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### Communications

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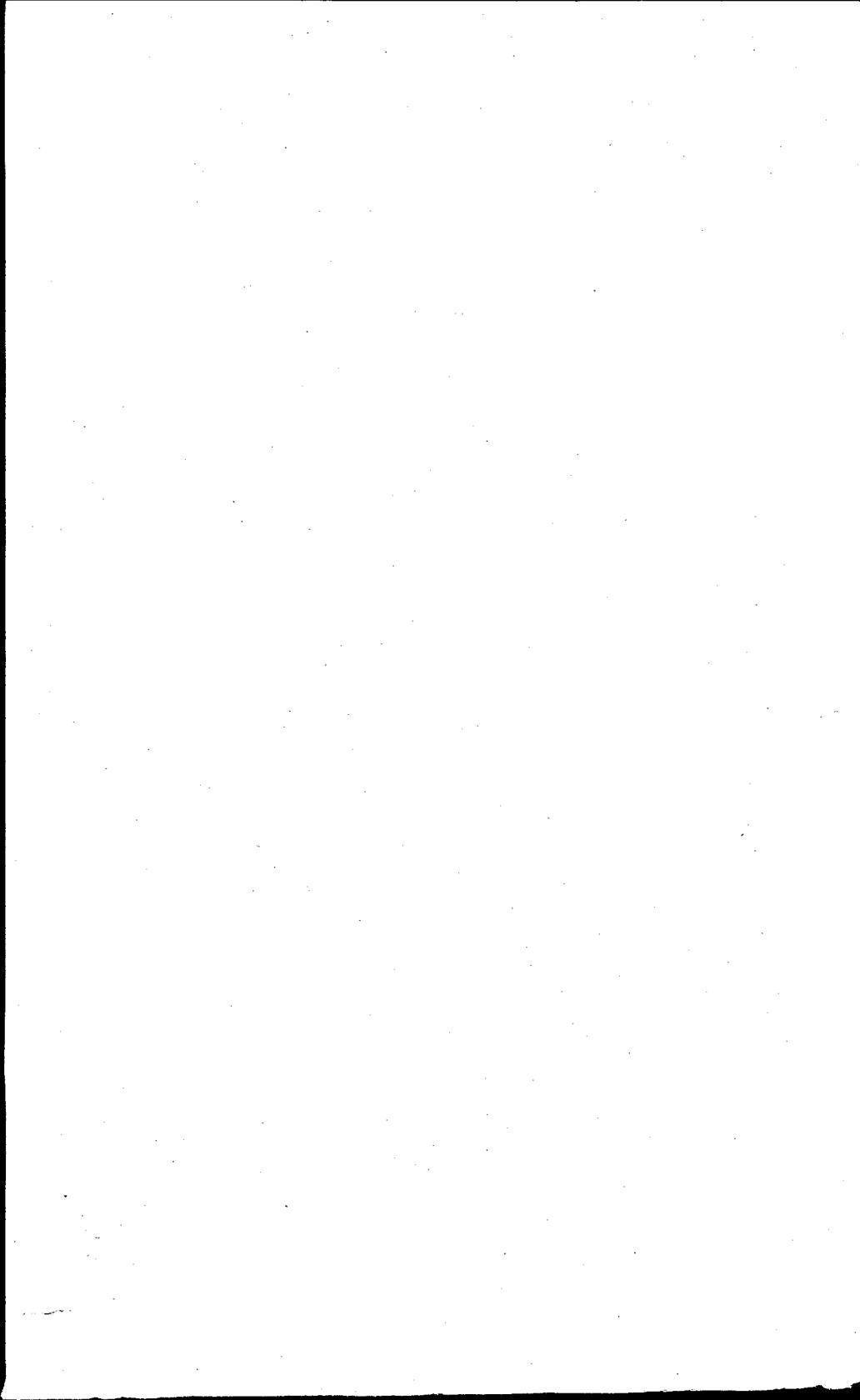
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Wednesday, March 4, 1896, at 4.30 p.m., W. M. FAWCETT, M.A., President, in the Chair.

T. BASS MULLINGER, M.A., made the following Communication :

### THE RELATIONS OF FRANCIS BACON, LORD VERULAM, WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

It is sufficiently well known that, in April, 1573, Francis Bacon, then only twelve years and three months old, entered Trinity College in this university, and that in March, 1575, he went down to become a student at Gray's Inn. Most of us have probably read how, during his residence at Trinity, a new star appeared, and then disappeared, in the constellation of Cassiopea. Aristotle had pronounced that region in the heavens to be one that was exempt from change, and the contradictory phenomenon was the first piece of evidence that shook young Bacon's faith in the great Oracle of the universities of those times. He was led to examine for himself what it was that Aristotle taught in other departments of knowledge besides that of physical science, and the result was that, in the language of Macaulay, he went down from Cambridge, carrying with him 'a profound contempt for the course of study pursued there, a fixed conviction that the system of academic education in England was radically vicious, a just scorn for the trifles on which the followers of Aristotle had wasted their powers, and no great reverence for Aristotle himself.'

This is not the occasion for pointing out the grave defects which detract so seriously from the value of the historian's famous criticism of this illustrious member of his own college, but I have cited the above expressions because they appear to me to have been the key-note of the tone in which all Bacon's biographers without exception,—Mr Spedding, Dr Abbott, Kuno Fischer, Dr Gardiner, Dean Church, Professor Fowler,—have alluded to the relations which existed between the

great philosopher and his university. And inasmuch as, in working at the history of our university, I have met with some interesting evidence which these writers appear to have altogether ignored, I have thought it a subject not unworthy of being treated in connexion with the proceedings of our Society.

And at the outset, I must call attention to the fact that none of the above writers has noticed, at all adequately, how important and friendly were the relations of Bacon both with the town of Cambridge and the university of Cambridge throughout his career. Mr Spedding is, I think, the only one who gives us his letter to the earl of Essex (written in 1593, when he was labouring under feelings of despondency with respect to his prospects of promotion), in which he says: 'I will...with God's assistance...retire myself with a couple of men to Cambridge, and there spend my life in my studies and contemplations, without looking back' (*Letters and Life*, I 291). And they have one and all ignored the fact, how greatly his genius and his philosophy alike were admired by Cambridge scholars; and how, when he died a disappointed and half-ruined man, those scholars remained true to his memory and celebrated it in a collection of verses in which they confidently predicted the immortality of his philosophy and his fame.

Oxford scholars may perhaps be excused for being somewhat neglectful of Cambridge history, but when we bear in mind that Macaulay and Spedding were both members of Bacon's own college, and that Dr Abbott was formerly a fellow of St John's, these writers, at least, certainly do appear a little remiss in allowing facts like those which I am about to bring before you to drop so completely into the background or pass altogether unnoticed.

(i) In the year 1613 Bacon was appointed standing Counsel to the University; and in the following year, at the election of burgesses in parliament to represent the academic body, he being now Sir Francis Bacon, and attorney general, together with Sir Miles Sandys was returned, both of them by large

majorities. Sir Miles, however, was subsequently declared ineligible as being non-resident, and Dr Barnaby Gooch, the Master of Magdalene, was consequently elected in his place. The office of vice-chancellor, just at that time, was discharged by a deputy, Dr John Duport, Master of Jesus College, who drew up a very prolix but also interesting account of the whole proceedings. The election appears to have been an exceptionally stormy one; and when it devolved upon Duport; as deputy, to declare the result of the voting, he tells us that 'he was continually cried upon and shouted at with the greatest extremitie that might be, either to hinder him from speaking at all or else to putt him out,' 'Yeat,' he says, 'the Vicecan<sup>r</sup>. with settled resolution and an audible voice pronounced bouldly to the end "I John Duport deput Vice Can<sup>r</sup>. (as farr as by law in me lieth) doe choose and pronounce to be choosen by the greater part of the Regents and non Regents for the Burgesses of the universitie against the next Parliament the Ho<sup>ble</sup> Knight Sir Fr. Bacon Attorney Generall to his excellent Magestie and both M<sup>r</sup>. of Artes and of Councill of and to the Universitie of Cambridge (*wherby he may seeme after a sort to live and breathe amongst us*).' This account is a MS. preserved in the archives of Jesus College, and must, I think, be regarded as very emphatic testimony to the close relations existing in 1614 between Bacon and his university. But the document appears altogether to have escaped Mr Spedding's research, and, I need scarcely add, that of Bacon's other biographers. All that the former here notes, is the letter from Chamberlain to Carleton, printed in the Calendar of State Papers (LXXV, no. 52); and he omits altogether to record the noteworthy fact, that Bacon was so anxious to prove the disinterestedness of his motives that he refused to receive any fees for the services rendered in his official capacity.

(ii) Two years later, we have a corresponding piece of evidence which Mr Spedding *has* recorded (*Letters and Life*, vi 132). In 1616, on Bacon being made a privy councillor, the university addressed to him a letter of congratulation, but

at the same time expressed a certain apprehension that his new dignity might in some measure interfere with the performance of his services as their counsel. Bacon's language, as he hastens to reassure the university on this point, is singularly emphatic,—‘among the parts of the Commonwealth,’ he says, ‘none is dearer to my mind than colleges and letters’; and he concludes his letter with these words: ‘the thought often occurs to me, that even in the midst of so many and great businesses, I may nevertheless spend a few days each year among you, that, *by a better knowledge of your affairs, I may be better able to consult your interests.*’

(iii) On 23 April, 1617, Bacon was elected High Steward of the Town of Cambridge (an office which Macaulay himself filled in the present century), and the occasion supplies additional evidence of the very friendly feeling that existed between him and the civic community. He was now Lord Keeper, and in the town treasurer's accounts there is an entry: ‘A present of fishe. to the Lord Keeper High Steward at his first elecion.’ £13. 6. 8, which seems a large sum when we consider the value of money in those days, and also the fact that the Mayor of Cambridge received only thirty shillings for ‘going to London about a high steward.’ This latter document is printed by Cooper in his *Annals* from the ‘Accounts of the Treasurers of the Town,’ but both Bacon's election and the document itself are apparently unknown to Mr Spedding; and the whole series of the above events, so valuable as correcting the impression which we might otherwise receive,—that Bacon had formed something approaching to an aversion for Cambridge and its studies,—is completely slurred over by all his biographers. And let us observe that the genuineness, the sincerity, of his regard for his university, is attested in the most unquestionable manner by his language after his fall. When he had made over York House to Buckingham, he still sought to ingratiate himself with the all-powerful favourite by letters couched in the humblest language. ‘Low as I am,’ he writes, ‘I had rather sojourn in a College in Cambridge, than recover a good fortune by any other than

yourself.' Cambridge and congenial studies were, in short, the alternative in Bacon's mind, if Fortune frowned upon him without.

I pass on now to note the estimation in which Bacon was held by his university. If Cambridge was dear to him, it is equally certain that long before his death he was already revered by the university as a great writer and a profound thinker.

(i) His *Essays* appear to have, very early, made a considerable impression on the most discerning minds in the community. I am indebted to the Master of Christ's College, who has recently been giving the Harleian MS. at the British Museum a careful examination, and comparing it with the letters published in the well-known Collection,—*The Court and Times of Charles I.*—for the following extract (omitted in the printed text) from a letter written 21 May, 1625, by Joseph Mede to his august relative Sir Martin Stuteville in Suffolk: 'On Saturday (unlesse you prohibit me) I will send you my Lord Bacon's *Essays*, newly enlarged both in the manner of handling and number of the Heads, in a fair print in quarto.' Now it is quite certain that Joseph Mede was the last person to value a book because it was written by one who had been high in place and power and might be so again. He was one of the most widely-read scholars and enlightened thinkers in the university of that day. Mede had however no reason for exulting in Bacon's fall from court favour; but there was another yet more eminent member of the university whom we might almost expect to find doing so,—I mean the celebrated John Williams, archbishop of York, who succeeded Bacon in the office of lord chancellor, being the last ecclesiastic promoted to that dignity. But in 1626, when Williams, in his turn, incurred the royal displeasure, and retired to his palace at Buckden (he was at that time Bishop of Lincoln), he found there a splendid library,—a library especially strong in French literature, comprising some 600 volumes of the best known French authors of that time. And of these books he had a separate double Catalogue made,—

a MS. which is still preserved in our Library at St John's College, the library to which he was so great a benefactor. It is entitled: *Deux Catalogues des Livres Français qui se trouvent au Palais de Buckden en l'exquise Bibliothèque de Monseigneur l'Evêque de Lincoln. Lincoln, 1634.* And in it I find 'Sire François Bacon, Essais Moraux.' This, judging from the title, must have been the edition: 'Essais Moraux. Traduits en François par le Sieur A. Gorges, Chevalier Anglais. Jean Bill: Londres, 1619.' 12mo; not that printed in Paris in 1621, which is entitled 'Essais Politiques et Moraux': 'mis en notre langue par J. Baudoin.' But the interest attaching to the presence of this French version in archbishop Williams' fine collection lies, for my present purposes, in this,—that it shows that one of Bacon's most distinguished contemporaries in the university, and one of the best friends Cambridge ever had, thought so highly of the *Essays* that he deemed even a translation of them worthy of being included among his literary treasures; and this, notwithstanding that the early French versions have *not* (as some of the Italian versions have) any special value.

(ii) As regards his *Novum Organum*, I have already quoted in my *History of the University* (II 573) the singularly graceful letter in which, 'as your son and nursling,' he begged acceptance of the copy of that work which he presented, in 1620, to the University Library. But I have, more recently, noted various items of evidence which serve to show what a hold the Baconian principles were gaining in the university even before his death. Especially emphatic is the testimony of the eminent Samuel Collins, provost of King's College from 1615-1644. He declared, after reading the *Advancement of Learning*, that 'he found himself in a case to begin his studies anew, and that he had lost all his time of studying before.' Now this passage was quoted in a Communication made to this Society by Professor Mayor thirty-seven years ago. It occurs in Rawley's *Life of Bacon* (ed. Spedding, p. 16), and it is contained in a long extract from that *Life* printed by Dr Abbott, in his *Bacon*; but as evidence of the

esteem in which Bacon was held in Cambridge, it is unnoted by all of his biographers, although we have it, on Bacon's own authority, that his *Advancement of Learning* was being well received at the universities and at the English Colleges abroad (Abbott, p. 314).

When he saw his end approaching, Bacon made a more direct effort to secure for natural science a place in the curriculum of university studies. And it was to Williams, whom he appointed one of his executors, that he imparted his design of founding, both at Oxford and Cambridge, a lecture in 'natural philosophy' with 'the science in general thereunto belonging' (*Letters and Life*, VII 544). Williams loved Cambridge much, and Oxford (where Laud's influence was now predominant) but little; and he accordingly made a bold attempt to prevail upon Bacon to bestow the whole of his benefaction on his own university. Oxford, he pointed out, had recently been endowed with a lectureship in natural philosophy by Sir William Sedley, while Cambridge,—'poor Cambridge,' whom he describes as clad in 'tattered garments,'—had none at all. Bacon, however, with all his regard for Cambridge, had the general advancement of science still more at heart, and seems not to have admitted the force of Williams' cleverly urged argument. But in less than four months after his correspondence, he fell a martyr to his own devotion to science; and it soon transpired that the funds resulting from the sale of his estates would not suffice to give effect to his generous design.

(iii) I now approach the material which has more especially suggested this paper, inasmuch as it refers to important incidents which are altogether passed over by Bacon's biographers, including even Mr Spedding. And that they should have been passed over by him is all the more remarkable when we note that they are especially creditable to his own College. It was the custom of the universities in those days (as long afterwards), whenever any very notable death occurred,—either of the reigning sovereign or of some individual who during his life had been closely associated with

the university,—to publish collections of verses in honour of the deceased. The leading members of the academic community sent in their contributions, and especially those whose classical studies had made them expert Latin versifiers. These verses were afterwards collected and printed; and we may condone a large amount of feeble trash and forced imagery when we recall that it is to this custom that we are indebted for the *Lycidas* of John Milton,—the tribute which he paid, in common with many others, to the memory of his college friend, Edward King, and his tragic fate.

Now when we consider the gloomy circumstances and the political disfavour which cast so sombre a cloud over Bacon's last days, we should scarcely be surprised to find that his university deemed it most prudent to allow the event of his death to pass uncelebrated in the foregoing fashion. His biographers, indeed, would one and all allow us to infer that it was so. But, instead of such being the case, we find that, in reality, his death elicited a tribute, which I venture to affirm was characterised by far more than the ordinary sincerity and genuineness of feeling evoked by such occasions. We could hardly, indeed, ask for more convincing proof of the high regard in which the great Verulam was held and of the academic sense of his services, alike to the university, to philosophy, and to mankind. The existence of these verses was first brought under my notice by a reference by Dr Monk, the eminent bishop of Gloucester, who, along with Blomfield, edited the *Museum Criticum* in the early years of the present century. To the second volume of that serial Monk contributed a sketch of Dr James Duport, our Greek professor,—son of the Dr John Duport to whom I have already had occasion to refer. In this sketch he makes mention of the verses contributed by the subject of his Memoir to the Collection; while with respect to the entire Collection, he observes (p. 676) that it 'bore all the exterior marks of an academic effusion, except that it was not headed by the Vice-Chancellor, and that it was printed in London instead of Cambridge.' There is a copy in the British Museum, but I have not been able

to find one in Cambridge; it does not appear in the Catalogue of our University Library, and Dr Sinker informs me that they have no copy in Trinity College Library, which is perhaps still more surprising. It has, however, been reprinted in one of the supplemental volumes of the *Harleian Miscellany*, a fact which makes it all the more remarkable that it should have been so completely overlooked by all Bacon's biographers. It is entitled: *Memoriae Honoratissimi Domini Francisci, Baronis de Verulamio, Vice-Comitis Sancti Albani, sacrum*, and was printed in London (1626) at the press of John Haviland. It was Bacon's 'learned chaplain,' William Rawley, a former fellow of Corpus Christi College, who collected the verses and saw them through the press. He tells us, in the preface, that the volume represents only a selection of the compositions which were sent in, and that those which were not printed were also mostly of considerable merit. Of the thirty-one effusions which have thus been preserved to posterity the majority are by members of Bacon's own college, some of them disguised under initials which it is difficult now to interpret; but the names of George Herbert and James Duport are conspicuous; nor could Dr Collins, the provost of King's, be silent on such an occasion; Sir William Boswell, fellow of Jesus College, afterwards known as the distinguished diplomatist and discerning patron of learning, sends his tribute; and, a noteworthy illustration of the conditions of learning in those days, Bacon's own servant, William Atkins, appears as a contributor.

Fantastic in conception and overstrained in expression as not a few of these compositions must now appear, the same sentiment underlies them all,—that of deepest admiration for the great philosopher's genius and confidence in the permanence of his fame; and rarely has the contemporary estimate formed by an academic body of one of its own members been better justified by the sequel. One of these effusions especially deserves to be noted, as showing that the sense of Bacon's services and merits was almost as profound at Oxford as at Cambridge. It is from the pen of William Loe, a member of

Trinity College, whose better-known father had been educated at St Alban Hall, Oxford, and was afterwards chaplain to James I, and went into exile on the Continent owing to differences with Laud. It was he who, when preaching one Sunday morning in London at a church where a Mr Adam was incumbent, somewhat infelicitously took for his text 'Adam, where art thou?' which Mr Adam, taking as personal to himself, chose for his text the same afternoon,—'Lo! here am I.' But neither discourse, so far as I am aware, has descended to posterity. The younger Loe's verses, possibly owing to the fact that his father had been educated at Oxford, are addressed 'Ad utrasque Academias,' and conclude as follows:

'Et noster vesterque fuit; lis inde secuta est  
 Atque ubi major sit dubitatur amor.  
 Communis dolor est, noster, vesterque; jacere  
 Uno non potuit tanta ruina loco.

Which may perhaps be thus rendered,

Alike we claimed him; now, alike contest  
 Which of the two, he living, loved him best;  
 His fate, our common loss, we both bemoan,  
 A loss too great for one to bear alone.

And thus, although no eloquent oration was pronounced over Bacon's tomb, the voice of some of the best and wisest of his university rose up, emphatic in his praise. These are, it seems to me, all interesting and important facts in relation, not only to his personal history, but to the history of the University of Cambridge and of the thought of Bacon's time, and consequently well deserve to be rescued from that oblivion into which they have been suffered by his biographers to fall.

The Rev. C. L. ACLAND, M.A., F.S.A., exhibited a stone implement recently found in Shetland.

The stone is of large dimensions, its material is a beautifully mottled serpentine, and it shows structural peculiarities

of a very unusual kind. Mr Acland's remarks were illustrated by a series of choice specimens of Shetland and Orkney stone implements, lent by James W. Cursiter, Esq., of Kirkwall, and forming part of his great collection of the Antiquities of the Northern Islands.

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Monday, May 18, 1896, at 8.30 P.M., W. M. FAWCETT, M.A.,  
President, in the Chair.

M. R. JAMES, Litt.D., made the following Communication :

#### ON A WINDOW RECENTLY RELEADED IN KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL.

The window last releaded was that over the South Door, the westernmost but one on that side, and the last but one in historical sequence. We had always thought that if any of the windows were ever wilfully damaged by the Puritans, this one and its neighbour on the left had been the maltreated windows: and that this was the reason why the lower lights of both, and especially of that over the door, were wellnigh indecipherable.

We knew of course from Mr Clark's researches that no official or authorised defacement of the glass had ever taken place: but it seemed possible that an individual zealot might have thrown a stone or fired a gun at them. What made this probable was the fact that the lower lights of these two windows represent the Death, Funeral, Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin—subjects of an essentially pre-reformation character, and such as no Puritan could tolerate if he once perceived their import. There was interest therefore in the restoration of this particular window of a rather special kind: and we were also anxious to have an opportunity of closely inspecting the

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