

and I shall transfer to this place the account which I have given of him in the *Philosophy*. I do this the more willingly because I regard the existence of such a work as the *Opus Majus* at that period as a problem which has never yet been solved. Also I may add, that the scheme of the Contents of this work which I have given, deserves, as I conceive, more notice than it has yet received.

“Roger Bacon was born in 1214, near Ilchester, in Somersetshire, of an old family. In his youth he was a student at Oxford, and made extraordinary progress in all branches of learning. He then went to the University of Paris, as was at that time the custom of learned Englishmen, and there received the degree of Doctor of Theology. At the persuasion of Robert Grosstête, bishop of Lincoln, he entered the brotherhood of Franciscans in Oxford, and gave himself up to study with extraordinary fervor. He was termed by his brother monks *Doctor Mirabilis*. We know from his own works, as well as from the traditions concerning him, that he possessed an intimate acquaintance with all the science of his time which could be acquired from books; and that he had made many remarkable advances by means of his own experimental labors. He was acquainted with Arabic, as well as with the other languages common in his time. In the title of his works, we find the whole range of science and philosophy, Mathematics and Mechanics, Optics, Astronomy, Geography, Chronology, Chemistry, Magic, Music, Medicine, Grammar, Logics, Metaphysics, Ethics, and Theology; and judging from those which are published, these works are full of sound and exact knowledge. He is, with good reason, supposed to have discovered, or to have had some knowledge of, several of the most remarkable inventions which were made generally known soon afterwards; as gunpowder, lenses, burning specula, telescopes, clocks, the correction of the calendar, and the explanation of the rainbow.

“Thus possessing, in the acquirements and habits of his own mind, abundant examples of the nature of knowledge and of the process of invention, Roger Bacon felt also a deep interest in the growth and progress of science, a spirit of inquiry respecting the causes which produced or prevented its advance, and a fervent hope and trust in its future destinies; and these feelings impelled him to speculate worthily and wisely respecting a Reform of the Method of Philosophizing. The manuscripts of his works have existed for nearly six hundred years in many of the libraries of Europe, and especially in those of England; and for a long period the very imperfect portions of them which were