

found in writers who, he thought, had the right to make them, like the Latins of the Empire and the Italians and Spaniards of the Renaissance. But a mere string of maxims and quotations would have been a poor thing and not new; and he cast what he had to say into connected wholes. But nothing can be more loose than the structure of the essays. There is no art, no style, almost, except in a few—the political ones—no order: thoughts are put down and left unsupported, unproved, undeveloped. In the first form of the ten, which composed the first edition of 1597, they are more like notes of analysis or tables of contents; they are austere even to meagreness. But the general character continues in the enlarged and expanded ones of Bacon's later years. They are like chapters in Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Rhetoric* on virtues and characters; only Bacon's takes Aristotle's broad marking lines as drawn, and proceeds with the subtler and more refined observations of a much longer and wider experience. But these short papers say what they have to say without preface, and in literary undress, without a superfluous word, without the joints and bands of structure; they say it in brief, rapid sentences, which come down, sentence after sentence, like the strokes of a great hammer. No wonder that in their disdainful brevity they seem rugged and abrupt, "and do not seem to end, but fall." But with their truth and piercingness and delicacy of observation, their roughness gives a kind of flavour which no elaboration could give. It is none the less that their wisdom is of a somewhat cynical kind, fully alive to the slipperiness and self-deceits and faithlessness which are in the world and rather inclined to be amused at them. In some we can see distinct records of the writer's own experience: one contains the substance of a charge deliv-

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