

PART 5

CHAPTER 43

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The most elusive life in the Western tradition can now be reconstructed to a high level of precision indeed: for the First Folio is explicit and emphatic about its main architecture. Here and there are found some more or less significant gaps, which can be filled in with some confidence with the help of external references, such as the known facts of Bacon's life, the well-known Stratfordian traditions concerning the young Shaksper ("Shakespeare" would come later, in London), and so on. The novelist or film-maker would doubtless wish to let creative imagination fill out the story even more; but this approach would not – albeit both Bacon and Shakespeare would probably approve – accord with the present purpose.

An element of puritanism, which would find its ultimate expression in his espousal of Protestant Puritanism in his sixteenth year, was constitutive to the psyche of William Shakespeare. In his early years this puritanism was Pauline Catholic in origin, as founded on the Virgin Mary, the Great Goddess as expurgated of her aspects of Woman and Witch. It was not the Virgin who was strictly the Goddess of mediaeval English Catholicism: but rather, the Virgin tempered with a large dose of Mary Jacob, or Mary the Gypsy, a love-Goddess, and companion of Mary Magdalene, who lent her name to "Merrie" England, and was the subject of Botticelli's memorable painting *The Birth of Venus*. This was not so in the case in point, however, where the pristine Virgin remained deeply imprinted in the unconscious of Shaksper. What was Her origin? He was not explicit about it; but it is likely to have been his mother, the Catholic Mary Arden.

Upon reaching puberty, therefore, his psyche began to take on the character of the consort of the love Goddess, in conflict with his unconscious anima-image of the Virgin. His response – the first of a series of mechanisms of coping with this disquiet, none of them

ultimately successful – was to turn to bookish asceticism, founded on cloistral isolation, from which he would periodically emerge seeking the plaudits of all. He read solidly in this period, to give him a sure foundation of literary skill, which would later stand him in good stead, especially during his time of greatest trial. He became a literary lion-cub of Stratford: not difficult, given the prevailing rudeness and illiteracy of the town at the time. Self-denial is difficult for an adolescent however, and his asceticism began to break down under the pressure of libido, to be expressed as auto-erotism, a scenario encountered often enough in the lives of the great 20th century artists, but which many will doubtless find hard to accept in the case of Shakespeare.

His solitary fastness now was shattered. His own company became irksome, and he began to mix freely again with family and friends, to present him with the new problem of hiding from them the unconscious-libidinous aspect of his psyche which had led him to fall. He adopted the second coping mechanism, then, of gentility, with the Faustian dimension – the invisible world of his unconscious – thought to have been eliminated as an activating force in his psyche. This was his period of volubility, when he expatiated widely on history, religion, literature, politics, and so on, from the learning acquired in his bookish phase. Still the Goddess of Onan tempted him, and the guilt-enveloped auto-erotism continued. We are now at aet.13-14.

The new coping mechanism – the third – had promise, in that it recognised the prime importance of the Faustian journey – the Journey of the Hero”, or the “emergency flight of the shaman”: it has been given many names – into the invisible world, to discover the causes of things, and come to the bourne of the incomprehensible void. Inspired by Plutarch’s description of the young Alexander the Great, as continent (with respect to women), convivial, and fond of conversation with his companions over a glass of wine (though not drunkenness) he now began to consort with a largely illiterate tavern crowd, to whom he became an instant guru, advising them at length of the virtues of the Faustian journey, with which he had become familiar in his ascetic phase and after, without ever having properly made it himself. We have become familiar with this type in the cases of Socrates, whom

Kleitophon reproved for being able to enthuse so eloquently about self-transformation without being able to tell them exactly how to go about it; and also the magnificent Joseph Campbell, as he himself freely admitted. The central pillar of this new period was his faculty of spiritualisation, which is based on the visual imagination. Thus could the troublesome blind libido be kept at bay; and he succeeded, for a time, in giving his eros no expression at all. His subject was the Journey of the Hero after all... perhaps he could become a hero by association, and do for his unconscious as Alexander had once done for Asia. An inveterate characteristic of the Welsh intellectual is his tendency to over-spiritualise, as Bacon or Shakespeare so brilliantly observed (perhaps the latter, drawing on his childhood experience with a Welsh schoolmaster): so that this phase may be termed his Welsh (with reference to King Hal) or Tavern or pseudo-Alexandrian phase. The libidinous adventures of Lucius in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*, including his graphically described seduction by Fotis in Milo's house, were part of his repertoire. We can readily imagine the uproar among his roisterous tavern copains.

It was all a brilliant illusion. The libido, cast in negative aspect by the puritan Catholicism of his upbringing, lay caged in his unconscious, as potent and irrepressible as ever, ready to surge as the Boar, and bring him to his knees. The Boar charged; he surrendered to it again, and expressed his erotism in his habitual though temporarily forgotten way. The several Stratford traditions concerning him can be integrated seamlessly into this scenario. Demoralised, he no longer felt moved to play his exalted role of guru to his companions, and gave in to Dionysian community with them, joining them in escapades of petty crime. He declined into drunkenness, and after a drinking contest with the Bidford Topers spent a night unconscious under a crab-apple tree which later became known as "Shakespeare's Crab". He composed verses satirising the noted Stratford Puritan Sir Thomas Lucy, which were nailed to his gates. Finally, he was identified by Lucy as the culprit in a theft, and prosecuted by him in the courts. In this he may have been an accessory after the fact, given his lameness.

Shaksper was shattered, his reputation in ruins, the shame of his family and town. He was now aged 15. There seemed nowhere to go

but down; but he was shown clemency by the courts, at the recommendation of his accuser, because of his background and promise, and in lieu of gaol was forcibly sundered from the tavern milieu and sent away to become a country schoolmaster. It is a well-recognised phenomenon that the hostage often comes to sympathise with the ideals of the captor (Nietzsche's theory of good and evil again: it depends on your point of view). At this critical point, at the nadir of his degradation, having been thrown a lifeline by the Puritan, which would bind him like a chain to save him, he espoused the fourth and final, and ultimately calamitous, coping mechanism of Protestant Puritanism. With its complete suppression of the imagination, and denial of the primacy of Nature - the Goddess in any of Her aspects - it offered protection and release. If Nature cannot be recreated in the mind, after all, then one may presumably be free of Her; but this is ever a delusion: and Shaksper remained au fond, however he might deny it, a lusty, human-only-too-human adolescent. Dimly yet powerfully conscious of his incompleteness as a Puritan, and filled with self-contempt, he won over, against her initial resistance, the illiterate Aphrodite-figure Anne Hathaway. They made love; she became pregnant: and marriage, which was not the end he had had in mind, was now forced upon them. He now found himself lying every night beside Woman as ianus diaboli, the "gateway to the devil" of puritan Christianity; and he hardened progressively in his coping mechanism of Puritanism as the months and years went on. Perhaps he became totally frigid towards his wife. At any event, his Puritan phase came to a shattering end in 1587, when took up again a book which he had read in his tavern, perhaps even earlier ascetic, phase - perhaps the one that had first incited the Boar to charge - The Golden Ass by Apuleius, and came once again upon that memorable early passage describing the seduction of Lucius by Fotis. Now his libido surged again, and no will power could deny it. He surrendered to auto-erotism as of old; the Boar charged with savage and redoubled fury: and, with the protection afforded him by a powerful imagination and the richness of his reading, against the charges of the Boar all those years ago, - which he had thought to have finally escaped, - no longer available, having been so completely suppressed by Puritanism for those eight years, he was poleaxed by disabling anxiety and depression, and teetered on the

brink of psychosis. The tower of Lear Inc. had come tumbling down.

One can only feel for the resourceless and tortured youth that was Will Shaksper in those years. What was it that saved the last remnant of his reason, to pull him back from the pit of madness? His great intellect and imagination remained unimpaired, at least potentially; and the memory of the Journey of the Hero with which he had become so familiar all those years ago indicated to him firmly what he had to do. Facing his wife in his desperation and suffering, he told her of his intention to move to London, and commence a *vita nuova*. What exactly would happen there he had no clear idea; but he knew it was the only way forward. Anne Shaksper understood, and forgave him, an act of mercy that he felt at the time to decide for life rather than death. He had decided, in truth, - whether from pure instinct, which is often infallible in these situations, or because of a previous encounter with travelling players from London, - to seek the mythic goal of "at-one-ment with the Father", with which Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* has made us so familiar: to make the journey of Phaëthon, or Dante, or Stephen Daedalus. In this way was begun the greatest journey in Western art.

On arrival in London he made for the theatres, where he may have had a job minding the horses of patrons. Dionysius is the tutelary deity of the stage, after all, and it is precisely the Dionysian or Falstaffian aspect of Man which Puritanism anathematizes. This was the crack of light in the iron that covered the pit of his torment, a chink that would prove to be his star. At some point he came across Sir Francis Bacon, who had a deep philosophical conviction of the worth of the stage, and may already have had a successful pseudonymous career. Shaksper knew immediately, with the infallible nose of intuition, that his saviour was at hand. As their acquaintance grew into friendship, he opened up to Bacon unreservedly; and the great philosopher recognised and accepted the challenge of restoring him to health, by leading him out of the Puritan darkness into the highest realms of enlightenment. The instruments of his therapy would be the Musical arts, as defined by Socrates to include reading and writing, speech and song, recital and repetition, and so on; but principally, in this case, reading of the written word. This is the true Faustian medium, evoking as it does the imagination, with its fostering of ideas, then Platonic

Ideas, whence the unseen world – the *bête noir* of Puritanism - is revealed. The central plank of his approach would be Apuleius' timeless masterpiece *The Golden Ass*, - in the original Latin, rather than the bowdlerised translation, – which, if surrendered to with one's whole imagination, leaves one even now with a sense of magical transformation, as if the psyche has been through a furnace, to emerge as something quite different, and stronger. The siren-call of the seduction of Lucius would be resisted, to enable engagement with its powerful transformational magic: libido-as-will being conquered by libido-as-idea.

This initial period of intensive reading was maintained for a little over two years. Shakespeare (as he had now become) then began to take up the pen, and his first productions – perhaps the early Acts of *Pericles*, followed by *Mr. Arden of Feversham* – began to appear. At about this time, or possibly earlier, Bacon conceived the grand idea that would change the course of Western cultural history. He had already identified Protestant Puritanism as the culprit in Shakespeare's condition and, in the wider field, in the degradation of humanity in general, and England in particular. He feared nothing less than the extinction of the cultural achievements of the West: a powerful initiatory call-to-arms in the way of the shaman, and certainly sufficient stimulus to the production of art of the urgency and magnitude of FF, as even the most un-philosophical of literary critics would concede. This sort of mortal threat to a peoples or culture is often associated with intense cryptographic activity. The fibrils of Puritanism had been coalescing for some years into a tissue that would come to strangle the soul of his country; while his own mother (or foster-mother) Lady Anne Bacon, herself a staunch Puritan, whom her son kept at arm's length, would come, in the last ten years of her life until her death in 1610, to be disabled by a schizophrenia-like illness, which is recorded as having begun to manifest itself as early as 1594. Perhaps even in 1587, or earlier, the signs were there for a super-alert mind like her son's. At any event, Bacon was able to identify precisely the causal factors in Shaksper's neurosis, and to settle upon just the right treatment. For many reasons, his findings on the aetiology, pathogenesis, and crisis of Shaksper's condition and, by extension, of schizophrenia, as well as the principles of his

successful therapeutic regime, could not possibly be published openly, or under his own name. Even as an anonymous pamphlet, there would surely be fearful retributions from the Puritans, and the work could conceivably be lost forever. Moreover, this sort of subject is best explored in art, rather than a theoretical treatise. Many lives have been enriched by Joseph Campbell's magnificent *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*; but incomparably more, and in a deeper way, by James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and the *Star Wars* films. If you want to invite Jung to change your life, read the symbolist poets; or, better still, the *First Folio* as allegory: for this is exactly its weight, as marking the true inauguration of the Western school of depth psychology, some three centuries before its accepted birth.

A drama had been enacted in the mind of Shaksper, and of the Puritan. It had to do with Woman, Witch, the libido, the unconscious, the reasoning ego, the superego, the visual imagination, the impulse to self-protection, and so on. Bacon realised that it could be enacted on the stage, with these principles being yoked to individual characters. The first productions in this vein were *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Mr. Arden of Feversham*, from the pens of doctor alone and pupil alone, respectively. It was at about this time that Shakespeare was born, - as a reference to the Boar spear, his new weaponry against his nemesis, - and Shaksper sloughed off. Bacon encouraged his patient, by now for all intents and purposes successfully treated, to write the history of his own inner life, with which Bacon was by now familiar, into a sequence of plays based on the well-known histories of *Holinshed*; while he himself would be engaged on a series dealing with the principles of his the illness as it had presented to him, and its treatment. In general terms, Bacon was responsible alone for his eponymous group, while giving Shakespeare, of course, tremendous help with the histories and other collaborations of this time, as he would until "Shakespeare" was no more; but it was the pupil who had lived through the storm: and his awful familiarity with the details of his crisis would inject their collaborations, especially the tragedies, with an energy that would transform them into art of the highest possible order.

London-phase Shakespeare was a prickly customer, somewhat aloof, and a dandy with a penchant for the French fashion. He was,

of course, lame, and walked with a stick. His erotic life remained problematic, with the Boar charging repeatedly, albeit now into the net of his highly developed imagination, - in stark contrast to his Puritan phase, - along with deep insight into the psyche, and the richness of his learning under the guidance of his doctor. Yet the charges would remain ferocious enough to wound; from which traumas, now comparatively minor, yet still painful, he would find healing in creativity. This is a syndrome common enough in the annals of Western Art: for example, in the case of the fine Scottish-Australian novelist and essayist Colin McInnes, whose constitutive high Scottish puritanism, derived from his mother, the novelist Angela Thirkell, was continually deliquescing into libidinous encounters with rent-boys and rough trade. Yet it is the son's works, especially the memorable novel *Absolute Beginners*, later basis for a film, - as celebratory of the "x" factor, or will-to-life, whose immanence is the prime determinative factor of great art, - that have survived; while the mother's gather dust in the remainder store of history. Bacon was also gay, perhaps following the example of the Knights Templar, whose influence is felt so powerfully throughout FF (albeit basic erotic orientation is rarely a matter of choice, as fundamentalists like to believe); but the word "deliquescence" would be utterly inappropriate here. Nothing he ever did was done blindly; his Cupid had his eyes open: and his erotic life remained not in the slightest degree problematic. His relations with his servingmen and others were utterly consistent with his beliefs about the incompatibility of love and wisdom, and the desirability of solitary travel for attainment of the goals most worth reaching.

This would present a problem for Shakespeare, who remained thoroughly heterosexual. It is axiomatic that one becomes eventually like the God one worships; and Shakespeare attained very closely indeed to the condition of his teacher. There would be no satisfying long-term relationship with a woman, which would only be achieved on his return to Stratford and his family. Gay relations were out; and he expressed his erotism initially through tarts or courtesans, of whose company perhaps was the Dark Lady; later, after contraction of a venereal disease, through auto-erotism. This undoubtedly will be a scenario difficult of acceptance

for the modern intellectual, whose condition approaches most closely to that of Homer Simpson, protected as he is from the dangerous substances of his workplace by a screen and asbestos gloves; while Shakespeare was, on the contrary, constantly clutching the heat and danger of his smouldering will-to-life to his naked skin, absorbing its energy, grasping still, in spite of the burns. This is the stuff of which the greatest art is made.

Problematic too would be the inevitable time when the works of Shakespeare reached their natural end. Shakespeare's London phase had been an endless cycle of Baconesque study, indispensable for the plays, interrupted by irruption of libido, then "charge of the Boar", for which creativity was the sovereign remedy, followed by more study, and so on. In his scholarly mode the Kate principle in himself – the invisible world, the unconscious, the libido - was kept repressed; and yet we feel that Kate should never have been subjugated to such an extent: and that it was her enfranchisement by the Shakespeare half of the firm that was the catalyst for the transformation of the pure gold of Bacon's philosophy and linguistics into the priceless element of "x" factor art. Now the creativity was at an end, and the study had served its purpose. Kate was free to come and go at will; and his return to his wife would undoubtedly give her much opportunity. The challenge for Shakespeare was to ensure that the coup of 1587 would never be repeated. There was no chance of that now, with his imagination developed to such an extent, along with the insights into his own psyche gained throughout all those years. Further, the Boar could be taken completely out of play, if the Baconesque side of his life were to be relinquished; and so he returned to Stratford and domestic harmony, with no books or manuscripts or other temptations for him to take up his old life. Shakespeare remained essentially Shakespeare, while Shaksper seemed to belong to the hell of a distant age.

Bacon remained in London, to shepherd the plays into the First Folio, whose extreme accuracy is an index to his close supervision. This would form Part IV of his *Instauratio Magna*, to do with examples of his scientific method. He had been the philosophical and linguistic genius behind the greatest invention of Western literature, whose birth had seen much misery and ecstasy,

suffering and peace, degradation and glory: but such is the way of art, in spite of what the neo-Classacists of our feeble era may believe.

CHAPTER 44

SIR FRANCIS BACON AND THE HOLY GRAIL

The Journey of the Hero on which Bacon led his patient William Shaksper, - later "Shakespeare", a reference to the Boar spear, his new weaponry against the psychic coup which had stricken him down in 1587, - was of the nature of a Ring or Grail quest, as the argument of these pages has exhaustively shown. The Ring tradition began at least as far back as Sumer, in the 5th and 6th millennia BC, and is celebrated in The Volsung Saga, The Ring of the Nibelung, and lately Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, among others; but there is abundant evidence in FF that it was the Ring of the famously wise King Solomon that Bacon took as his prime symbol of mastery of the wisdom of the invisible world, the impartation of which to his patient was the goal of his therapy.

Yet this identification of an organising principle of FF still leaves major questions of architectonics unanswered. It is one thing to be aware of the unseen world as a dimension crucially to be engaged by the reasoning mind, for the health of the psyche and of the broader society; another to crystallise it so brilliantly into the creative symbol of the Queen of Hell-Ring/Grail Queen: and so with the Boar, Fool and Adonis principles, and so on. So many of these principles sprang fully-formed into being, with no prior period of development, at the very beginning of the great work, in TGV, TitA, the early comedies, and, of course, 1-3HVI. It was as if some pre-existing rich spring had suddenly been tapped. The principal theme of FF is the new appreciation by the suffering Puritan subject of the true nature of the visible or phenomenal world, as founded on the world unseen below the surface. This is expressed, for example, in TOS, in the prior marriage of Petruchio and Kate (unseen world), followed by that of Lucentio and Bianca (visible world); but it made

the first of its many appearances in the very early TGV. Again, the sudden crystallisation of this strategy would appear almost miraculous; and an established tradition must be suspected. The Tarot was, as we have seen, almost certainly the source of the motifs of the Tower (1HVI, RIII), Wheel of Fortune (HAM), Emperor (TGV: for Milan did not have an emperor, rather a duke), and Fool (although ass-phase Lucius in *The Golden Ass* is another strong possibility). Yet this still leaves us far from full enlightenment.

I came relatively late to Graham Hancock's acclaimed *The Sign and the Seal*, and found it to provide, to my surprise and great delight, the key to the architectonics of FF. Briefly, this thoroughly researched, richly detailed, and impeccably argued long work describes Hancock's search for the lost Ark of the Covenant, that famed box of acacia wood, three feet nine inches in length and two feet three inches in width and depth, plated inside and out with solid gold, likewise covered with a lid of gold, and surmounted by two cherubims of gold opposed at each end of the lid, - which Moses constructed on Mt. Sinai to bear the two "Tablets of Testimony" whereon God had inscribed his Word, and which came to bring the Israelites great victories, at Jericho and elsewhere, through its potent magic.¹ The Ark is particularly associated with King Solomon, who from 966-958 BC constructed the Temple of Jerusalem to house it, yet from which it apparently disappeared into impenetrable obscurity, as the Bible relates. Hancock's investigation - a non plus ultra of thoroughness - showed that the Ark was in truth spirited away from the Temple by its guardian priests during the reign of the sacrilegious King Manasseh (687-642 BC), to the island of Elephantine on the Nile, where it remained for some two centuries, before the destruction of its temple forced its relocation to the island of Tana Kirkos in Ethiopia. Finally, after the conversion of much of Ethiopia to Christianity by Frumentius in the late 4th century AD, it found its final home in the church of St. Mary of Zion, in Axum, Ethiopia, where it remains to this day.

Of striking relevance to FF is Hancock's interpretation of *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach, which, building on the earlier *Conte de Graal* by Chretien de Troyes, appeared at the turn of the 12th

¹ This is far from the whole story, however: see Laurence Gardner's *Genesis of the Grail Kings*.

century AD as the first complete Grail saga. I had been aware of Ted Hughes' discussion of the scrotum wound of Anfortas, the stricken Grail King in Parzival, as the source for the thigh wound inflicted on Adonis by the Boar in V&A; and now The Sign and the Seal prompted me to read Wolfram's tale in detail. Briefly, Parzival relates the search by the eponymous hero for the Holy Grail. It begins with his father Gahmuret, who marries the dark-skinned Queen Belacane, to beget his son Feirefiz, whose skin is parti-coloured in black and white. Gahmuret now leaves her in search of knightly adventure, and marries the white-skinned Herzeloide, to beget Parzival. Belacane is, fascinatingly, yet another "foul and fair" Goddess:

Now many an ignorant fellow would think that it was her black skin I ran away from, but in my eyes she was bright as the sun!²

This recalls all the similar Goddess-figures of FF, as well as the lover of the Song of Solomon, which I have nominated as their source. It will emerge that the legend of Solomon was the ultimate source of Belacane, and so much else in Parzival, as Bacon was fully aware. Indeed, to read Parzival is seemingly to confront a primer of FF as allegory, such is the identity of their allegorical techniques. Parzival now sets out on his own knightly career, dressed in a fool's rags, and riding a feeble palfrey (this was surely the inspiration for Don Quixote). He dishonestly acquires a ring from the sleeping Jeschute, and is later forced to return it. This is, of course, the momentous Ring of King Solomon and FF. Laurence Gardner has demonstrated the Ring and Grail traditions to be essentially the same;³ and this is not at all a recondite argument, for the Ring motif plays a colossal part in Parzival, as a symbol of the wisdom associated with Grail nobility. This is reflected in the twin Grail and Ring motifs of All's Well That Ends Well, which is for this reason a key play in the corpus.

Parzival enters the castle of Monsalvaesche, wherein resides King Anfortas, the Fisher King, guardian of the Grail, who suffers from a crippling lance-wound to the scrotum. Parzival could heal

² p.56, Parzival, Penguin Classics, 1986 (trans. A. T. Hatto). All quotations are from this edition.

him, and himself become the Grail King, if only he would ask the question “What ails thee?”; but, restrained by his knightly code of politeness, he does not, and the opportunity is lost. Yet not forever: and now the Grail quest begins in earnest. The questing hero divides into two, Parzival and Gawan: and the prime importance of Parzival as a source for FF here becomes apparent. The allegorical nature of Gawan’s adventures in the castles of Logroy and Clinschor, and his winning of Orgeleuse as his bride, as an underworld journey, could not be more clearly expressed. Logroy, where Gawan first comes upon Orgeleuse, is an exemplary “spiral castle”, which symbolises always in myth a return to the mother-womb at death,⁴ the baby following a spiral course through the pelvis at birth:

With its path ascending in spirals the castle-hill resembled a top, so that when a simple person saw it from a way off he thought it was all spinning round.⁵

Further, the castle of Clinschor, to which Gawan and Orgeleuse now travel, is surrounded by a river, complete with ferryman and ferry! The analogy to the Styx and underworld of Virgil’s Aeneid VI could not be clearer. Gawan weds Orgeleuse in Clinschor; and soon Parzival returns to centre stage, finally to ask Anfortas the right question, and claim the Grail Kingship. There can be no doubt at all that the splitting off in Parzival of the underworld journey as a separate quest was the model for Bacon’s identical treatment of the Journey of the Hero in FF: so that the Parzival-Gawan duad is equivalent to Lucentio-Petruchio, and is reflected in the constant theme in FF of the necessity for rebirth into Gnostic enlightenment of prior engagement with the unseen world. The nature of Orgeleuse as a Queen of Hell, and Kate-analogue, is emphasised by her association with Cundrie la suziere (“the sorceress”), an exemplary underworld Goddess, with nose “like a bear’s”, hair “about as soft as boar’s bristles”, boar’s tusks, and so on. She, or more likely her equally porcine brother who encounters Gawan early in his quest, may well have been the source of the Boar in FF,

⁴ Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*.

⁵ p.258, *ibid*.

as the libido in negative aspect. Cundrie la surziere is a floating presence throughout Parzival, bearing always the value of the unseen world. Most importantly, she is a messenger of the Grail, and is closely associated with Anfortas and his sister Repanse de Schoye, its priestess. This identification of the Grail Queen as an underworld Goddess was undoubtedly the inspiration for Bacon's treatment of Julia, Portia, Cordelia, Desdemona, Perdita, and all the other Queens of Hell-Grail Queens of FF. The isolation of the Queen of Hell-Grail Queen has always seemed to me Bacon's most spectacular creative leap; but the invention evidently was not his.

A plethora of further correspondences firmly identify Parzival as the key source of FF. Anfortas' groin wound was, as noted above, clearly the model for Adonis' similar wound in V&A, as well as Falstaff's in 2HIV II, iv, and the King's fistula in AWT. Anfortas' groin stands, like the "I" principle in 1-3HVI, and more generally in FF the libido, for the invisible world, or underworld; and Parzival's question "What ails thee?" for the Gnostic initiate's enquiry into that world. Clinschor has been castrated by a King of Sicily, after dallying with Iblis his wife: the point being that he has been indelibly marked by the underworld, where Sicily, as a southern province of Italy, bears the allegoric value of the will, or body, or libido. Again, this was quite plausibly the source for the geographic symbolism so widespread throughout FF: in TT, for example, where Milan-Naples (north-south) bears the value of idea-will, or mind-body. Iblis is a classic jinn or fallen angel of the Koran. This sort of symbol-mining of history or legend is a technique used repeatedly by Bacon. On Gawan's arrival in Clinschor's (underworld) castle, and before his trials, he asks questions of the master's daughter who, however, is "bound to silence"; and a result of his marriage to Orgeleuse will be that the ladies therein, formerly immured in muteness, will now begin to talk with the knights. The correspondence to the silences of Cordelia, Hero and Hippolyta, is striking. The silences of these latter mean that the Puritan subject is deaf to the song of the underworld as described in the Gnostic written word, with his redemption being predicated on the opening of his ears to it (their volubility): and so here, where Clinschor's ladies are underworld Goddesses, once mute, now songful.

One of the tasks set Gawan in the castle before he may claim Orgeleuse is the slaying of a ferocious lion: and this is plausibly a source for the "lion" (leo-) in Leonato, Leonine, Posthumus Leonatus, Leontes; in MND; and implicit in the "Andronicus" of TitA (a reference to Pliny's tale): in all of which it bears the value of the Goddess-rejecting Puritan subject that was Shaksper aet.15-23, the slaying of which abomination was the goal of Bacon's therapy. This is not the whole story, however: for another strong candidate is the lion torn to pieces by Samson on his way to a tryst with the Philistine girl in Judges 14:

And after some days, returning to take her, he went aside to see the carcass of the lion, and, behold, there was a swarm of bees in the mouth of the lion and a honeycomb. And when he had taken it in his hands, he went on eating: and coming to his father and mother, he gave them of it, and they ate. But he would not tell them, that he had taken the honey from the body of the lion.

Bacon referred to this in a petition to the House of Lords:

...if any of you will do posterity good, if out of the carcass of a dead and rotten lion, there may be honey gathered for the use of future times.⁶

It is of extreme relevance that Leontes and Posthumous Leonatus feature in the final two plays TWT and CYM, written almost entirely by Bacon; and that the final lines of the latter contain a summa of the philosophical intent of the FF allegory: so that the honey would represent the balm of the philosophy of the works of Shakespeare for future generations, garnered from the extirpation of the Puritan ego of the patient Shaksper (slaying of the lion), and Samson's deception of his parents the encryption of the hidden message. Both sources may have operated: Parzival for the early lions in TitA and MND, the Book of Judges for the later.

Before Gawan's confrontation with the lion, as he lies on the Lit merveil ("Bed of marvels"), he is pelted with successive hails of

⁶ Quoted by Ignatius Donnelly in his *The Great Cryptogram*.

pebbles and crossbow arrows, the genital symbolism of which is clear: the libido standing here, once again, more broadly for the invisible world. The arrow bears often this value in FF (most powerfully in the character of Sebastian in TN and elsewhere, a reference to the shaft-pierced body of St. Sebastian, a favourite theme of Renaissance artists); while the “Bed of marvels” recalls the dream of Clarence (libido) in RIII I, iv, with its “Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,/Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,/All scattered in the bottom of the sea”: the sea bearing here its age-old mythic value of the unconscious/underworld.

A recurring motif of Parzival is the lady Sigune cradling her ailing or dead knight-husband in her arms. She is undoubtedly an expression of the *mater dolorosa*, so well known in Christianity as the Virgin Mary embracing Jesus after his deposition from the Cross, the most famous depiction of which is Michelangelo’s *Pieta*, - although Sigune seems to represent here rather Mary Magdelene, whose status as Jesus’ wife and mother of his children has lately been established,⁷ but would certainly have been known to Wolfram, as a staple of the Gnostic heritage. In any case, the *mater dolorosa* symbol appears in KJ IV, iii, as Hubert cradling the body of young Arthur. The scene of Cleopatra helping to arm Antony in A&C IV, iv, recalls the many similar episodes in Parzival: for example, of Lady Cunneware arming Parzival, just after the splitting of the hero into Parzival-Gawan.⁸ One of the most remarkable and frequent motifs in FF is of the napkin, often blood-stained, or sewn with strawberries, as symbolic of the Goddess, as a reference to menstruation. There is in Parzival, again, a similar symbolism in the blood-stained snow which torments Parzival, as suggestive of his wife Condwiramurs. The parting words of Gurnemanz to Parzival recall the paternal advice of Polonius to Laertes. The roots on which Timon feeds after his banishment from Athens irresistibly suggests the similar diet of Parzival after his expulsion in failure from Munsalvaesche (see below). And so it goes on.

It is repeatedly emphasised in FF that the Holy Grail is the wisdom based on knowledge of the unseen world, as conveyed by the written word. It is therefore startling to find in Parzival that, in reference to

⁷ Baigent et al., *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*; Gardner, *Bloodline of the Holy Grail*.

⁸ p.173 *ibid.*.

⁹ p.243 *ibid.*

Anfortas:

But any Lord of the Grail who seeks love other than that allowed him by the Writing will inevitably have to pay for it with pain and suffering fraught with sighs.⁹

And:

“It [the face of Feirefiz] is like a parchment, with writing,” answered Herzeloide’s son, “black and white, in patches.”¹⁰

This latter is just before the brothers Parzival and Feirefiz go arm-in-arm to approach the Grail. Which brings us back to The Sign and the Seal. Hancock’s thesis (again to cut a long story regrettably short) is that both Chretien de Troyes and Wolfram von Eschenbach were associated with the Knights Templar, whose mission to Jerusalem was to recover the Ark of the Covenant, which they presumed to have been hidden by Solomon under the foundations of the Temple. Although they would find the secrets to the Temple’s architecture (Hancock concludes), which the builders of the great Cathedrals of France, such as Chartres, were later to employ, they would fail in their search for the ultimate prize. Yet they did discover its location – in Ethiopia (see above); – and Chretien, later Wolfram, would conceive the first Grail romances as a guide to its location. The story of the removal of the Ark remains a cornerstone of Ethiopian tradition, and probably had been told to the Templars by the Ethiopian King Lalibela during his long exile in Jerusalem from 1160. According to this tradition, the Queen of Sheba was in truth an Ethiopian. On her legendary visit to King Solomon she conceived as a son, Menelik, who would be born in Ethiopia, but return aet.20 to see his father. The elders of Jerusalem became jealous of the preferment given to Menelik, and demanded his expulsion. The King acquiesced, but on condition that the first-born sons of the elders accompany him. One of these sons, Azarius, stole the Ark; and when Menelik discovered it on the journey home, he reasoned that such a daring venture could not

¹⁰ p.372 *ibid.*

have succeeded without the blessing of God, and retained the Ark for Ethiopia.

As we have seen, Graham Hancock has shown this tradition to be factual only in its final detail, the location of the Ark, the rest being fabrication. Yet it is this story that the Templars would have known. In *Parzival*, Wolfram would portray the Queen of Sheba as the dark-skinned Belacane. She is associated with India throughout the work, that country generally being synonymous with Ethiopia in the literature of the time. Hancock most plausibly derives the name of her pied son Feirefiz from the French *vrai fils*, “true son”; and in an ancient recension of the same legend, Solomon’s words of greeting to the long lost Menelik are given explicitly as “Thou art my true son”. “Perceval” means “Piercer of the Valley”: a reference to the threading by the Templars, in their search for the Ark, of the labyrinth of tunnels under the Kidron Valley in Jerusalem.¹¹ The white skinned Gahmuret – the etymology of whose name, along with so many others in *Parzival*, remains an untilled field of extraordinary richness - is, of course, Solomon himself. It would have been unthinkable for a half-caste to become the hero of a knightly work, and so the figure of *Parzival* was created. Yet Feirefiz remains the “true son”, and the two become brothers-in-arms before the final, successful, encounter with Anfortas and the Holy Grail. The Grail is, of course, identical with the Ark of the Covenant. A precept of St. Bernard of Clairvaux in his Templar-derived theory of Gothic architecture, which was almost certainly the definitive influence on the construction of the Chartres Cathedral (12th-13th centuries), was “No ornamentation, only proportion”. Everything there has a purpose; and there is in the north porch of Chartres a statuette of the Queen of Sheba with an Ethiopian slave, as well as a depiction of the Ark in transit. Most strikingly, there is a statue of Melchizedek holding the cup of the Holy Grail, wherein is contained a cylindrical or tabloid stone. We remember at this point that, according to Exodus, the Ark was built house to the two stone “Tablets of Testimony”, which were inscribed with the Word of God, and given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. This Grail-Ark identification is made explicit in *Parzival*:

¹¹ Erling Haagensen and Henry Lincoln, *The Templars’ Secret Island*.

¹² p.239 *ibid*

“It is well known to me,” said his host, “that many formidable fighting men dwell at Munsalvaesche with the Grail... Whether these same Templars reap trouble or renown, they bear it for their sins... They live from a Stone whose essence is most pure... This Stone is also called ‘The Grail’.”¹²

It is immensely relevant that the guardians are explicitly named as Templars (templeis). Finally, Feirefiz and the Grail Princess Repanse de Schoyes marry, and have a son, Prester John. This is the name by which the Christian kings of Ethiopia were known at that time, and for long after. Remarkably, there is a later Grail saga, *The Younger Titurel*, - thought to have been written by Albrecht von Scharfenberg, an acolyte of Wolfram’s, from previously unpublished fragments of his master’s work, - in which this same Prester John explicitly becomes the guardian of the Grail.

Wolfram’s *Parzival* is clearly also an allegory of psychic transformation in itself, in the great line of Homer’s *Odyssey*¹³ and Sophocles’ *Oedipus* trilogy. It contributed to FF its axis, namely the towering figure of the Grail Queen-Queen of Hell, as well as a multitude of further allegoric techniques and motifs: so that there can be no doubt that this was Bacon’s prime source and inspiration. To put it more strongly, he seems to have been saturated with it, so that the sudden appearance of Will Shaksper on his doorstep, with his acute ailment, and the potential he saw there for a cure, and the recording of a timeless philosophical and artistic statement, provided the catalyst for the tapping of this hidden spring. With regard to the philosophy and allegorical strategy of FF, Bacon is therefore to be understood as not only an astonishing innovator, but also an inheritor, like Chretien and Wolfram, of an ancient tradition, the Gnostic tradition, the philosophical cornerstone of which is the primacy of the unseen world.

The question must now be asked: Was Sir Francis Bacon aware of the cryptic nature of *Parzival* as a guide to the location of the Ark of the Covenant? The Ark was associated above all with Solomon; and I have noted repeatedly the centrality of Solomon and his Ring to FF.

¹³ See Joseph Campbell’s *Occidental Mythology* for a beautiful discussion of the *Odyssey* as psycho-allegory.

Does this remain valid in the light of the foregoing, or was Parzival the immediate source of the Ring motif in FF? An affirmative answer to the first question would complete the puzzle of these pages, as well as providing confirmation of Graham Hancock's theory. There are, of course, numerous direct references to Solomon throughout FF, in the character of Davy (invisible world) in 2HIV V, - a reference to King David, father of Solomon, and therefore father of Wisdom, as the unseen world certainly is; the "foul and fair" or "black and fair" Goddesses, the prominence of Whom in FF would suggest the Biblical Song of Solomon rather than Parzival as the source; and so on.

Far more telling is the Ark symbolism in Timon of Athens. Shortly after his expulsion from Munsalveasche in Wolfram's tale, having failed to ask of Anfortas the vital question "What ails thee?", Parzival comes upon the hermit Trevrizent, and joins him in his meal of roots dug up from the soil. Timon also dines on roots after his expulsion from Athens in TimA. We remember that Timon in Athens is a portrayal of Shaksper's Tavern or pseudo-Alexandrian phase of mid-adolescence, the third in a series of coping mechanisms against the negative libido (the Boar), when he became an instant guru to his friends, a voluble expert on the Journey of the Hero, or Grail Quest, without ever himself having undertaken it, to leave him still vulnerable to his nemesis (entry of Cupid and dancers in TimA I, ii, 120); and that Timon's exile represents the forced termination of this phase by the re-irruption of the libido into the reluctant ego, to leave only one further coping mechanism in the offing: that of Puritanism, with its total extirpation of the Goddess principle from the psyche. We now recall the statue in Chartres, of Melchizedech holding the cup of the Holy Grail, with a tabloid or cylindrical stone contained therein; and that its purpose is to demonstrate the identity of Grail and Ark. Of the utmost relevance then, is Timon's final banquet in Athens in III, vi, when he uncovers the dishes to reveal warm water and stones, and subsequently throws them, in his bitterness, at his guests. The first scene of his exile (IV, i), with his digging for roots, follows immediately. There can be not the slightest doubt that Athens here is a reference to the Grail castle, Munsalveasche; and Timon's banishment, to the expulsion therefrom of Parzival: for Tavern-phase Shaksper had also failed to

ask The Question of the visible world, which would have led him directly to the invisible world which underlies it. The banquet fare can only be a direct reference to the Chartres statue: and it must be inferred that Bacon had seen for himself that symbol of Grail-Ark identity during his Grand Tour aet.14-18, or at least (the less likely scenario) knew of it from other sources, and that he was thoroughly aware of its esoteric significance.

The gravestone of Timon, inscribed with his writing, clearly also represents the tables within the Ark; the sea that covers it, and recedes from it each day to allow it to be read, the unconscious (this is the sea's immemorially ancient mythic value), whose power wanes with Gnostic enlightenment. The words on the gravestone are those written as allegory by Shakespeare (albeit this is mostly Bacon's play, and FF his "baby"), on the subject of his own illness, which posterity may employ to stave off a breakdown of the type of 1587 (appeasement of Alcibiades – the Boar – in final scene). In the true spirit of Christian Cabalism, these are to be considered the words of God, for divine reason is founded on engagement with the unseen world. In an adroit legerdemain, Timon has a second grave, in the forest. This is his true grave, which commemorates the death of Shaksper as Puritan, as the phoenix that would rise again into Gnostic nobility; and the inscription found there powerfully expresses Bacon's opinion of the Puritan: 'Some beast read this: there does not live a man'. TimA emerges therefore as a key play in the corpus, secreting as it does Bacon's acknowledgement of his debt to the Templar tradition. There is a further reference to the Ark of the Covenant in *The Spanish Tragedy* (first performed in 1592), which will be shown (Appendix 1) to belong to the FF family, and to have been written under the direction of Bacon, probably by Thomas Kyd.

Allied with this really conclusive evidence of the stones in TimA is, of course, the utter centrality to FF of the Grail Queen as Queen of Hell, Goddess of the Invisible World, and the identification of the Grail itself with the wisdom derived from knowledge of that world as described in the written word. I had originally assumed this identification to have been a brilliant master stroke of Bacon's, an idiosyncratic reworking of an ancient symbol to express a personal

¹⁴ Robert Graves, *ibid.*

philosophy concerning the written word. It is clear, however, that this was also the central philosophy of Parzival, and that Wolfram was himself expressing a traditional Gnostic theme of the primacy of the unseen world, to be contrasted with the denial of this world by the Roman Catholic Church, - that savage enemy of Gnosticism, - whose corrupt world-view is enshrined in the Virgin Mary, who is Maiden only (in terms of the pastoral-agricultural Triple Goddess), with Woman and Witch (Queen of Hell) suppressed.¹⁴ It was Wolfram's great innovation to take - in response to the discovery of the Ark, and the need to communicate its whereabouts to the few - the Tablets of Testimony inscribed with the words of God as a symbol of the Gnostic written word, as descriptive of the unseen world, and thereby to kill two birds - the philosophical and the historical - with one stone (as it were). The discovery of the Ark was the catalyst - just as the arrival of Shaksper was to Bacon - of a reaction that had been brewing in him for some time, as an inheritor of the Gnostic tradition. Bacon was to follow his example to the letter, and himself encrypt two allegories within the one work. The philosophical allegory it has been the task of these pages exhaustively to disclose; while the great Ignatius Donnelly went some way toward doing a similar service for the historical allegory in his astonishing 19th century masterpiece *The Great Cryptogram*.

The more enlightened of the Brotherhood have long claimed Bacon as one of their own, and there is little reason to doubt it. Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas in their much admired *The Hiram Key*, - which traces the roots of Freemasonry to the kingly secrets of Middle Kingdom Egypt, via Moses and the Jews, the Jerusalem Qumran community of the 1st century BC, the Gnostic Church, and the Knights Templar, - give a convincing provenance for the esoteric lore that is so much a part of Parzival and the First Folio. For example, they describe the central importance of the pillar symbol in the esoteric tradition: the twin pillars surmounted by an arch originally representing the union of Upper and Lower Kingdom Egypt, and the resulting security and prosperity (the arch). These became the famous Boaz and Jachim pillars of Solomon's temple, which would later be perpetuated by the post-captivity Jews in the symbolic pillars of mishpat (kingly rule) and tsedeq (priestly rule), joined by the shalom arch, where

the word shalom bears the broad meaning of “good fortune, prosperity, victory in war, and general good fortune and well-being”. The Qumranians always kept separate the offices of King and Priest, until Jesus Christ came to arrogate both titles to himself, for good political reasons, in the context of their struggle against the Roman occupation. Yet it was John the Baptist who was the original High Priest or tsedeq figure, and he rather than Christ who would come to be venerated by the Knights Templar, and also Leonardo da Vinci, amongst others.¹⁵

There is a pillar, too, in Parzival, in Clinschor’s palace:

At one side of the Palace a spiral staircase, vaulted and moderately broad, ascended through the whole height of the Palace and beyond. It carried a splendid Pillar not made of rotten wood but strong and burnished and so tall... Gawan mounted this watchtower with all its costly gems in order to survey the scene and discovered such great marvels as he never wearied of gazing at. It seemed to him as though each land was revealed to him in the great Pillar, that they were whirling round and the huge mountains clashing with one another. He saw people in the Pillar, riding and walking, this man running, that one standing...¹⁶

The spiral staircase identifies this as an underworld scene (see above); and the watchtower is identified, remarkably, with the pillar itself. The story of the pillar tradition is a complex one; however, this may be the priestly or tsedeq or John the Baptist pillar of the Gnostic tradition, or even the kingly pillar, as Knight and Lomas argue in their later book, the epochal *The Second Messiah*. In any case, the ultimate reference – predating even Egypt - is probably to the pillars of Enoch, which he inscribed with the knowledge of the ancient world, to preserve it from the flood. Thus, the figures Gawan sees on Clinschor’s pillar plausibly refer to the hieroglyphs in which the wisdom was recorded; the lands whirling round, to the earth itself. It is clear, from the pillar-watchtower identification, that Gawan has acquired thereby the seer’s gift of foresight. This resonates powerfully with the

¹⁵ Peter Blake and Paul S. Blezard, *The Arcadian Cipher*.

¹⁶ p. 298 *ibid*

emphasis in FF of the visual imagination as necessary for the acquisition of Gnostic nobility, as represented by the several Michaels, as well as the numerous Watches, torches and flares. It is clearly of immense relevance also that a central pillar features in the Templar churches on the island of Bornholm, Denmark.¹⁷

Fascinatingly, Anfortas, the Fisher King of Parzival, because of his injury cannot stand or lie, only lean. This recalls the posture of the Worshipful Master as he grips the wrist of the prone candidate – in the character of Hiram Abif – to raise him to the vertical in the Master Mason initiation ceremony of Freemasonry, as described by Knight and Lomas. This was in itself based on the story of the mason who went looking for the body of the Egyptian King Sequenenre Tao II (the original Hiram Abif), whose murder hastened the demise of the Hyksos tyranny of the 16th century BC. After lying down to rest, he caught hold of a shrub to pull himself up, and found that it came away rather easily, to reveal the tomb of the King. Wolfram is clearly affirming the continuity between Hiram Abif (or Sequenenre Tao), John the Baptist, and his Fisher King. John the Baptist's Fisher King aspect is evident in his baptism of Jesus. This Qumranian rite led to the adoption by the early Christians of the fish symbol.

Knight and Lomas inform us that when James I took the throne, one of his first acts was to confer a knighthood on Bacon, who was one of his favourite thinkers, as well as a fellow Freemason. Bacon continued to prosper under the new monarch, culminating in his appropriation of the title Baron Verulam in 1618. Bacon would come to be described by Voltaire and Diderot as the “father of modern science”; and he was almost certainly the driving force behind the styling of the new second degree of Freemasonry, to do with understanding the hidden mysteries of Nature. Part IV of his masterwork *Instauratio Magna* was projected to present examples of his new approach, and has been assumed by orthodox scholars to have been lost, or never completed. Yet there can be no doubt that the First Folio of Shakespeare is in truth this lost work, as the Baconists have long claimed, and that it must be judged, further, to be the greatest single creation of speculative Freemasonry.

I have consistently emphasised the centrality to the philosophy of FF of Christian Cabalism/Renaissance Neoplatonism (Ted Hughes

termed it Hermetic Occult Neoplatonism), which had arisen in Florence in the late 15th century, as a recrudescence of the ancient Gnostic tradition. Yet the definitive contribution of the Masonic heritage is also clear. These sources are not incompatible: for Bacon is impossible to pigeonhole, – he was utterly and gloriously *sui generis*, - and there is, further, a huge overlap between the two traditions, especially, with regard to FF, in their common insistence that nobility may be attained by virtue of the inner powers of the individual in question, with no need for the intervention of any external God; or rather, that he has this divine principle in himself. It was this principle that Bacon elicited in his pupil and patient.

This is the authentic Masonic tradition, as celebrated in the thirty-three degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, rather than the feeble confection of the Grand Lodge of England of the 18th century, which attempted to wipe from the face of the earth the old patrimony, in the way of the Christian vandals of the Alexandria library. They were not quite thorough enough, for Knight and Lomas have managed to retrieve significant fragments of the lost rituals.¹⁸ We have seen these rituals, such as so far discovered, unmistakably to obtrude at several points in FF. Thus, the several Adams of FF, as well as Protheus in TGV, almost certainly refer to “Thrice Perfect Father Adam” of the twenty-eighth (“Knight of the Sun”) degree, whose overall purpose is the indoctrination of the truths of Nature, as founded on the unseen world. TGV was perhaps the earliest of the Shakespeare plays to emerge from the pen of Bacon: so that the proposition of Knight and Lomas that Bacon was not inducted into Freemasonry until 1603 may have to be revised. Over the entrance to the chamber where the degree is to be conferred is written the admonition ‘Ye who have not the power to subdue passion, flee from this place of truth’: and the victory over the libido is a constant theme of FF, as most memorably expressed in Petruchio’s total subjugation of Kate in TOS. Ulysses’ famous speech on degree in T&C (Ch.26) is most plausibly a reference to the fourteenth degree, of the “Scotch Knight of Perfection”, which records the establishment by King Solomon of a “Lodge of Perfection” to rule over the lower thirteen

¹⁸ The Second Messiah.

degrees. Timon's digging for roots, - with its boon of gold, - as well as Parzival's similar action in Wolfram, powerfully suggests the ritual of this degree, in which it is told that Solomon's Knights had 'wrought in the difficult and dangerous work of the ancient ruins, had penetrated into the bowels of the earth and had brought out treasures to adorn the Temple'. These "treasures" included the pillar of Enoch. The purpose of the twenty-ninth degree is certainly also that of FF:

To pursue the virtues of charity, philanthropy, universal tolerance, the protection of the innocent, the pursuance of truth, the defence of justice, reverence and obedience to the Divine, with the expiration of fanaticism and intolerance.

Needless to say, I await the completion of Knight and Lomas' work with great anticipation. It is all a wonderful story, certainly now with its final pages approaching.