

tended to convey." Severe as it is, it is instinct with enthusiasm, sometimes with passion. The Latin in which it is written answers to it; it has the conciseness, the breadth, the lordliness of a great piece of philosophical legislation.

The world has agreed to date from Bacon the systematic reform of natural philosophy, the beginning of an intelligent attempt, which has been crowned by such signal success, to place the investigation of nature on a solid foundation. On purely scientific grounds his title to this great honour may require considerable qualification. What one thing, it is asked, would not have been discovered in the age of Galileo and Harvey, if Bacon had never written? What one scientific discovery can be traced to him, or to the observance of his peculiar rules? It was something, indeed, to have conceived, as clearly as he conceived it, the large and comprehensive idea of what natural knowledge must be, and must rest upon, even if he were not able to realise his idea, and were mistaken in his practical methods of reform. But great ideas and great principles need their adequate interpreter, their *vates sacer*, if they are to influence the history of mankind. This was what Bacon was to science, to that great change in the thoughts and activity of men in relation to the world of nature around them: and this is his title to the great place assigned to him. He not only understood and felt what science might be, but he was able to make others—and it was no easy task beforehand, while the wonders of discovery were yet in the future—understand and feel it too. And he was able to do this because he was one of the most wonderful of thinkers and one of the greatest of writers. The disclosure, the interpretation, the development of that great intellectual revolution which was in the air, and which was practically carried forward in obscurity, day by day, by the fathers of modern astronomy and chemistry and physiology, had fallen to the task of a genius, sec-