commendations of the favourite. The first of these faults admitted of palliation, the second was susceptible of none; but both were real and heavy offences. Yet neither of them was made an article of charge against Bacon. He was at­tacked upon a different ground. Buckingham, by the advice of his new counsellor Williams, then dean of Westminster, abandoned the monopolists to their fate, contenting himself with sending his own brothers out of the country, and with afterwards publicly denying that he had any hand in assist­ing their escape. But the storm was not allayed. In March, the parliamentary committee appointed to inquire into the existence of abuses in the courts of justice, reported that abuses did exist, and that the person against whom they were alleged, was the lord chancellor himself. Two cases were specified, of suitors named Aubrey and Egerton, of whom the one had given the chancellor L.100, the other L.400, and against whom he had decided, notwithstanding these presents. Two days after this report was presented, Lord St. Albans presided in the House of Lords for the last time. New accusations accumulated against him; and, alarmed in mind, and sick in body, he retired from the house, and ad­dressed to the peers a letter, praying for a suspension of their opinion, until he should have undergone a fair trial. In no long time the charges against him amounted to twenty- three; and Williams, again called to the councils of Bucking­ham and his master, advised that no risks should be incurred upon his account. A prorogation of parliament ensued, dur­ing which an interview took place between the king and the chancellor; and James, instead of encouraging his accused servant in the resolution he had expressed of defending himself, recommended “ that he should submit himself to the House of Peers, and that upon his princely word he would then restore him again, if they in their honours should not be sensible of his merits.” On the 24th of April there was presented to the Lords, by the Prince of Wales, a sup­plication and submission of the lord chancellor, in which the most important passage is the following : “ It resteth, therefore, that, without fig-leaves, I do ingenuously confess and acknowledge that, having understood the particulars of the charge, not formally from the house, but enough to in­form my conscience and memory, I find matter sufficient and full, both to move me to desert my defence, and to move your lordships to condemn and censure me. Neither will I trouble your lordships by singling those particulars, which I think may fall off.

Quid te exempts juvat spinis de pluribus una ?

Neither will I prompt your lordships to observe upon the proofs, where they come not home, or the scruples touching the credits of the witnesses : neither will I represent unto your lordships how far a defence might, in diverse things, extenuate the offence, in respect of the time or manner of the gift, or the like circumstances ; but only leave these things to spring out of your own noble thoughts, and obser­vations of the evidence and examinations themselves, and charitably to wind about the particulars of the charge here and there, as God shall put in your minds ; and so submit myself wholly to your piety and grace And, there­

fore, my humble suit to your lordships is, that my penitent submission may be my sentence, and the loss of the seal my punishment; and that your lordships will spare any further sentence, but recommend me to his majesty’s grace and par­don for all that is past.” But not even thus was the humilia­tion complete. The house resolved that the submission was not specific, nor unequivocal enough to be satisfactory; and that he should be required to furnish categorical answers to the several articles of charge, which, accordingly, were sent to him, being numbered under twenty-three heads. The specific answers which he returned were prefaced and fol­lowed by these declarations : “Upon advised consideration of the charge, descending into my own conscience, and call­

ing my memory to account, so far as I am able, I do plainly and ingenuously confess that I am guilty of corruption, and do renounce all defence, and put myself upon the grace and mercy of your lordships This declaration I have

made to your lordships with a sincere mind ; humbly crav­ing that, if there should be any mistakes, your lordships would impute it to want of memory, and not to any desire of mine to obscure truth, or palliate anything. For I do again confess, that in the points charged upon me, although they should be taken as myself have declared them, there is a great deal of corruption and neglect, for which I am heartily and penitently sorrow, and submit myself to the judgment, grace, and mercy of the court.—For extenuation, I will use none, concerning the matters themselves: only it may please your lordships, out of your nobleness, to cast your eyes of compassion upon my person and estate. I was never noted for an avaricious man, and the apostle saith, that covetousness is the root of all evil. I hope also that your lordships do the rather find me in the state of grace ; tor that, in all these particulars, there are few or none that are not almost two years old, whereas those that have an habit of corruption do commonly wax worse and worse ; so that it hath pleased God to prepare me, by precedent de­grees of amendment, to my present penitency. And for my estate. It is so mean and poor, as my care is now chiefly to satisfy my debts.”

This declaration being read, a deputation of the lords was appointed to wait on the unfortunate man in the chamber where he sat deserted and alone, and to demand whether it were his own hand that was subscribed to it. Among them was Shakspeare’s friend Lord Southampton, who had been condemned to death along with Essex. Bacon replied to them, “ It is my act, my hand, my heart. I beseech your lordships, be merciful unto a broken reed.” Again the fal­len judge prayed the king to intercede for him ; and again the king, his haughty son, and their thankless favourite, refused to interfere. On the 3d of May 1621, the lords pronounced a sentence which, stamping him at all events with indelible disgrace, was terrible even in the punish­ment which it actually inflicted. Bacon, found guilty upon his own confession, was sentenced to a fine of forty thou­sand pounds, and to confinement in the Tower during the king’s pleasure ; he was pronounced incapable of public employments, and of sitting in parliament ; and prohibited from coming within the verge of the court. His judges in­deed knew that the harsher part of the sentence would not be executed. Accordingly, though committed immediately to the Tower, he was released after two days’ imprison­ment ; and the fine was remitted in the course of the au­tumn, although it is a fact dishonourable (in the circum­stances) to his enemy and successor Bishop Williams, that the pardon was stayed at the seal, till the king in person ordered it to be passed.

From the whole tenor of this afflicting history. It is plain that Bacon’s memory cannot be cleared from very heavy imputations. Indeed, the case against him may be stated, if we push it to the utmoβt, in an alternative form which admits of no honourable solution. Convicted of corruption, as he was, upon his own confession, we must either believe the confession, and pronounce him a corrupt judge, or we must disbelieve it, and pronounce him a liar. Most of his bio­graphers adopt the former alternative. Mr. Montagu’s ela­borate defence is really founded on something which is not very far distant from the latter. And, humiliating as either supposition is, we have, for our own part, no hesitation in be­lieving that the truth lies nearest to that theory which im­putes to the unhappy chancellor insincerity and cowardice rather than wilful corruption. We cannot indeed go so far as his enthusiastic biographer, who insists that the acts charged and confessed, were in themselves, if not quite free from moral blame, yet palliated, not only by general usage,