ENGLISH PHILOSOPHERS. BACON

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649070701

English Philosophers. Bacon by Thomas Fowler

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

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BY

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NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
27 AND 29 WEST 23D STREET
1881

PREFACE.

THE object of this book is to present the character of the revolution which Bacon endeavoured to effect in scientific method, as well as the nature of his philosophical opinions generally, in a form intelligible and interesting to readers who have no technical acquaintance with logic or philosophy. The ground-plan of Bacon's work and the leading ideas with which he was inspired seem to me easily comprehensible by any person who has a general interest in the history and progress of thought. And the place of Bacon, standing mid-way between the old times and the new, is one which cannot be neglected by any one who is desirous of informing himself of the manner in which our modern ideas in science, in philosophy, and in logic have grown out of those which, for so many centuries prior to the Renaissance, held almost undisputed sway over the civilized world. Those who are induced to go more deeply into the topics treated in these chapters may be referred to my edition of Bacon's *Novum Organum* (Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1878), and to the valuable edition of Bacon's Philosophical Works, contained in the first five volumes of Ellis and Spedding's Bacon (Longmans and Co.).

To the Delegates of the Clarendon Press I have to express my obligations for the free use which they have allowed me to make of the Introduction and Notes to my edition of the *Novum Organum*. I have sometimes embodied in this work several pages of the Introduction, though it must, of course,

be understood that I have only used the more popular parts of it, and that the present book in no sense replaces my larger work for the purposes of the professed student of logic, philosophy, or the history of science.

To Mr. Spedding I must also express my obligations for allowing me, with that courtesy and kindness which he always extends to those labouring in the same fields with himself, to draw the materials for my chapter on the Life of Bacon from his *Life and Times of Francis Bacon* (Trübner and Co.) and his *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon* (Longmans and Co.). Mr. Spedding must not, however, be held responsible for every remark which I have made or every inference which I have drawn. But, though I have endeavoured to exercise my own judgment on the facts, without slavishly following Mr. Spedding's interpretation of them, I feel bound, after a careful perusal of his volumes, to express my general agreement both with his conception of Bacon's character and with his presentation of the principal passages in Bacon's life. Notwithstanding the mass of prejudice still remaining to be dissipated, I believe that his view of Bacon's personal history is the one which, in the main, will ultimately prevail.[1]

Lincoln College,
Jan. 25, 1881.

[1] It is only fair to the reader to inform him that a different view of Bacon's character and conduct from that maintained by Mr. Spedding, and generally adopted by myself, has been recently advocated by Dr. Abbott in his Introduction to *Bacon's Essays*, in an Article in the *Contemporary Review* for June, 1876, and in a work on *Bacon and Essex*, published in 1877.

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BACON.

CHAPTER I.

BACON'S LIFE.

FRANCIS BACON was born at York House in the Strand, January 22, 1560-1. He was the youngest son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper to Queen Elizabeth, by his second marriage with Anne, one of the daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, of Giddy Hall, in the county of Essex, formerly tutor to Edward the Sixth. One of his mother's sisters had been married, also as second wife, to William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley. Thus, the subject of this volume was not only the son of one of Elizabeth's highest officers of state, but, through his mother, the nephew of the most influential and the most able of all her ministers. By his first marriage Sir Nicholas Bacon had a numerous family, but by the second marriage he had two sons only, Anthony and Francis. Anthony, the elder of the two, died at an early age in 1601, and, though he was mixed up a good deal with foreign affairs and seems to have been a man of energetic character, never attained to any great celebrity. Francis was a boy of sickly constitution, but he soon showed a special aptitude for learning, being doubtless encouraged and assisted therein by his mother, "a choice lady," as Rawley [1]

[1] Life of Bacon by his chaplain, William Rawley, prefixed to the *Resuscitatio.*

tells us, "and eminent for piety, virtue, and learning, being exquisitely skilled for a woman in the Greek and Latin tongues." According to the same authority, he was, as a child, specially noticed by the Queen, who would often, from his gravity and the maturity of his discourse beyond his years, term him "her young Lord Keeper." Being asked on one occasion how old he was, he answered "that he was two years younger than her Majesty's happy reign;" with which answer, we read, the Queen was much taken.

When only twelve years and three months old, in April, 1573, he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, residing in the same rooms with his elder brother, Anthony. At Christmas, 1575, he quitted the University, and in the following June was admitted, together with his brother, "de societate magistorum," that is probably as an *ancient*, at Gray's Inn.

It was during Bacon's residence, as a young boy, at Cambridge, that he was first struck with the idea of inaugurating a new method in the study of Nature. He told Rawley that he was only about sixteen years of age when he first fell into the dislike of the philosophy of Aristotle, "not for the worthlessness of the author, to whom he would ever ascribe all high attributes, but for the unfruitfulness of the way." "This," says Mr. Spedding, "ought to be regarded as the most important event of his life; the event which had a greater influence than any other upon his character and future course. From that moment there was awakened within his breast the appetite which cannot be satiated, and the passion which cannot commit excess. From that moment he had a vocation which employed and stimulated all the energies of his mind, gave a value to every vacant interval of time, an interest and significance to every random thought and casual accession of knowledge; an object to live for as wide as humanity, as immortal as the human race; an idea to live in vast and lofty