

It is difficult in these days of international expositions, and with our easy familiarity with the products of remotest shores, to re-create the simple credulity with which stories of new worlds and new human beings would be accepted by Englishmen in Elizabeth's day, and the avidity with which they would be devoured. Every day brought news of some Eldorado, discovered in a wondrous island or in the hold of a Spanish galleon. Picturesque records of this naive curiosity are preserved in some of Shakespeare's dramas, "Love's Labour's Lost" for example; in Trinculo's surmisings and moralizings over the prostrate Caliban in the "Tempest," also, there is a most amusing suggestion as to the way in which the London public flocked to see the latest monster, dead or alive, brought from some distant shore.

In addition to the spirit of adventure, there is implied in the engraving a resolute encounter by navigators of the mysterious and unknown. The columns in the picture are the Pillars of Hercules, the utmost limit of seafaring amongst the ancients. But now the vessels before us are heading away from the Mediterranean. We, the spectators, look back over the familiar stretch of waters; but forward we cannot look. What is beyond the pillars, the ultimate destruction and fate of the daring seamen, is left to our imagination. Just as in "Othello" we have a story of travel through "antres vast and desarts idle"—the very words suggesting something singular, fascinating and mysterious in the objects themselves—so the boundless and unknown spread of the northern and southern oceans exercised a potent charm, and even inspired awe.

Perhaps more interesting than either the art of the picture, or its suggested dream of an expanding empire, is its symbolism in regard to Bacon's own thought. A good many years before the "Novum Organum" was composed, Bacon had, in a work entitled "Advancement of Learning," and dedicated to the pedantic King James I., confessed the hope that the king would be the pilot of an enterprise undertaken for the purpose of discovering new continents of truth. "Why," he asks, "should a few received authors stand up like Hercules' columns, beyond which there should be no sailing or discovery, since we have so bright and benign a star as Your Majesty to conduct and prosper us?" Years rolled on, however, and, though Bacon did not cease to turn his shafts of criticism against those authors who barred the way to new discoveries, though Aristotle himself were among the number, the bright and benign star showed unmistakable signs of aberration, and was suspected of being something of a will-o'-the-wisp. So Bacon, lifting upon his own shoulders the burden of dispersing the ignorance of the age, takes the rudder into his own hands.

Pathos is in his quiet admission that the king is not the leader of thought, just as tragedy lay in Shakespeare's conception that the king might not be a truly noble man. Yet, if the king prove unworthy, the work will not cease; someone will arise to carry it on. Not with trepidation, but with dauntless courage and self-confidence Bacon himself undertakes the task, and though conscious that as yet "he stands alone in the experiment, he has a faith that many vessels will soon be following in the wake of his own." Perhaps not as he expected, but none the less truly have his hopes been realized.

CONTRIBUTED.

LET'S TALK OF GRAVES, OF WORMS, AND EPITAPHS.

IN a country so young as Canada, where the first settlements were necessarily of a rude and temporary character, and where the successive stages of improvement have swept away almost all vestiges of the old order of things, it is very rarely that one comes across anything that would be of interest to an antiquarian. However, this process of denudation has not as yet obliterated all evidences of the past, for here and there, at long intervals, may still be seen relics which remind us of men who lived in the previous century.

The onward march of improvement, and the great plea of utility, have as yet been unable to make any impression on a certain "corner lot" in the heart of the city of Halifax, which was used formerly as a burying ground, and which looks at the present time, except for the crumbling and moulding of the headstones, very much as it did half a century ago. Many of the old stones have so decayed that the inscriptions are quite illegible, but from the dates found on some that "were made of sterner stuff," it would appear that the place was first used as a burying-ground about the year 1750, while the most recent inscriptions bear dates no later than 1845, since which time the spot seems to have been allowed to remain undisturbed by spade or pick. Once within the great iron gates, the rush and bustle of modern city life fades into an indistinct hum, and in imagination one is permitted to enjoy an hour or two of eighteenth century quiet.

One of the inscriptions called up vivid recollections of a familiar "lesson" in the old Public School Third Reader which has been read and re-read with never-failing interest by many generations of Canadian schoolboys. On the first glance at the stone I was somewhat startled, for though the event referred to was an undoubted fact in history, yet it had been to so great an extent associated with boyish fiction that the effect on my mind was some-