

ment whatever. "I have chosen," says he, "to read upon the Statute of Uses, a law whereupon the inheritances of this realm are tossed at this day like a ship upon the sea, in such sort, that it is hard to say which bark will sink and which will get to the haven; that is to say, what assurances will stand good, and what will not. Neither is this any lack or default in the pilots, the grave and learned Judges, but the tides and currents of received error, and unwarranted and abusive experience, have been so strong as they were not able to keep a right course according to the law. Herein, though I could not be ignorant either of the difficulty of the matter which he that taketh in hand shall soon find, or much less of my own unableness which I have continual sense and feeling of, yet, because I had more means of absolution than the younger sort, and more leisure than the greater sort, I did think it not impossible to work some profitable effect; the rather where an inferior wit is bent and constant upon one subject, he shall many times, with patience and meditation, dissolve and undo many of the knots which a greater wit, distracted with many matters, would rather cut in two than unknit; and, at the least, if my invention or judgment be too barren or too weak, yet by the benefit of other arts I did hope to dispose and digest the authorities and opinions which are in cases of uses in such order and method as they should take light one from another, though they took no light from me."

This, I think, may be considered the most auspicious period of Bacon's career. By increased practice at the bar he had overcome his pecuniary difficulties. He was sure of professional advancement upon the next vacancy. He had been slighted by Lady Hatton, but the Queen showed much more personal favor to him than to his rival, Coke, the Attorney General, and consulted him about the progress and conduct of all her law and revenue causes. She not only gave him frequent audiences at her palace, but visited him and dined with him in a quiet way in his lodge at Twickenham.<sup>1</sup> His literary eminence was very great both

<sup>1</sup> Bacon has himself given us a very amusing specimen of the royal talk on such occasions. It seems her Majesty was mightily incensed against a book lately published, which she denounced as "a seditious prelude to put into the people's head boldness and faction," and, having an opinion that there was treason in it, asked him, "if he could not find any places in it that might be drawn within case of treason?"—*Bacon*. "For treason, Madam, I surely find