace. "And, sir, if you would save your life, give up and foot it with me to her presence. You shall suffer death unless you turn and go with us in peace."

"By my heels I care not." Francis pretended a great indifference. "I had rather suffer a short thrust than a long hanging."

The page was as coolly impersonal as the government which he represented. He shrugged his shoulders.

"Reason coldly of your grievances, or else depart with me." He glanced quickly around at the servants, hanging on every word. "Here all your servants' eyes gaze upon us."

"Men's eyes were made to look and let them gaze." But even as he said this, Francis yielded. Lady Anne had encouraged him not in his resistance, knowing only too well the ruthless power and purpose of the youth's mother. None there wanted to thwart the queen nor her messenger. "Let us go; come, I dare no longer stay. I cannot choose."

Head high, without a backward glance, Francis made off across the

hall, waiting not for hat nor cloak, and pushed out into the chill, pre-dawn darkness of the Strand. Wordlessly the page moved beside him and the men-at-arms fell in close to the rear.

Behind them in York House Lady Anne dismissed the servants, ordering them off to bed; but she, good and devotional soul, retired to her chapel to plead with the Almighty God for the safety and well-being of her beloved son.

The torches of the guards cast murky, fitful shadows in the gloom of the street as Francis and the page picked their way along. The damp, early-morning mists of the river crept about them, reminding Francis that he should have taken a cloak; but even more irritating was the presence of those knaves behind him.

"Look you," he said to the page, "I love you well, I'll give you gold. Rid me of these villains from your company and I as patient as the midnight will, I swear, go along with you."

It galled his youthful pride that he would be haled before the Queen, and before the Court, guarded like some criminal. But this page was well chosen for the Queen's service.

"You are not oathable," he replied shortly. "Although I know you will come, I cannot make my heart consent to take a bribe."

"Let molten coin be your damnation."

"Sirrah, this unlooked for sport comes not well. You must needs go with me. You are sent for, and this beastly fury is contrary to your nature."

"Sir, vouchsafe me for my need a smaller boon than this," said Francis as he tried another tack. "I beg to enter an apothecary's shop."

"Sir, I do remember an apothecary hereabouts," replied the page agreeably and rambled on in a wordy description of the place, which he had visited more than once, probably with other hostages to the Queen's wrath who stood in fear of the rack and the hangman's noose.

"Meagre were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones;
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuffed, and other skins,
Of ill shap'd fishes, and about his shelves
A beggarly account of empty boxes,
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses
Were thinly scattered to make a show.
Nothing this penury, to myself I said
And if a man did need a poison now,
Whose sale is present death,
Here lives a catiff wretch would sell it him."

"Oh, this same thought did but forerun my need," said Francis eagerly, "And this same man must sell it to me."

"Oh, mischief thou art swift to enter in the thoughts of desperate men." The page shook his head sadly, and led them off in a little lane away from the river. "Come, sir, I will bring you to his house."

It was but a few paces along, the men holding their torches high, and the page found the gloomy place, all dark and tight shuttered. He shouted loudly, his voice echoing up the walls, and banged upon the door. There was a stirring within; a shutter soon opened.

"Who calls so loud?" A tousled head peered out at them.

"Come hither, man," said Francis. "I see that thou art poor. Hold, here is forty duckets; let me have a dram of poison."

When he held up the gold for the apothecary to see, the shutter banged shut, there was a clatter inside and soon the dispenser of drugs, in his "tattered weeds and overwhelming brows" was opening his door to them. The page ordered his men to stand watch outside. The apothecary lighted his one lone candle at one of the torches. Carrying this before him he led them into his little shop, peered into the youthful face that asked for poison.

"Such as it will disperse itself through all my veins," said Francis to that seamed face with the bushy brows. "That the life-weary-taker may fall dead and the trunk discharged of breath."

The apothecary pursed his lips, reluctantly nodded.

"Such mortal drugs I have, but London's law is death to him that utters them."

"Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness, and fearest to die?" Francis scoffed. "Famine is in thy cheeks, and oppression starveth in thine eyes. The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law; the world affords no law to make thee rich. Then be not poor and take this."

Francis held the gold full forward in the candle light, clanked it firmly to the counter under his hand. Even as his palm withdrew the apothecary's came as swiftly forward to cover it.

"My poverty, but not my will consents."

"I pray thy poverty, and not thy will."

Proving that he violated London's law more often than not, and that his poverty might be more sham than real, the wretch quickly produced a small packet of powder.

"Put this in any liquid you will and drink it off, and if you have the strength of twenty men it would dispatch you straight."

Francis pointed to the duckets in the man's hand.

"Thy gold there is worse poison to men's souls
Doing more murder in this loathsome world
Than these poor compounds thou mayst not sell.
I sell thee poison, thou hast sold me none.
Farewell, buy food, and get thyself in flesh.
Come cordial, and not poison, go with me."

He raised the packet high, like a toast, and with this light-hearted jest to cover the dread foreboding in his heart, the Prince of Wales left the gloom of the shop for the heavier gloom and fog of the dank alleyway outside.

The prince and the page were wrapped in their own thoughts as they skirted the puddles and the filth of the Strand along to Whitehall, the men-at-arms close behind. All too soon were they through the gates, across the courts, accepting and passing the challenges of the guards, the long corridors echoing emptily in the early morning hour, and finally to the Presence.

The page went down on his knees of course; but Francis, strangely fortified by that packet of poison, stood calmly before his mother, a royal knight before a royal queen. Now he had grown since that shocking revelation of the day before.

"So thou at length hast come, thou groom, hast thou?" Elizabeth's words revealed a mixture of queenly pride and motherly curiosity. "Did I not send for thee in the afternoon, between the hours of three and four? And now it is between three and four in the morn?"

At his unmoving silence her satanic pride quickly took over. After all, a dozen curious courtiers were watching. Color flamed into her pale cheeks, her red locks danced; she banged her staff on the floor.

"What? Standest thou? I'll teach thee what it is to brave my wrath. Thou slave, to set a supersedeas to my great command. Am I a daughter of a Jew, that a boy with a reed voice and two mincing steps should that he, or one of his, hath license to set my power at nought? If thou arm thy wit against my will, I'll make thee suffer the deadly pangs of death. Thou shalt hang. Pass into my room."

The Prince of Wales thought to have seen his father, the Earl of Leicester, by Elizabeth's side when he came into her presence, but Robert Dudley was nowhere to be seen, neither there nor in her private chambers. Francis didn't know it; neither did Elizabeth; but even then Leicester was romancing Lettice Knollys at Wanstead. There, too, he was also enjoying the companionship of his second son by Elizabeth, eight year old Robert Devereaux. Elizabeth's implacable opposition to anyone even hinting at the succession, either from sons or lovers, had finally convinced the Earl after some sixteen long years that he must look elsewhere for a wife and heirs.

Still galled at Francis' manly dignity, those kingly qualities which came direct from her, Elizabeth raged on; but now in a slightly different vein, blaming him for all her troubles.

"I know not whether heaven will have it so for some displeasing service I have done, that in His secret doom, out of my blood He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me; but thou dost, in thy passage of life, make me believe that thou art only marked for the hot vengeance of the rod of heaven to punish my mistreadings."

Behind her glitter and glamor, laid on so as to be a mask for the beast beneath, Francis read with sickening heart, the life that was given over to all wickedness. As he stood unyielding her tirade worsened.

"Tell me else, could inordinate and low desires, such poor, such base, such lewd, such mean attempts, such barren pleasures, rude societies as thou art matcht withal and grafted to, accompany the greatness of thy blood, and hold their level with thy princely heart?"

Inwardly shocked at her lying tongue and false accusations but outwardly calm, Francis refused her claims.

"So please your majesty, I would I could quit all offenses with as clear excuse as I can purge myself of this charge. Doubtless I am in reproof of many false tales devised, which oft the ear of greatness must hear, by smiling pickthanks and base newsmongers. Yet such extenuation let me beg, wherein my youth hath faulty and irregular wandered; and that I may for something true find pardon, on my true submission."

Elizabeth brushed his manly apology aside with a curt, "Heaven pardon thee," and continued her efforts to beat him down, humiliate him. What was she leading up to when she said, "Yet let me wonder, Francis, at thy affections, which do hold a wing quite from the flight of thy ancestors. Thou art almost alien to the hearts of all the court and princes of my blood; the hope and expectation of thy time is ruined and the soul of every man prophetically doth forethink thy fall."

Just her devious way of telling her son that in her opinion he was not and never would be fit to be king of England. She could very well prophesy his fall because she was in a position to make it come true whenever it suited her whim! To fill in the discouraging picture she was trying to create in his mind, she reverted back to the tortuous days of her life before the death of her sister Mary opened the path to the throne.

"Had I been so lavish of my presence been, so common in the eyes of men, so stale and cheap to vulgar company, opinion that did help me to my crown had still kept loyal possession."

What a pack of lies was this, when Elizabeth's scandalous behavior with a young Moor at eleven and with Howard at thirteen were the talk of England! Here the Queen revealed to her son that no lie, no monstrous accusation, no arrangement of words was too low if it served her vile

purpose. Here, on the spotless reputation of her own son, she tried to dump the garbage of her own corruption.

"By being seldom seen I could not stir, but like a comet I was wondered at, that men would tell their children, 'This is she.' Others would say, 'Where, which is Elizabeth?' And then I stole all courtesy from heaven, and drest myself in such humility that I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts, loud shouts and salutations from their mouths, even in the presence of Mary, the queen. Thus did I keep my person fresh and new, my presence like a robe pontifical, ne'er seen. (What was she leading up to, that Francis was going to be hidden away?) And so my state seldom but sumptuous shewed like a feast, and won by rareness such solemnity. My sister soon kindled and soon burnt and carded her estate, and mingled her royalty with carping fools; had her great name profaned with their scorn. Grew a companion to the common streets, enfeoffed herself to popularity, that being daily swallowed by men's eyes, they surfeited with honey and began to loathe the taste of sweetness. Being with her presence gorged and full. And in that very line, Francis, standest thou."

What a ridiculous charge to make to this studious young man whose exemplary behavior, good humor and unfailing courtesy won the admiration of everyone who knew him, including his fellow law students at Gray's Inn, where only a few months ago he had undertaken to prepare for a worldly career. But the venom flowed on from the lying tongue and the twisted soul before him.

"For thou has lost thy princely privilege with wild participation; (How could Francis lose what he never had?) not an eye but is awearie of thy common sight, save mine, (What she really meant was that she was fearful of her throne now that her parenthood of this handsome, charming youth had been revealed to the Court. Elizabeth had good reason to be weary of the sight of him.) She babbled on about her sight "which hath a desire to see thee more, which now doth that I would not have it do, make blind itself with foolish tenderness. Thy companions are the very disturbers of our peace, a company of irreligious harpies, scarping, griping catch-polls, unlettered, rude and shallow; thy hours filled up with riots, banquets, sports. And in thee is noted never any study, any retirement, any sequestration from open haunts and popularity; thy addiction to courses vain with thy familiars and coadjutors, and should I make thee mine heir, thou wouldst make my throne a seat of baseness."

What was the old despot leading up to, accusing her son of the very things she had done herself, and would do in deepening depravity another twenty - seven years, until her body itself became so stinking that no one could bear to be near her. What could Francis reply to this foul issue from the queenly mouth?

"No, madam," he replied quietly, "I would rather add a lustre to the throne."

"Peace, sir," she stopped him with an imperious gesture. "Most subject is the fattest soil to weeds, and thou, noble, manly image of my youth art overspread with them; therefore, my grief stretches itself be-

yond the hour of death. The blood weeps from my heart when I do shape the unguided days and rotten times my kingdom shall look upon when I am sleeping with my ancestors."

"I thought that thou had hated me," replied her son. "I will in the perfectness of time cast off my followers and their memories, shall as a pattern or measure live. Thy highness knows that I but study them like a strange tongue wherein to gain the language; for tis needful that the most immodest word and gross term be looked upon and learned, which once attained comes to no further use but to be known and hated."

Here young Francis was referring to his diligent researches into the superstitions and customs of his people, started after he had quit the University in disgust, saying he would have to unlearn all he had been taught at Trinity. Lately he had been prowling the highways and byways, learning practical useful things, re-educating himself. This heterogeneous information was to come forth ten years later in the first edition of the Anatomy of Melancholy. But now, he might as well have been talking to the air for all effect it had on his hard-hearted mother. She must have heard of his market-place investigations and belabored him with more insults.

"Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her combe in the dead carrion. I speak not of the creatures which are useful in thy kitchen to turn the spit, lick the pan, and make the fire burn; but of the train of gallants that run at thy heels, so men say. Why dost thou look so low, as if thou hadst been born of the worst of women? Thy tastes are not for royal deeds, and twere sin to stain England's throne by such a counterfeit image of a king."

With this thrust she killed any burgeoning hope that some day he might come into his rightful heritage, at least while Elizabeth was on the throne! And then she drove it home with a venom. The flames of gossip she herself had fired up the day before in her disgraceful fight with the daughter of Lord Scales, these had to be put out, and quickly. Francis could not be allowed to remain at court and bask in their glow.

"To shield thee from the disasters of the world, I am resolved that thou shall spend some time in the French emperor's court. Muse not that I thus suddenly proceed, for what I will, I will; and there an end. Tomorrow be in readiness to go; excuse it not, for I am peremptory."

Francis was staggered. "Madam, I cannot so soon be provided; please you deliberate a day or two."

She had scored and an ugly smile crossed her painted face.

"No more! Look, what thou wantest shall be sent after thee. And as thou canst not live on grass, on berries and on water, as beasts, birds and fishes therefore for thy provision thou shalt receive enough from me for thy maintenance. And so, my son, farewell. May all happiness bechance to thee. Wer't not thy hated affections change thy tender days to the worse with brutish company which hath metamorphosed

thee and made thee neglect thy studies, lose thy time, war with good counsel and set the world at naught. I rather would keep thee home and send thee to the studious universities, but now farewell. Blest mayst thou be like to the flowring sheaves, that play with gentle winds in summer-tide; like olive branches let thy children spread; or as the kids that feed on lepher plains, so be the seed and offspring of thy loins. And in long years to come, may thy pure soul and spright enrich the heavens above. Farewell!"

These pious phrases, coming from the lecherous lips of the old shrew, were a mockery of truth, considering the base purposes behind them. Francis was not deceived as to her true purpose in sending him so hastily out of England. This was merely an extension of the cruel policy which had kept him, the Prince of Wales, hidden from the public for sixteen years, which made treason out of the mere mention of the succession to the throne; but what could he do?

He would obey, of course; but it was a youth become a man who left the privy chamber with unflexed knee, a conflict of moods stirring within him. The desperation which led him to procure the poison was steadily washing away before new feelings of exultation. His hand still clutched the deadly packet but heart and brain were aswirl with the dazzling prospect of a long, long visit to the French court across the Channel.

Not three months before he, and his brother Anthony, had been proud to become Ancients at Gray's Inn. Now the dull, dry study of law at the Inn would be replaced by the glamor of Paris, and perhaps Italy as well! Out in the audience chamber he paused again to look for his father, his real father, Robert Dudley. Where was he at this time? He had looked for Leicester in vain when he came in awhile ago but the master of Kenilworth was nowhere to be seen.

Leicester was much at Buxton "taking the waters" and at Wanstead in 1576. He was finally beginning to accept Elizabeth's unyielding determination to keep their two sons and their marriage hidden forever. Understandably, Robert Dudley wanted heirs to continue his name and fortune. Elizabeth's devious diplomacy had taught him that marriages could be made in secret and kept secret, until or if it suited one's purpose to publicly acknowledge the ceremony. Three years earlier his flaming love affair with the beauteous Douglass Sheffield wound up in a clandestine marriage. There was a son by this union, also named Robert. But Leicester's lusty passions were now centered on Elizabeth's cousin, Lettice Knollys. She was the sultry beauty who had graciously consented to mother the second child of the union of Elizabeth and Robert Dudley. Robert Devereaux was now about eight years old.

Elizabeth's flaming jealousy made her distrustful of any woman who looked twice at her husband, but his interest in the welfare of their second son called for occasional social contacts with Lettice Knollys, Lady Essex. That Lettice reacted warmly to the charm of Elizabeth's dashing consort was obvious as early as the eighteen day celebration at Kenilworth in 1574. There is no doubt that though the magnificent spectacle was for Elizabeth, Leicester found or made plenty of time

for dalliance with the willing Lettice.

There is no doubt also that the two found further opportunity to carry on their clandestine romance in the summer of 1576 while so many of the Court were at Shrewsbury's. If something like this hadn't been going on why did the suspicion of murder again attach itself to the Earl of Leicester's name in September? Walter Devereaux, Lord Essex, husband of Lettice Knollys and supposed father of Robert Devereaux, was campaigning in Ireland while his wife and Leicester were flirting in England. When Devereaux died suddenly of the flux, as they called acute dysentery in those days, vicious rumor had it that Leicester had him poisoned. So serious was this matter that Elizabeth had her deputy in Ireland, Sir Henry Sidney, investigate the matter thoroughly. Sidney's report was that the Earl of Essex had died a natural death, brought on by the barbarous living conditions of the campaign. That was on Sept. 20, 1576.

At that same time young Francis Bacon was riding in the train of the new Ambassador to France, Sir Amyas Paulet, down to the Channel. Five days later he landed at the French channel port of Calais. It was during this stormy crossing that young Francis felt the power of the sea and witnessed the seamanship described so vividly years later in one of his last plays, "The Tempest".

There is no doubt that Leicester was fully informed of the trick by which the hunchback, Robert Cecil, had gotten Elizabeth to publicly admit Francis Bacon's true parentage. He may have learned it within a few hours, certainly within a day or two after that momentous September afternoon at court. Considering the seriousness of the matter, and if Leicester was away from court at Wanstead, the Essex estate, at the time, the sudden decision to send young Francis abroad must have been Elizabeth's own. It is doubtful that it was momentous enough to take up with her Privy Council or that the Queen would have wanted to discuss so private a matter even with her Councillors. She certainly wouldn't have wanted to make legal admission of her marriage to Leicester sixteen years earlier at this time of her negotiations with the French court for marriage with the French prince, Alencon, twenty-one years her junior!

In any event, Elizabeth's decisive move quashed any positive reaction to her acknowledgement that there was a Prince of Wales. This action must have dispelled any lingering hope Leicester might have had that he would ever see either of his two sons by Elizabeth ascend England's throne. These two events, his first-born shipped summarily out of the country -- perhaps never to come back, and the death of Walter Devereaux, the one falling rapidly on the heels of the other, opened the way toward his eventual marriage to Lettice Knollys Devereaux, at Wanstead in 1578. This decisive act, though secret at the time, would make it even more impossible for the Prince of Wales to ever claim his throne. He faced an impossible task with both parents against him, and Elizabeth had made it legally impossible for anyone to even mention the succession in her presence. For Francis to claim his rightful heritage would be an act of treason. Thus far had Elizabeth pushed her absolute power, to absolute corruption of the high moral purpose with which she had set out to rule this little island off the coast of Europe.

After the usual rough channel crossing Francis Bacon set first foot on the Continent at Calais, Sept. 25, 1576, to begin a sojourn on French soil which lasted until the 20th or 21st of March, 1579.

* * *

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chamberlin - The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth

Dixon - Personal History of Lord Bacon

Donnelly - The Great Cryptogram

Durning-Lawrence - Bacon Is Shakespeare

Gallup - Francis Bacon's Bi-literal Cypher

Manly Hall - Pathways of Philosophy

Hort - Dr. John Dee

Jenkins - Elizabeth the Great

Owen - Bacon's Cipher Story

Reed - Francis Bacon Our Shakes-peare

Spedding - Life and Letters of Francis Bacon

Tudhope - Bacon Masonry

Waldman - Elizabeth and Leicester