

dim, dingy, unlighted, uncared for, with its picturesque contrasts between royal pageantry and squalid poverty, contained at that time probably not more than 300,000 inhabitants, crowded down close to the river under the shadow of the Tower. The irregular and badly paved streets, the rows of ancient houses in every stage of decay, whose monotony was broken here and there by a church or a residence of more pretensions, presented a prospect that was not suggestive of impending change. Things were much as they were in the days of the Plantagenets; and they would probably so continue. As a lawyer, the owner of many broad acres, and with such surroundings, it was not surprising that Coke should favor the established order of things.

If we look back to the Elizabethan period, we shall find that the connection then existing with antiquity was close and intimate. Whoever was educated at all could read Homer and Plato in the original, and could speak Latin, the common medium of communication between persons of cultivation all over the world. A slavish adulation of antiquity was the most prominent feature of the civilization of the age. There was a prevailing bigotry on the subject that could only be compared with the ancestor worship of the Chinese. Pierre la Ramee, a contemporary of Coke, a scholar, a virtuous and an honorable man, was persecuted all his life, and was finally assassinated, because he ventured to dispute some of the theorems of Aristotle. Giordano Bruno, the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, who visited England when Bacon was a student at Gray's Inn, and whom Bacon must have known, followed in the footsteps of la Ramee, and suffered a like fate. He has left on record his opinion of the course of teaching then in use in the English universities. "Rhetoric, or rather the art of declamation," he said, "is their whole study; and all the philosophy of the universities consists of a purely technical knowledge of the Organon of Aristotle; and for every violation of its rules a fine of five shillings is imposed."<sup>1</sup>

Outside of theological writings, where there was an occasional mention of the millennium, and outside of the writings of Bacon, there was never any expression of hope as to the future of our race; not even in the writings of Shakespeare, in which almost everything else can be found. The work of the world seemed to have been done, and Time to be leaning on his scythe. Scholastics still continued languidly their war of words. Nowhere

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<sup>1</sup> Giordano Bruno par Christian Bertholmess, Paris, 1846, p. 102.