

Then it was that appeared, and studied and philosophized, the great Bacon, the founder of the modern Inductive Science, the author, in a double sense, of the *Great Instauration* of the *Newum Organon*—the new Instrument by which the Advancement of Human Learning was in all after-time to be secured.

§ 5. *Especial Sympathy of the Present Age with the Era Three Hundred Years Ago.*

Now, the men of our day love to lay hold of occasions for reverting to the stirring era of which we have been speaking,—to place themselves, so far as they may, in the midst of its surroundings—because they, to a greater extent and in larger numbers than was the case with their immediate forefathers, have learned to sympathize with it. In the present generation, to a greater extent than in any preceding one, History has been revived—History in its legitimate sense, laborious and truth-seeking, without regard to bye-ends.

This has in some degree brought back to men's minds, in intelligible form, the reality of things as they were, in many of the ages that are past. And among the men of our time, there are found more perhaps than existed in any preceding age, who, thus, through the resuscitations of history, have had their hearts set aglow with fellow-feeling for those of their fellow-men, who, when the odds were so against them, encountered the early shocks in the battle between Darkness and Light.

In the midst of that battle, are we not all amazed still to find ourselves? The energy of the opposing hosts, though severely taxed, and fluctuating on both sides from time to time, has not been exhausted in the struggle. And we discover from experience, that we too, like our forefathers, must manfully contend yet in a variety of respects, if advances in human knowledge—in human well-being—are to be maintained—are to be yet extended.

So that our commemorations of the heroes of three and four hundred years ago—our anniversaries of events that took place in those now far-distant times of refreshment, are not only convenient *epochs*, pausing-places from whence to review the past, and look forward hopefully into the future, but they assume likewise, in some instances, the character of declarations of principles—and protests—too hot and impatient oftentimes,—against falsehoods and wrongs that for wise though inscrutable purposes are permitted to be long a-dying. (Note III.)

But why this prelude to the subject of the day? It is that we may see the place and function of the great poet whose birth we commemorate.

§ 6. *The Era Opportune for the Appearance of such a Poet.*

In the midst of the great outburst of new thought and new life, three hundred years ago, he also appeared and spoke. And we cannot but believe that he too was one of the elements, divinely ordained, and therefore beneficent, nay, required, in the renovations that were to be.