

mens of poetry ever produced in our language. He had unbounded genius for whatever is practical; but farther his genius did not go. Curiously enough, the civilization which he projected, wonderful beyond conception, partakes largely of all of his defects. As the law is, or ought to be, above all things practical, it was strictly within his domain. He had not the marvellous technical knowledge of the common law that made of Coke an oracle in his profession; but he possessed a comprehensive insight into the spirit, adaptability and philosophy of jurisprudence which Coke could never have acquired.

So thoroughly conscious was Bacon of the necessity of the work for which he had endeavored to obtain the sanction of Parliament, that he afterwards resolved to carry it out as an individual enterprise. In his "Proposal for Amending the Laws of England," addressed to James I., he showed that he had thoroughly matured his scheme, and that he contemplated nothing revolutionary. "I dare not advise," he said, "to cast the law into a new mould. The work which I propound tendeth to pruning and grafting the Law, and not to plowing it up and planting it again; for such a remove I should hold indeed for a perilous innovation."

This great work, which might have been the crowning glory of almost any lifetime, was never to be accomplished. Bacon spoke of it in his last years regretfully as a work that required assistance, and that he had been compelled to forego. The failure has been a loss irreparable; for no one that ever lived was better qualified for such a task than Bacon. It seems strange, that in his busy life, animated by such extensive designs, filled with so many vicissitudes, he should have formed this plan so early and should have brooded over it so long. Bacon's capacity for labor was something marvellous. During the four years that he was chancellor he cleared off the long arrears of Ellsmere, and passed judgment in 36,000 cases, though during that period he presided over the House of Lords, was active in all affairs of State, participated in all kinds of social functions, and added largely to his voluminous writings, most of which were translated into Latin, either by himself or by others under his supervision. From early manhood he was a frequent debater in Parliament, and until he ascended the bench he was engaged in an extensive practice in the courts; so that, although it might