

The Works of Francis Bacon, Volume 1/Essays

< [The Works of Francis Bacon, Volume 1](#)

Chapters

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- Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates
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- Of Ceremonies and Respects
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- Of Honor and Reputation
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Appendix

- A Fragment of an Essay of Fame
- Of a King

LORD BACON'S WORKS

ESSAYS OR COUNSELS,

CIVIL AND MORAL.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE MY VERY GOOD LO. THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM HIS
GRACE, LO. HIGH ADMIRALL OF ENGLAND.

EXCELLENT LO.

Salomon saies; A good name is as a precious oyntment; and I assure myselfe, such wil your Grace's name bee, with posteritie. For your fortune, and merit both, haue beene eminent. And you haue planted things, that are like to last. I doe now publish my Essayes; which, of all other workes, haue beene most currant: For that, as it seemes, they come home, to mens businesse, and bosomes. I haue enlarged them, both in number, and weight; so that they are indeed a new work. I thought it therefore agreeable, to my affection, and obligation to your Grace, to prefix your name before them, both in English, and in Latine. For I doe conceiue, that the Latine Volume of them (being in the Vniuersal Language) may last, as long as Bookes last. My Instauration, I dedicated to the King: My Historie of Henry the Seventh, (which I haue now translated into Latine) and my Portions of Naturall History, to the Prince: And these I dedicate to your Grace: Being of the best Fruits, that by the good encrease, which God gives to my Pen and Labours, I could yeeld. God leade your Grace by the Hand. Your Graces most Obliged and Faithful Seruant,

FR. ST. ALBAN.

EDITORS PREFACE

TO

1. The Essays.
2. Meditationes Sacræ.
3. The Colours of Good and Evil.
4. Miscellaneous Tracts upon Human Philosophy.
 1. In Praise of Knowledge.
2. Valerius Terminus, or the Interpretation of Nature.
 3. Filum Labyrinthi.
 4. Sequela Chartarum.
5. Miscellaneous Tracts.
 1. Apophtegmes.
 2. Ornamenta Rationalia.
 3. Sentences.
4. Notes for Conversation.
 5. An Essay on Death.

§ 1.

THE ESSAYS.

The first edition of the Essays was published in the year 1597. It is entitled^[1]

"Essayes.
Religious Meditations.
Places of perswasion
and disswasion.
Seene and allowed.
AT LONDON,
Printed for Humfrey Hooper, and are
to be sold at the blacke Beare
in Chauncery Lane.
1597."

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORIE.

"To M. Anthony Bacon his deare Brother.

"Louing and beloued brother I do now like some that haue an Orcharde il neighbored, that gather their fruit before it is ripe, to preuent stealing. These fragments of my conceits were going to print: To labour the stay of them had bene troublesome, and subiect to interpretation: to let them passe had bin to aduentur the wrong they mought receiue by vntrue Coppies, or by some garnishment which it mought please any one that shold set them forth to bestow upon them. Therefore I helde it best discretion to publish them my selfe as they passed long agoe from my pen without any further disgrace, then the weakenes of the author. And as I did euer hold there mought be as great a vanitie in retyring and withdrawing mens conceits (except they be of some nature) from the world, as in obtruding them: So in these particulars I haue played my selfe the inquisitor, and find nothing to my vnderstanding in them contrary, or infectious to the state of Religion, or manners, but rather (as I suppose) medicinable. Onely I disliked now to put them out, because they will be like the late newe halfepence, which though the siluer were good, yet the pieces were small. But since they would not stay with their master, but wold needs trauel abroad, I haue preferred them to you, that are next myself, dedicating them, such as they are, to our loue, in the depth whereof (I assure you) I somtimes wish your infirmities transslated upon my selfe, that her maiesty mought haue the seruice of so actiue and able a mind, and I mought bee with excuse confined to these contemplations and studies for which I am fittest, so commende I you to the preseruation of the diuine Maiestie. From my Chamber at Grayes Inne, this 30. of Ianuary. 1597.

"Your entire louing brother, FRAN. BACON."

It consists of ten Essays.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Of Studie. | 6. Of Expençe. |
| 2. Of Discourse. | 7. Of Regiment of Health. |
| 3. Of Ceremonies and Respects. | 8. Of Honor and Reputation. |
| 4. Of Followers and Friends. | 9. Of Faction. |
| 5. Of Sutors. | 10. Of Negotiating. |

These Essays, which are very short, are in octavo, in thirteen double pages, and somewhat incorrectly printed.^[2] They are annexed as Notes at the end of the Essays.^[3]

Of this edition there is a manuscript in very ancient writing in the Lansdowne MSS. in the British Museum.^[4]

The next edition was in the year 1606. It is entitled

"Essaies.
Religious Meditations.
Places of perswasion
and disswasion.
Seene and allowed.
Printed at London for Iohn laggard,
dwelling in Fleete streete at the
hand and Starre neere
Temple barre.
1606."

This edition, which is in 12mo,^[5] and not paged, is, except a few literal variations, a transcript of the edition of 1597.^[6]

The next edition was in 1612. It is entitled,

"The Essaies
Of Sr Francis Bacon Knight,
The King's Solliciter Generall.
Imprinted at London by
Iohn Beale,
1612."

It was the intention of Sir Francis to have dedicated this edition to Henry Prince of Wales, but he was prevented by the death of the prince on the 6th of November in that year. This appears by the following letter:

"To the most high and excellent prince, HENRY, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester.

"It may please your Highness,

"Having divided my life into the contemplative and active part, I am desirous to give his majesty and your highness of the fruits of both, simple though they be.

"To write just treatises, requireth leisure in the writer, and leisure in the reader, and therefore are not so fit, neither in regard of your highness's princely affairs, nor in regard of my continual service; which is the cause that hath made me choose to write certain brief notes, set down rather significantly than curiously, which I have called Essays. The word is late, but the thing is ancient; for Seneca's epistles to Lucilius, if you mark them well, are but essays, that is, dispersed meditations, though conveyed in the form of epistles. These labours of mine, I know, cannot be worthy of your highness, for what can be worthy of you? But my hope is, they may be as grains of salt, that will rather give you an appetite, than offend you with satiety. And although they handle those things wherein both men's lives and their persons are most conversant; yet what I have attained I know not; but I have endeavoured to make them not vulgar, but of a nature, whereof a man shall find much in experience, and little in books; so as they are neither repetitions nor fancies. But, however, I shall most humbly desire your highness to accept them in gracious part, and to conceive, that if I cannot rest, but

must shew my dutiful and devoted affection to your highness in these things which proceed from myself, I shall be much more ready to do it in performance of any of your princely commandments. And so wishing your highness all princely felicity I rest

"1612.

Your Highness's most humble servant,

FR. BACON."

It was dedicated as follows:

"To my loving Brother Sr IOHN CONSTABLE Knight.^[7]

"My last Essaies I dedicated to my deare brother Master Anthony Bacon, who is with God. Looking amongst my papers this vacation, I found others of the same Nature: which if I myselfe shall not suffer to be lost, it seemeth the World will not; by the often printing of the former. Missing my Brother, I found you next, in respect of bond both of neare alliance, and of straight friendship and societie, and particularly of communication in studies. Wherein I must acknowledge my selfe beholding to you. For as my businesse found rest in my contemplations; so my contemplations ever found rest in your louing conference and judgment. So wishing you all good,

I remaine

Your louing brother and friend,

FRA. BACON."

The Table of Essays is,

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Of Religion. | 13. Of Friendshippe. |
| 2. Of Death. | 14. Of Atheisme. |
| 3. Of Goodnes and goodnes of nature. | 15. Of Superstition. |
| 4. Of Cunning. | 16. Of Wisdome for a Mans selfe. |
| 5. Of Marriage and single life. | 17. <i>Of Regiment of Health.</i> |
| 6. Of Parents and Children. | 18. <i>Of Expences.</i> |
| 7. Of Nobilitie. | 19. <i>Of Discourse.</i> |
| 8. Of Great place. | 20. Of Seeming wise. |
| 9. Of Empire. | 21. Of Riches. |
| 10. Of Counsell. | 22. Of Ambition. |
| 11. Of Dispatch. | 23. Of Young men and age. |
| 12. Of Loue. | 24. Of Beautie. |
| 25. Of Deformitie. | 33. <i>Of Negotiating.</i> |
| 26. Of nature in Man. | 34. <i>Of Faction.</i> |
| 28. Of Custome and Education. | 35. Of Praise. |
| 29. Of Fortune. | 36. Of Judicature. |
| 30. <i>Of Studies.</i> | 37. Of vaine glory. |
| 31. <i>Of Ceremonies and Respects.</i> | 38. Of greatnes of Kingdomes. |
| 32. <i>Of Suitors.</i> | 39. Of the publike. |
| 33. <i>Of Followers.</i> | 40. Of Warre and peace. |

It is an octavo of 241 pages; and the two last Essays "Of the Publique," and "Of War and Peace," although mentioned in the table of contents, are not contained in the body of the work.^[8]

This edition contains all the Essays which are in the preceding editions, except the Essay "Of Honor and Reputation:" and the title in the former editions of the Essay "Of Followers and Friends," is in this edition "Of Followers," and there is a separate Essay "Of Friendship." The Essays in Italics are in the former editions.

These Essays are more extensive than the Essays in the preceding editions, according to the manner of the author, who says, "I always alter when I add; so that nothing is finished till all is finished."^[9] As a specimen, the Essay "Of Study," in the first edition ends with the words "able to contend." The edition of 1612 is the same as the former edition, but it thus continues "Abeunt studia in mores;" "nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises; bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like; so, if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are 'Cymini sectores;' if he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call upon one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers cases; so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt."

The next edition was in 1613.^[10] It is entitled,

"The Essaies
Of Sr Francis Bacon Knight,
The Kings Atorney Generall.
His Religious Meditations.
Places of Perswasion and Disswasion.
Seene and allowed.
Printed at London for Iohn Iaggard,^[11]
dwelling at the Hand and Starre,
betweene the two Temple
Gates 1613."

It is a transcript of the edition of 1612, with the erroneous entries in the table of contents of the two Essays "Of the Publique" and "Of Warre and Peace," which are omitted in the body of the work; but it contains a transcript from the editions of 1597 and 1606, of the Essay "Of Honor and Reputation," which is omitted in the edition of 1612.

In the year 1622, in his letter to the Bishop of Winchester, concerning his published and intended writings, he says, "As for my Essays, and some other particulars of that nature, I count them but as the recreations of my other studies, and in that manner purpose to continue them; though I am not ignorant that those kind of writings would, with less pains and assiduity, perhaps yield more lustre and reputation to my name than the others I have in hand; but I judge the use a man should seek in publishing his writings before his death to be but an untimely anticipation of that which is proper to follow, and not to go along with him."

The next edition, which is a small quarto of 340 pages, was in 1625,^[12] and, on the 9th of April, 1626, Lord Verulam died.

It is entitled,

"The Essayes or Covnsels Civill and Morall,
Of Francis Lo. Vervlam, Viscovnt St. Alban.
Newly written.
London, Printed by Iohn Haviland for
Hanna Barret. 1625."

The Essays contained in the volume now published are an exact transcript of this edition of 1625, except that I have added the note in page 43.

Of this edition, Lord Bacon sent a copy to the Marquis Fiat.^[13]

There is a Latin edition of the Essays consisting of the Essays in the edition of 1625, except the two Essays of *Prophecies*, and of *Masks and Triumphs*, which seem not to have been translated.

The nature of the Latin edition and of the Essays in general is thus stated by Archbishop Tenison.^[14]

"The Essays, or Counsels Civil and Moral, though a By-work also, do yet make up a Book of greater weight by far, than the Apothegms: And coming home to Men's Business and Bosomes, his Lordship entertain'd this persuasion concerning them, that the Latine Volume might last as long as Books should last. His Lordship wrote them in the English Tongue, and enlarged them as Occasion serv'd, and at last added to them the Colours of Good and Evil, which are likewise found in his Book De Augmentis. The Latine Translation of them was a Work performed by divers Hands; by those of Doctor Hacket (late Bishop of Lichfield) Mr. Benjamin Johnson (the learned and judicious Poet) and some others, whose Names I once heard from Dr. Rawley; but I cannot now recal them. To this Latine Edition, he gave the Title of Sermones Fideles, after the manner of the Jews, who call'd the words Adagies, or Observations of the Wise, Faithful Sayings: that is, credible Propositions worthy of firm Assent, and ready Acceptance. And (as I think) he alluded more particularly, in this Title, to a passage in Ecclesiastes, where the Preacher saith that he sought to find out Verba Delectabilia, (as Tremellius rendreth the Hebrew) pleasant Words, (that is, perhaps, his Book of Canticles;) and Verba Fidelia (as the same Tremellius) Faithful Sayings; meaning, it may be, his Collection of Proverbs. In the next Verse, he calls them Words of the Wise, and so many Goats and Nails given 'Ab eodem Pastore,' from the same Shepherd [of the Flock of Israel.]" And of this translation, Bacon speaks in the following letter.

To Mr. TOBIE MATTHEW.

"It is true, my labours are now most set to have those works, which I had formerly published, as that of Advancement of Learning, that of Hen. VII. that of the Essays, being retractate, and made more perfect, well translated into Latin by the help of some good pens, which forsake me not. For these modern languages will, at one time or other, play the bankrupt with books: and since I have lost much time with this age, I would be glad, as God shall give me leave, to recover it with posterity.

"For the Essay of Friendship, while I took your speech of it for a cursory request, I took my promise for a compliment. But since you call for it, I shall perform it."

In his letter^[15] to Father Fulgentio, giving some account of his writings, he says, "The Novum Organum should immediately follow, but my Moral and Political writings step in between as being more finished. These are the History of King Henry the Seventh, and the small Book, which in your language you have called Saggi Morali, but I give it a graver title, that of Sermones Fideles, or Interiora Rerum, and these Essays will not only be enlarged in number but still more in substance."

I have annexed an Appendix^[16] containing "A fragment of an Essay of Fame," which was published by Dr. Rawley in his Resuscitatio: and "Of a King,"^[17] which was published in 1648, in a volume entitled "Remains," which also contains an Essay "On Death." This Essay I have inserted in page 131 of this volume.^[18]

During the life of Bacon, various editions of the Essays were published and in different languages. In 1618, in Italian;^[19] in 1619, in French;^[20] in 1621, in Italian,^[21] and in French.^[22]

Since Lord Bacon's death, the press has abounded with editions. In some of these editions the editors have substituted their own translations of the Latin for the beautiful English by Lord Bacon. How well they have succeeded the reader may judge by the following specimens. In a translation published by William H. Wilymott., LL.D., A. D. 1720, he says, "Wanting an English Book for my Scholars to Translate, which might improve them in Sense and Latin at once, (Two Things which should never be divided in Teaching) I thought nothing more proper for that purpose than Bacon's Essays, provided the English, which is in some Places grown obsolete, were a little reformed, and made more fashionable. Accordingly having by me his Lordship's Latin Volume of the Essays, (which as it was a later, so seems to be a perfecter Book) I fell to Translating it, not tying myself strictly to the Latin, but comparing both Languages together, and setting down that Sense (where there was any Difference) that seem'd the fullest and plainest."

The following is a specimen:

Dr. Wilymott.

Lord Bacon.

"The principal Virtue of Prosperity, is Temperance; of "But to speak in a mean, the virtue of prosperity is Adversity, Fortitude; which in Morals is reputed the temperance, the virtue of adversity is fortitude, which most heroical Virtue. Again, Prosperity belongs to the in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the Blessings of the Old Testament; Adversity to the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the Beatitudes of the New, which are both in Reality blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater greater, and carry a clearer Revelation of the Divine benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's Favour. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's Harp, you ll find more lamentable Airs, than David's harp, you shall hear as many herse-like airs Triumphant ones." as carols."

So too Shaw has made a similar attempt, of which the following is a specimen, from the Essay "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature."

Lord Bacon.

Dr. Shaw.

"The parts and signs of goodness are many. If a man be "There are several parts and signs of goodness. If gracious and courteous to strangers, it shews he is a a man be civil and courteous to strangers, it shews citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off him a citizen of the world, whose heart is no island from other lands, a continent that joins to them; if he be cut off from other lands, but a continent that joins compassionate towards the afflictions of others, it shews them. If he be compassionate to the afflicted, it that his heart is like the noble tree that is wounded itself shews a noble soul, like the tree which is wounded when it gives the balm: if he easily pardons and remits when it gives the balm. If he easily pardons and offences, it shews that his mind is planted above injuries, forgives offences, it shews a mind perched above so that he cannot be shot; if he be thankful for small the reach of injuries. If he be thankful for small benefits, it shews that he weighs men's minds, and not benefits, it shews he values men's minds before their trash." their treasure."



This work was published before January 1, 1925, and is in the **public domain** worldwide because the author died at least 100 years ago.

1. There is a copy of this edition at Cambridge, and in the Bodleian.

2. The Essay (for instance) in the table of contents is "Of Suters," in the body of the book it is "Of Sutes:"

3. See note L.

4. The reference to it is in vol. ii of Catalogue, page 173, as follows:

"Essays by Lord Bacon, viz. on Studies, Discourses, Ceremonies, and Respects, Followers and Friends, Suitors, Expense, Regimen of Health, Honor and Reputation, Faction and Negotiating." The Catalogue then adds, "These Essays will be found to vary in some degree from the printed copies and especially from an expensive edition of Lord Bacon's works, in which the Essays appear to lie greatly mutilated."

It is probable that this (although groundless) relates to the edition of 1730, published by Blackburn. It may, perhaps, be doubtful whether this is a MS. of the edition of 1597 or of 1606; but the first Essay in the edition of 1587 says, "if he conferre little, he had need of a present witt;" but the words "he had need of" are omitted in the edition of 1606. They are however in the MS. in the Museum. There is also in the Harleian MSS. 6797, a MS. of two Essays, of Faction and of Negotiating, with cross lines drawn through them.

5. I have a copy in my possession, with a very bad engraving of Lord Bacon prefixed above the following lines:

"Bacon, his Age's Pride and Britann's Glory
Whose Name will still be famous in her story,
Hauing by's works Oblig'd all future Ages
To pay Him Thanks as many as His Pages,
Having well-weigh'd each Tittle of that Praise,
Found a great pairt arose from his ESAIES"

As this volume, published 1606. (three years after the death of his brother Anthony,) contains the dedication to Anthony and these lines, and as I do not find the edition mentioned in any of his letters: query, was it published by the author or by some bookseller?

6. For instance; the dedication in 1597 is to M. Anthony Bacon, and in 1606 it is to Maister Anthony Bacon: and the signature in 1597 is Fran. Bacon; in 1606 is Francis Bacon.

7. Francis Baron married Alice Burnham, and Sir John Constable married her sister Dorothy Burnham. In Lord Bacon's will, he says, Sir John Constable, Knight, my brother-in-law; and he nominates him as one of his executors.

8. There is a copy in the British Museum, and in the Bodleian; and I have a copy.

9. "To Mr. Matthews: along with the Book De Sapientia Veteriim. I Heartily thank you for your Letter, of the 21th or August, from Salamanca; and, in recompence, send you a little Work of mine, that has begun to pass the World. They tell me my Latin is turned into Silver, and become current. Had you been here, you should have been my Inquisitor, before it came forth: but I think the greatest Inquisitor in Spain will allow it. One thins you must pardon me, if I make no haste to believe, that the World should be grown to such an Ecstasy, as to reject Truth in Philosophy, because the Author dissents in Religion; no more than they do by Aristotle or Averroes. My

great Work goes forward; and after my manner, I always alter when I add: So that nothing is finish'd till all is finish'd. This I have wrote in the midst of a Term and Parliament; thinking no time so possess'd, but that I should talk of these Matters with so good and dear a Friend—*Gray's-Inn. Feb. 27, 1610.*"

L0. There is a copy in the Bodleian, and I have a copy.

L1. This is the same bookseller who published the edition of 1606.

L2. There is a copy in the British Museum and at Cambridge, and the copies are not uncommon.

L3. Baconiana, 201.—"A Letter of the Lord Bacon's, in French, to the Marquis Fiat, relating to his Essays."

"Monsieur l' Ambassadeur mon File,

"Voyant que vostre Excellence faict et traite Manages, non senlement entre les Princes d' Angleterre et de France, mais aussi entre les Langues (puis que faictes traduire non Liure de l' Advancement des Sciences en Francois) i' ai bien voulu vous envoyer mon Liure dernièrement imprimé que i' avois pourveu pour vous, mais i' estois en doubte, de le vous envoyer, pour ce qu' il estoit escrit en Anglois. Mais a' cest' Heure poure la raison susdicte ie le vous envoie. C' est un Recompillement de mes Essays Morales et Civiles; mais tellement enlargiés et enrichiés, tant de Nombre que de Poix que c' est de fail un Oeuvre nouveau. le vous baise les Mains, et reste,

"Vostre tres Affectionée Ami, ex tres humble Serviteur."

"The same in English, by the Publisher.

"My Lord Embassador, my Son,

"Seeing that your Excellency makes and treats of Marriages, not only betwixt the Princes of Rance and England, but also betwixt their Languages (for you have caus'd my Book of the Advancement of Learning, to be Translated into French) I was much inclin'd to make you a Present of the last Book which I have published, and which I had in readiness for you.

"I was sometimes in doubt, whether I ought to have sent it to you, because it was written in the English tongue. But now, for that very Reason, I send it to you. It is a Recompillement of my Essaies Moral, and Civil; but in such manner enlarged and enriched both in Number and Weight, that it is in effect, a New Work. I kiss your hands, and remain

Your most Affectionate friend and most humble Servant, &c.

L4. Baconiana, page 60.

L5. Ibid, page 196.

L6. See end of Essays.

L7. There is a manuscript of this Essay in the Lansdown Collection, B. Museum, 135, 136. In Blackburn's edition of Bacon's Works, published in 1610, he says, "I have inserted from the Remains, an Essay of a King: and my reason is, ti is so collated and corrected by Archbishop Sancroft's well known hand, that it appears to be a new work; and though it consists of short propositions mostly, yet I will be so presumptuous as to say, that I think it now breathes the true spirit of our author; and there seems to be an obvious reason why it was omitted before."

L8. There is a MS. of this in the Harleiam MS. Vol. ii. p. 196.

L9. Essays, Italice, 8vo. B. Museum and Oxford.

20. Essays Moraux, Par Gorges. B. Museum and Oxford.

21. Saggi Morali, opera nuova de F. Bacon corretta a data en luce dal. Sig. Andr: Croli et un tributo, 24mo. B. Museum.

22. Essais trad. en Francois par Bandouin, 16mo. Paris. B. Museum.

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