

matured. It occurs in Lib. ii. Aphorism xxxvi., in which he is speaking of *Prerogative Instances*, of which he gives twenty-seven species. In the passage now referred to, he is speaking of a kind of Prerogative Instances, better known to ordinary readers than most of the kinds by name, the *Instantia Crucis*: though probably the metaphor from which this name is derived is commonly wrongly apprehended. Bacon's meaning is *Guide-Post Instances*: and the *Cruz* which he alludes to is not a Cross, but a Guide-Post at Cross-roads. And among the cases to which such Instances may be applied, he mentions the diurnal motion of the heavens from east to west, and the special motion of the particular heavenly bodies from west to east. And he suggests what he conceives may be an *Instantia Crucis* in each case. If, he says, we find any motion from east to west in the bodies which surround the earth, slow in the ocean, quicker in the air, quicker still in comets, gradually quicker in planets according to their greater distance from the earth; *then* we may suppose that there is a cosmical diurnal motion, and the motion of the earth must be denied.

With regard to the special motions of the heavenly bodies, he first remarks that each body not coming quite so far westwards as before, after one revolution of the heavens, and going to the north or the south, does not imply any special motion; since it may be accounted for by a modification of the diurnal motion in each, which produces a defect of the return, and a spiral path; and he says that if we look at the matter as common people<sup>2</sup> and disregard the devices of astronomers, the motion is really so to the senses; and that he has made an imitation of it by means of wires. The *instantia crucis* which he here suggests is, to see if we can find in any credible history an account of any comet which did not share in the diurnal revolution of the skies.

On his assertion that the motion of each separate planet is, to sense, a spiral, we may remark that it is certainly true; but that the business of science, here, as elsewhere, consists in *resolving* the complex phenomenon into simple phenomena; the complex spiral motion into simple circular motions.

With regard to the diurnal motion of the earth, it would seem as if Bacon himself had a leaning to believe it when he wrote this passage; for neither is he himself, nor are any of the Anticopernicans, accus-

---

<sup>2</sup> Et certissimum est si paulisper pro plebeis nos geramus (missis astronomorum et scholæ commentis, quibus illud in more est, ut sensui in multis immerito vim faciant et obscuriora malint) talem esse motum istum ad sensum qualem diximus.