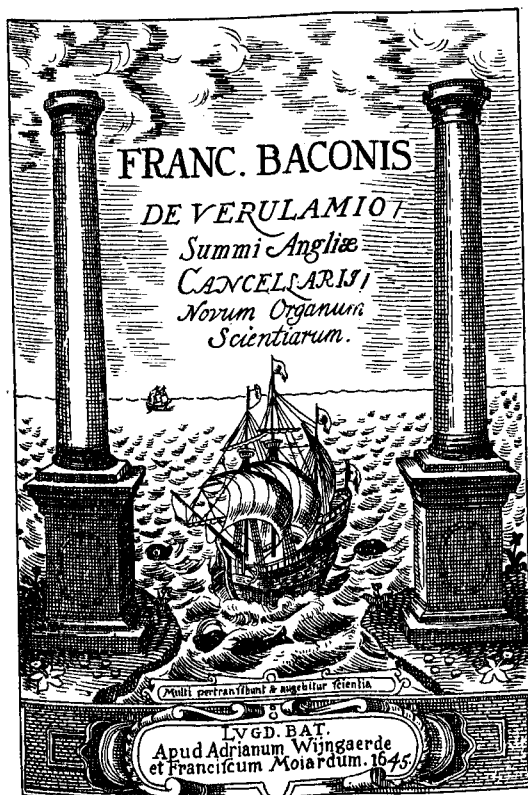


# LITERATURE.

\*AN OLD PICTURE FROM AN OLD BOOK.



IN alcove H, on shelf 41 of "The Library of Queen's College at Kingston, C.W.," there reposes a duodecimo volume, bound in vellum, bearing its years well, though nearly two centuries and a half old, and containing as its frontispiece a curious and interesting picture. A vessel is about to make its way between two tall pillars erected one on each side of a narrow strait. The breeze is fair, the canvas is fully spread, and five flags fluttering gaily from prow, three masts and stern, serve to mark the occasion as one of unusual significance. The fish of the sea are the vessel's escort, a dolphin disporting itself on each side, and a third spouting like a miniature whale right before its prow. A second ship in the left background is following in its leader's wake, and if we were to clamber to the mast-head and look backward, we would see many another craft mounting the rounded waters and making steadily in the same direction. At the foot of the small engraving runs the legend, *Multi pertransibunt & augebitur scientia*, and below it stands the date, 1645. The whole serves as pictorial introduction to Bacon's *Novum Organum*.

\*We are very fortunate, through the prompt action of our publishers, in being able to give a cut of this picture.—The Editors.

Londoners may perhaps still have been eagerly discussing the startling reports from Naseby, one day in the leafy month of June, when this tiny volume was issued from the press. At the time it would create hardly the faintest ripple of interest, yet its appearance is an indication that even in these stormy and portentous days, when the greatest men had given themselves up—some eagerly, some with reluctance—to the red business of war, a few studious minds there were, who had time and desire to reflect upon the words of the founder of English thought. But let us look simply at the engraving, which is attached in its meaning, not to 1645, but to events of some twenty-five years before.

The fashion of the picture deserves a passing notice. It is surely not the product of a great artist. The formalism of the two columns, confronting the beholder like two big nine-pins, dominates it all. Growing up out of the ground on the three visible sides of each column, is a small plant, on each side one, to which a distinguished botanist\* has hardly dared to assign as a name, the name of anything that has really bloomed, but would, if threatened, call an English primrose. If one flower nods to the left its single blossom rising above its five-pointed leaves, then its *vis a vis* nods its single blossom rising above its five-pointed leaves to the right. Four small round stones are laid on the soil on one side of the picture, and the number of small round stones on the other side is four also. Two dolphins must not swim both at once to the same side of the vessel, lest the nice adjustment of the picture be disturbed. Whatever freedom of handling is to be found has exhausted itself in producing two ships, a line joining which would not run up and down the centre of the picture, as might have been supposed, but slantwise from the right foreground to the left background. If it were permissible to attribute so much insight to the artist, it might be argued that he meant to suggest by the easy posture of the vessels, as contrasted with the trimness and balance of the rest of the scene, that the pilot of the volume was about to leave behind him the old intellectual landmarks.

What is of more interest than the style of the picture is the testimony which it bears to the growing spirit of maritime adventure. Perhaps at no previous age in the history of Europe was national greatness so fully identified with greatness at sea. England had produced three navigators who in the early life of Bacon were in their prime, Frobisher, Hawkins and Drake; and Raleigh, too, had been tempting the main. Already it was seen that the world, as it was being mapped out by Europe's bold seamen, would pay tribute to that nation alone which was master of the sea.

\* Professor Fowler of Queen's University.