



Francis Bacon: his life and philosophy: Volume 2

John Nichol

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The mass of criticism, English, German, and French, accumulated about the Baconian Philosophy, still leaves room for difference of opinion regarding its degree of inaccuracy in detail and failure in result: there is no room for difference as to its design, which was to explore the Universe, and, under reverence for the mysteries of Faith, to make men its masters. The popular

view of the subject is condensed in Lord Macaulay's brilliant and shallow review, of which the following is the gist:—

Bacon was neither a philosopher nor a logician, but

a practical reformer. Unlike his predecessors — who

M'asted their dialectic on labours like those spent on a treadmill — his desire was not to solve enigmas, but to multijDly enjoyment and mitigate pain. Century

after century, during the evening of Greece, the meridian of Eome, the darkness and the twilight before the dawn of Italy, rival sects had been repeating their idle cries, the Epicurean adding as little to the quantity of pleasure as the Stoic to that of virtue, or

the Scholastic to that of knowledge. At last there came a theoretical philanthropist who, caring nothing about the grounds of moral obligation or the freedom

of the will, disdaining disputes as barren as the toils of the damned m Tartarus, made Utility and Progress his watchwords, and, leaving the windy war to those

who liked it, was content to contribute to the sum of human happiness..



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Lorene Williamson:

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