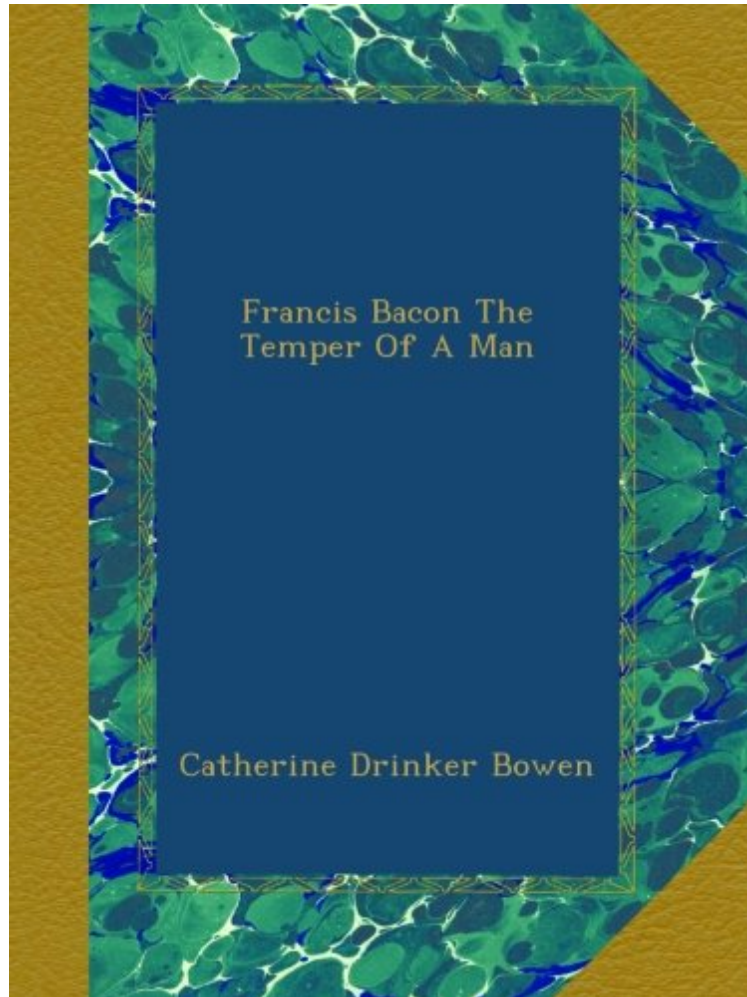


Francis Bacon The Temper Of A Man

Catherine Drinker Bowen

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Catherine Drinker Bowen : Francis Bacon The Temper Of A Man before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Francis Bacon The Temper Of A Man:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. "There is no thought to be taken about precedents, for there is no precedent."By Daniel PutmanBacon wrote this line about his approach to understanding nature and it seems wrong. Of course there were precedents. Many natural philosophers before Bacon had carefully studied nature. Scientists contemporary with Bacon like Galileo went well beyond him in actually describing the world. But what sets Bacon apart, and what actually was unprecedented, was his laying out on paper a new path for studying the book of nature strictly as it presents itself - what we call the inductive method. We know today that his method, usually called simple induction, was nave and inaccurate for describing what actually happens in science. But Bacon's insistence that, in order to break through the prejudices of words and the straitjacket of medieval logic, we must back off and let nature

tell us what it will - this was first laid out by Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England. It was a unique contribution to the revolution in science and physics that was happening in Europe. While Descartes trusted his mind and mistrusted his senses, Bacon mistrusted the mind and argued that what the senses tell us must be the starting point. Bacon had two overriding goals in life. One was to rise politically and socially. His father was Lord Chancellor of England and his youngest son was determined to reach his father's achievement, something he eventually did. But Bacon's other goal was to live a contemplative life of writing where he could examine the beauty of nature that he loved to be around and write down the method of discovery unencumbered by the Scholastic framework. These goals were almost always in conflict and Catherine Drinker Bowen does a great job of showing their constant tension in Bacon's life. I had no idea of all the political ups and downs that Bacon went through. After spending most of his life climbing the social ladder, he is impeached as Lord Chancellor for bribes which he fully admitted and actually spent time in the Tower. (But, as King James said, if he were to punish all those that took bribes in his kingdom, he would soon have no subjects left.) Then, in disgrace, Bacon writes some of his best work in his last five years; he finally had time for the full contemplative life. His honesty and insight about himself and the world around him is remarkable for his time. As Bowen notes, sometimes you have to read Bacon to actually believe he wrote what he did. Bowen gives many examples of his aphorisms, a literary form Bacon favored. On the other hand, despite his thoughtfulness and honesty, his flaws such as his complete inability to handle money intelligently plagued him throughout his life. All of this is brought out well in this biography. As another reviewer notes, Bowen's writing style has a literary flare to it. She says things like: "Never was mortal man so busy" or "Lady Bacon fired off her heavy guns." The result for me was to create less distance between author and reader. The sense given is that the reader is being taken along on this journey. I thoroughly enjoyed Bowen's style. If I have any criticism of the book, it is that Bowen could have spent a little more time spelling out Bacon's philosophical innovations in the history of science. She does cover those but the majority of the book is spent on the political and social aspects of Bacon's life. But this book was not written specifically for a scientific audience and clearly the most wrenching and life-changing events in Bacon's life were due to his social and political aspirations. As an overall biography of the man, the book is excellent. For breathing life into a critical person in the history of science that we know very little about, I highly recommend Bowen's book.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Didn't help me. By James Tolbert Not as relevant or engaging as I had hoped. Oh well - I'll keep reading from a wide and diverse set of books.

0 of 7 people found the following review helpful. No Show By P. Mantius Supplier failed to deliver book at all. Wasted a few weeks. Only compensation was my money back. Oh Gee thanks.

This book was originally published prior to 1923, and represents a reproduction of an important historical work, maintaining the same format as the original work. While some publishers have opted to apply OCR (optical character recognition) technology to the process, we believe this leads to sub-optimal results (frequent typographical errors, strange characters and confusing formatting) and does not adequately preserve the historical character of the original artifact. We believe this work is culturally important in its original archival form. While we strive to adequately clean and digitally enhance the original work, there are occasionally instances where imperfections such as blurred or missing pages, poor pictures or errant marks may have been introduced due to either the quality of the original work or the scanning process itself. Despite these occasional imperfections, we have brought it back into print as part of our ongoing global book preservation commitment, providing customers with access to the best possible historical reprints. We appreciate your understanding of these occasional imperfections, and sincerely hope you enjoy seeing the book in a format as close as possible to that intended by the original publisher.