

# From the Archive

## The Fellowship of Learning

*The following is an extract from Sir Frederic Kenyon's 1921 Presidential Address on 'The Fellowship of Learning', in which he took as his cue Francis Bacon's Instauratio Magna (1620) and its 'vision of the Kingdom of Knowledge, the ideal of the Fellowship of Learning, which our Academy exists to foster and promote'.*

'The prophecy which forms the motto of the great frontispiece of the Instauratio Magna has been realised in fullest measure in these latter days. Multi pertransibunt et augebitur scientia ['Many will travel and knowledge will be increased']. There has been much running to and fro on the face of the earth, and knowledge has been multiplied in a manner which has far exceeded the utmost dreams of Bacon. But the vision of unity, of the Fellowship of Learning, has been imperilled. The tendency has been centrifugal, separatist, specialist. No one can now, like Bacon, take all knowledge for his province. In each subject knowledge has multiplied to such an extent that the subject must be subdivided again and again, and one man will spend his life in settling Hoti's business or in the doctrine of the enclitic De, and another in investigating the parasite of a parasite. Without specialism knowledge

cannot now progress, and specialism has its tendencies which break up the family of learning. Separatism may only too easily turn to rivalry and even hostility: and valuable time and energy are wasted while those who should be allies fight one another.

This danger has been amply illustrated in the past, in the fights between the New Learning and the Old, between Theology and Science, between Science and the Classics, between the modern and the ancient humanities.

The fight between Science and Theology has died down; Science is no longer so sure that it knows everything, and Theology realizes that in its sphere Science must be respected. The fight between Science and the Humanities, or more particularly between Science and the Classics, has also, I think, lost its bitterness. The advocates of each are more willing to recognize the value of the other, and to acknowledge that the free development of both is essential to the intellectual culture of the nation. The [First World] war has taught us how greatly we need both, the knowledge of nature which comes from science and the knowledge of man which comes from the humanities. Neither can afford to despise the other. For our defence in war, for our

progress in peace, we need to cultivate science, both with the disinterested research which we call pure science, and in its practical applications to industry and commerce. And the problems of government, of economics, of international and internal relations, which bewilder us to-day, impress us with the vital need of the knowledge of man's thought and the history of nations, and of the cultivation of high ideals, which come through the study of the humanities.

**Image:**

*This frontispiece from the Instauratio magna depicts, in Kenyon's words, 'the ship of Learning putting out through the Pillars of Hercules into the uncharted ocean beyond in search of the new world of Knowledge'.*

