

nature; but it remained to show, on broad and general principles, how and why Aristotle was in the wrong; to set in evidence the peculiar weakness of his method of philosophizing, and to substitute in its place a stronger and better. This important task was executed by Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, who will, therefore, justly be looked upon in all future ages as the great reformer of philosophy, though his own actual contributions to the stock of physical truths were small, and his ideas of particular points strongly tinged with mistakes and errors, which were the fault rather of the general want of physical information of the age than of any narrowness of view on his own part; and of this he was fully aware. It has been attempted by some to lessen the merit of this great achievement, by showing that the inductive method had been practised in many instances, both ancient and modern, by the mere instinct of mankind; but it is not the introduction of inductive reasoning, as a new and hitherto untried process, which characterizes the Baconian philosophy, but his keen perception, and his broad and spirit-stirring, almost enthusiastic, announcement of its paramount importance, as the alpha and omega of science, as the grand and only chain for the linking together of physical truths, and the eventual key to every discovery and every application. Those who would deny him his just glory on such grounds would refuse to Jenner or to Howard their civic crowns, because a few farmers in a remote province had, time out of mind, been acquainted with vaccination, or philanthropists, in all ages, had occasionally visited the prisoner in his dungeon.

(106.) An immense impulse was now given to science, and it seemed as if the genius of mankind, long pent up, had at length rushed eagerly upon Nature, and commenced, with one accord, the great work of turning up her hitherto unbroken soil, and exposing the treasures so long concealed. A general sense now prevailed of the poverty and insufficiency of existing knowledge in *matters of fact*; and, as information flowed fast in, an era of excitement and wonder commenced, to which