a showy accession of rank. Accordingly, Bacon wrote to his cousin Cecil, stating his desire to obtain, for these rea­sons, “ this divulged and almost prostituted title of knight­hood." The request was granted, but was immediately followed by another. Bacon, heartily ashamed of the company in which he was to appear, entreated that he might be knighted alone ; “ that,” as he says, “ the man­ner might be such as might grace one, since the matter will not.” This petition was refused ; and, on the day of the coronation, Francis Bacon was one of three hundred who received the empty honour. Soon afterwards, being forty-two years old, he was married to the alderman’s daugh­ter, Alice Barnham, who brought him a considerable fortune, but seems, in the latter part of his life at all events, to have contributed little to his domestic happiness.

These details are in themselves trifles; but they are strange illustrations of the mixed character of one who, while thus soliciting honours of which he was half-ashamed, and eager for public distinctions, which, though more solid, were like­wise more dangerous, was not only respected and distinguish­ed as a lawyer and a statesman, as an orator, a scholar, and an author, but was occupied, during his few hours of leisure, in completing the most valuable system of philosophy that has ever been expounded in modern Europe. Smaller com­positions, submitted to his friends, showed from time to time the progress of the great work which he had marked out as the business of his life ; and among these was the treatise on the Advancement of Learning, published in 1605, in its au­thor's forty-fifth year. Political tracts alternated with these philosophical speculations.

In the mean time his public reputation, and his favour with the king, increased and kept pace with each other. In parliament he was actively useful in forwarding favourite and really good measures of the court, such as the union of England and Scotland, and the proposed consolidation of the laws of the two countries; nor was he less usefully em­ployed in taking a prominent part in the select committee of the house upon grievances. In his skilful hands, the report became all that the rulers could have wished, without ex­citing any general feeling against the framers. In 1604, he was made king’s counsel in ordinary, with a salary of forty pounds, to which was added a pension of sixty pounds. In 1607, upon Coke's promotion to the bench, Bacon was ap­pointed solicitor-general ; and he became attorney-general in 1612. His treatises concerning improvements in the law, and the principles of legislation, are more creditable testi­monies to the value of his official services than some others of his acts ; such as the scheme, first tried in the session of 1614, for securing majorities in the House of Commons by or­ganised corruption, the invention of which has been recently traced to him, although in his place in parliament he ridiculed those who asserted that such a project bad ever been form­ed. Bacon was likewise officially the prosecutor of Oliver St. John, of Owen and Talbot, and of the old clergyman Peacham, who was examined in the Tower under torture, the founder of modern philosophy being present, and put­ting the questions. In Peacham’s case there was even an attempt, actively promoted by Bacon, for securing a convic­tion by previous conference with the judges ; a plot which, though at length successful, was defeated for a time by the sturdy resistance of Coke, a tyrant to his inferiors, but a staunch opponent of encroachments upon judicial indepen­dence. Bacon’s last remarkable appearance as attorney-general, was in the noted trial of the earl and countess of Somerset and their accomplices, for the murder of Sir Tho­mas Overbury ; and, whatever the foul secret may have been, which was involved in that fiendish intrigue, Bacon's letters to the king leave little reason for doubting that he at least was in possession of it. His conduct in this matter however gained him great and deserved credit.

The fall of Somerset was followed by the rise of the new favourite Villiers, who had already profited by his intimacy with the attorney-general, and by the sound advices with which the cautious statesman endeavoured to fortify his youth and inexperience. The worthless Buckingham, des­tined in a few years to be the instrument of retribution for Bacon’s past desertion of Essex, did not for some time for­get obligations, of which he was probably wise enough to desire a continuance. In 1616 Bacon having been sworn of the privy council, relinquished the bar, but retained his chamber practice. In the spring of 1617, the Lord Chancellor El­lesmere resigned the seals, which were immediately delivered to Bacon, with the title of lord-keeper. In January of the succeeding year he was made lord high chancellor of Eng­land, and in July was raised to the peerage as Baron of Verulam. His higher title of Viscount St. Albans was not conferred on him till 1621. Without neglecting his politi­cal duties, he proceeded zealously to the judicial functions of his office, in which arrears of business had accumulated through the infirmities of his aged predecessor. “ This day,” wrote he to Buckingham in June 1617, “ I have made even with the business of the kingdom for common justice ; not one cause unheard ; the lawyers drawn dry of all the motions they were to make; not one petition unanswered. And this, I think, could not be said in our age before. Thus I speak, not out of ostentation, but out of gladness, when I have done my duty. I know men think I cannot continue, if I should thus oppress myself with business ; but that ac­count is made. The duties of life are more than life : and if I die now, I shall die before the world be weary of me.” And the man who wrote in this solemn moral strain, the man whose writings throughout are an echo of the same lofty expression of the sense of duty, was also the man who, in less than four years after his elevation to the seat of justice, was to be hurled from it in disgrace, branded as a bribed and dishonest man. “ At York House,” says Mr. Montagu, “ on the 22d of January 1621, he celebrated his sixtieth birth­day, surrounded by his admirers and friends, among whom was Ben Jonson, who composed a poem in honour of the day.

Hail, happy genius of this ancient pile !

How comes it all things so about thee smile— The fire, the wine, the men—and in the midst Thou stand’st, as if some mystery thou didst ?

“ Had the poet been a prophet, he would have described the good genius of the mansion not exulting, but dejected, humble, and about to depart for ever.”

He had now arrived at the conviction that his worship of the powers of this world had made it impossible for him to consummate the great sacrifice, which, during his lifetime, he had hoped to lay upon the altar of philosophy. Aged sixty years, and immersed in difficult and anxious business, he felt that his great Restoration of Science, his Instauratio Magna, could not be completed ; and he therefore hastened to give to the world an outline of its plan, coupled with a fill­ing up of one section of the outline. “ I number my days,” wrote he, “ and would have it saved.” The Novum Orga­num, the result of this determination, was published in October 1620; and the fame which it earned for its author throughout Europe, was in its rising splendour when his fall took place.

The tempest which was soon to overturn the throne was already lowering on the horizon ; and its earliest mutterings were heard in the important parliament which met on the 30th of January 1621. With most of the complaints, whose investigation the king and Buckingham feared so much, we have here little to do : but two gross abuses there were, in which the lord chancellor was personally implicated. He had passed the infamous patents of monopoly, of which the worst were those held by Sir Giles Mompesson, (Massin­ger’s Overreach,) and by Sir Francis Michell, and shared by Buckingham’s brothers and dependents : and he had allow­ed himself to be influenced in his judicial sentences by re­