

pressed his preference for the form of *aphorisms* over the argumentative and didactic continuity of a set discourse. He had, indeed, already twice begun a series of aphorisms on the true methods of interpreting nature, and directing the mind in the true path of knowledge, and had begun them with the same famous aphorism with which the *Novum Organum* opens. He now reverted to the form of the aphorism, and resolved to throw the materials of the *Cogitata et Visa* into this shape. The result is the *Novum Organum*. It contains, with large additions, the substance of the treatise, but broken up and rearranged in the new form of separate impersonal generalised observations. The points and assertions and issues which, in a continuous discourse, careful readers mark and careless ones miss, are one by one picked out and brought separately to the light. It begins with brief, oracular, unproved maxims and propositions, and goes on gradually into larger developments and explanations. The aphorisms are meant to strike, to awaken questions, to disturb prejudices, to let in light into a nest of unsuspected intellectual confusions and self-misunderstandings, to be the mottoes and watchwords of many a laborious and difficult inquiry. They form a connected and ordered chain, though the ties between each link are not given. In this way Bacon put forth his proclamation of war on all that then called itself science; his announcement that the whole work of solid knowledge must be begun afresh, and by a new, and, as he thought, infallible method. On this work Bacon concentrated all his care. It was twelve years in hand, and twelve times underwent his revision. "In the first book especially," says Mr. Ellis, "every word seems to have been carefully weighed; and it would be hard to omit or change anything without injuring the meaning which Bacon in-

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